



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 5 March 2026

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THURSDAY, 5 MARCH 2026

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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



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

REPORT

Auditor-General



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General Report 10: 2025-26, *Managing Queensland's finances 2025*. I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General Report 10: 2025-26—Managing Queensland's finances 2025 [\[278\]](#).

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Contempt of Parliament



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 18 December 2025 the member for McConnell wrote to me alleging that the Deputy Premier threatened her in the House on 10 December 2025. The alleged threat was captured on an unofficial transcript that I provided to both the member and the Deputy Premier. The Deputy Premier is heard saying, 'I'm going after you. Wait until I'm—', 'You wait', 'You wait'. The Deputy Premier provided examples of the member for McConnell using similar language in previous parliaments. However, I do think there is a difference in saying 'I will get to you' and 'I will get you'. The latter is more threatening in nature.

In accordance with the precedent set by Ethics Committee report 189, to amount to a contempt of parliament any threat must also have amounted to, or was intended or likely to amount to, an improper interference in the free performance of the member's duty as a member. The member for McConnell and the Deputy Premier both discharge their duties in the House robustly. There is no power imbalance as they both sit on their respective front benches and are both experienced and long-term members of this parliament. It is difficult to see how those words alone from the Deputy Premier would in any way prevent the member for McConnell from carrying out her duties as a member.

The Deputy Premier also explained that the words used showed an intention that he was about to speak about the member for McConnell rather than being intended as a threat to her personally. As such, I consider the Deputy Premier has made an adequate explanation. I will not be referring the matter for the further consideration of the House via the Ethics Committee. However, while some behaviour may not reach the threshold for a contempt of parliament, this does not mean that it is acceptable. It is unacceptable for members to be quarrelling across the chamber. It is also clearly unparliamentary for a member to gesticulate towards another member while saying 'I'm going after you'. I particularly urge senior members of this House to be more temperate in the way they address each other for the dignity of the House and the example it sets for other members and the public. We are leaders and role models and we must act that way. There is no place in this House, or in wider society, for disrespect to another person. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

Tabled paper: Correspondence relating to an alleged contempt of Parliament by the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations and member for Kawana [\[279\]](#).

I have circulated a ruling on this matter. I seek leave to incorporate the ruling.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S RULING—ALLEGED CONTEMPT OF PARLIAMENT

MR SPEAKER Honourable members,

On 18 December 2025, the member for McConnel wrote to me alleging that the Deputy Premier threatened her in the House on 10 December 2025.

The matter relates to an exchange between the member and the Deputy Premier. I reviewed the exchange and asked Hansard to provide an unofficial transcript of the exchange by listening to the surround sound. I subsequently provided the transcript to the member and the Deputy Premier, and the member later tabled that transcript in the House. The transcript reads as follows:

Grace: *Gutter politics.*

Bleijie: *I'm going after you. Wait until I'm ...*

Grace: *Gutter politics.*

Bleijie: *You wait.*

Grace: *You're a bully.*

Bleijie: *You wait.*

Grace: *You're a bully.*

Bleijie: *Don't bully me.*

Grace: *Don't threaten me in here.*

Bleijie: *Don't bully me.*

Grace: *Don't threaten me in here.*

Bleijie: *Don't bully me*

Grace: *I'm not going to be threatened by you.*

Bleijie: *Don't bully me.*

Grace: *Don't you threaten me here.*

The member alleged that the words 'I'm going after you. Wait until I...You wait... You wait' were a threat and an example of a contempt per Standing Order 266(9):

Assaulting, threatening or intimidating a member or an officer of the House acting in the discharge of the members' or the officer's duty.

The member also argued that such a threat was intended to:

- interfere with the performance of her parliamentary duties in the Legislative Assembly by trying to limit her ability to scrutinise the government,
- try and limit, curb or silence her contributions and language regarding industrial relations matters, due to the current Commission of Inquiry into the CFMEU and Misconduct in the Construction Industry, and
- be a potential personal or actual physical threat, regarding getting her.

She submitted this was part of repeated behaviour intended to intimidate her with respect to potential future appearances at the aforementioned Commission of Inquiry.

I sought further information from the Deputy Premier about the allegation that has been made against her, in accordance with Standing Order 269(5).

The Deputy Premier stated that he completely and utterly rejected the claim. He argues that it has long been established that comments such as 'I will get to the member' or words to that effect are with respect to a member about to speak about another member, rather than a threat.

The Deputy Premier also provided two examples where the member herself had used similar language in the House. On 25 October 2023, she said to the member for Mermaid Beach 'I will get to the Member for Mermaid Beach; it is coming'. And on 22 November 2019, she said 'Wait until I get to you, Member for Kawana'.

Standing Order 269(4) requires that in considering whether such a matter should be referred to the Ethics Committee, that I should take account of the degree of importance of the matter which has been raised and whether an adequate apology or explanation has been made in respect of the matter.

The member for McConnel submitted this behaviour is an example of a contempt in accordance with SO 266(9) and bases this submission on Ethics Committee Report No. 71 and proposed three elements to address the contempt:

1. Did the alleged threat occur?
2. Did the threat constitute an improper interference with the free performance by a member of the member's duties as a member?
3. Was this the intention of the person accused of committing the contempt?

However, the most recent precedent to deal with an alleged threat to a member is Ethics Committee Report No. 189. Report No. 189 considered that a threat could constitute a contempt via three different pathways:

- SO 266(9): *Assaulting, threatening or intimidating a member or an officer of the House acting in the discharge of the members' or the officer's duty.*
- SO 266(17): *assaulting, threatening or intimidating a member on account of the member's conduct in the House or a committee.*
- Parliament of Queensland Act, section 37 (example 3): *sending a threat to a member because of the member's performance of his or her parliamentary duties.*

Applying those provisions to the current matter, I determined that the elements to assess the allegations against were:

1. The conduct in question amounted to a threat or intimidation
2. The threat or intimidation was:
 - a. On account of a member's conduct in the House (SO 266(9))
 - b. To a member acting in the discharge of the member's duties (SO266(17))
 - c. Because of the member's performance of her parliamentary duties (POQA s 37, example 3)
3. The conduct amounted to, or was intended or likely to amount to, an improper interference with the free performance of the members' duties as a member.

While the Deputy Premier provided examples of the member for McConnel using similar language in the House previously, there is a difference between saying 'I will get to you' and 'I will get you'. The latter is more threatening in nature.

However as noted above, to amount to a contempt of Parliament any threat must also have amounted to, or was intended or likely to amount to, an improper interference in the free performance of the members' duties as a member. I made a preliminary assessment of this element to determine whether there was an adequate explanation and whether if there was a threat, it would be one that would justify referral to the Ethics Committee.

The member for McConnel and the Deputy Premier both discharge their duties in the House robustly. There is no power imbalance as they both sit on their respective front benches and are both experienced and long-term members of this Parliament. It is difficult to see how those words alone from the Deputy Premier would in any way prevent the member for McConnel from carrying out her duties as a member of this Parliament; or that it was intended to do so.

Indeed, the member for McConnel's submission was that it was intended to interfere with her ability to prepare herself for requests to give evidence to the Commission of Inquiry.

I find this is a largely irrelevant argument because first, it relates to her duties as a former minister in the executive government rather than a member of Parliament, and second it is unrelated to the words used by the Deputy Premier that she has alleged were a threat.

Finally, the Deputy Premier has explained that the words used were used to show an intention that the Deputy Premier was about to speak about the member for McConnel, rather than being intended as a threat to her personally. I do note that similar language is regularly used in the House.

Based on the above, I consider the Deputy Premier has made an adequate explanation and I **will not** be referring the matter for the further consideration of the House via the Ethics Committee.

While some behaviour may not reach the threshold for a contempt of parliament, this does not mean it is acceptable. It is unacceptable for members to be quarrelling across the chamber. It is also clearly unparliamentary for a member to gesticulate towards another member while saying 'I'm going after you.'

Finally, I urge senior members of this House to be more temperate in the way they address each other, for the dignity of the House and the example it sets for other members and the public. We are leaders and role models, and we must act that way. There is no place in this House, or in wider society, for disrespect to another person.

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 17 February 2026 the member for Stretton wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services deliberately misled the House on 12 January 2026 in his response to question on notice No. 1570 of 2025. As per my statement in the House on 11 February 2026, it appears to me that the member is simply wishing to appeal the answer to the question on notice through a matter of privilege. I made it clear to all members then—and I reiterate now—that I will not allow the process of matters of privilege to be a de facto appeal process against answers. Therefore, I will not be referring the matter for the further consideration of the House via the Ethics Committee. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

Tabled paper: Correspondence relating to an alleged contempt and misleading of the House by the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and member for Clayfield [\[280\]](#).

SPEAKER'S RULING

Question Out of Order

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, yesterday during question time I ruled out of order a question by the member for Maiwar. I have decided to give full reasons for my ruling, which I have circulated. I seek leave to incorporate those reasons in the *Record of Proceedings*.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT—REASONS FOR RULING

Yesterday, during question time, I ruled out of order a question by the member for Maiwar.

I have decided to give full reasons for my ruling.

The member's question was:

"My question today is to the Premier. The UN Human Rights Council has concluded that a genocide is occurring in Gaza and the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and former defence minister Yoav Gallant. Does the Premier accept that it is possible to criticise the State of Israel and its actions without being anti-Semitic?"

Initially my focus was on whether the question could be described as public affairs with which the Premier is officially connected or to any matter of administration for which the Premier is responsible. This is a requirement under standing order 113(1)(a). Given the wide remit of the Premier's responsibility, I was inclined to allow the question although conscious of the rule of anticipation given legislation being debated in the House.

However, the Leader of the House then rose to a point of order, asking whether the elements of the question were seeking an opinion and also querying the jurisdictional responsibility.

After taking further advice, I came to the view that the question was either seeking an opinion and/or was a hypothetical question and prohibited by standing order 115(b)(v) or 115(c)(i). It was seeking an answer based on belief or supposition. Questions should be based on factual matters, policy, not speculative situations or scenarios. (see rulings such as: Fouras (AS) 10/05/2005 PD p 1180; Fouras (AS) 25/05/2005 PD p 1630; Reynolds (S) 06/02/2007 PD p 27; Pitt (S) 29/11/2022 p 3620).

This was not a case where the member was asking the government's actions in assessing risk or preparing policy (see Pitt (S) 23/02/2023 pp 230-231).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Visitors to Public Gallery

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Fig Tree Pocket State School in the electorate of Maiwar, Mount Nebo State School in the electorate of Pine Rivers and the OneSchool Global Maryborough campus in the electorate of Maryborough.

TABLED PAPER

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

MEMBER'S PAPER

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

Member for Murrumba (Hon. Miles)—

[277](#) Public Report of Office Expenses for the Office of the Leader of the Opposition for the period 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2025

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Weather Events, Recovery

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Premier and Minister for Veterans) (9.36 am): We are continuing to closely monitor severe weather across the state. Widespread and damaging flooding has already caused stock losses and damage to infrastructure in many parts of Queensland. More heavy rainfall in already saturated catchments over the next few days will certainly test local communities again. In the south-west of our state floodwaters are already over critical bridge connections in towns

like Bedourie and Glengyle. Major flooding is expected in Windorah and Jundah in the coming days where the Thomson River and Cooper Creek are still rising. There is a lot of water still to come through that catchment, and that shows how large it is. Preparations by our emergency services are well underway and we are ensuring resources are pre-positioned to—

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry, Premier, but there is way too much chatter. If you want to have a conversation, take it outside.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Preparations by emergency services are well underway and we are ensuring resources are pre-positioned to support where necessary. Local councils, police, Fire and Rescue, SES volunteers and emergency services personnel right across the board are ready.

Queenslanders are resilient and we back each other in difficult times. Isolation because of flooded roads remains our No. 1 priority and will take up a lot of attention in the coming days. Whether that is the Bruce Highway and its major underinvestment over many decades or whether it is regional communities in Western Queensland that rely so heavily on road, they are at risk of being cut off from critical supplies. We have done the preparation to have emergency services in place for things like goods and services, and we will get them there. Whether that is by road, whether that is by air or whether that is by boat, we will not allow Queenslanders to not get assistance in their hour of need.

Resources Industries

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Premier and Minister for Veterans) (9.38 am): Our government wants the world to know that Queensland is open for business. Resources are the backbone of many regional communities, providing jobs and skills and vital resources for this state. We want to see the industry strengthened for the next generation with more investment and more opportunity. It is why we are committed to providing investment certainty. That means approvals being given in a timely fashion. If the answer is yes, it has to be clear and quick. If the answer is no, it has to be direct and you have to give reasons for it. It is already paying off. We secured major investment in Queensland coal from Fitzroy Australia that is delivering a thousand jobs, new investment from Eva Copper will open up more jobs for the mighty north-west of the state and we have worked with other levels of government to secure the future of the Mount Isa copper smelter.

Last year we opened a package of exploration areas for tender—a critical step in unlocking future energy supplies. This includes three new gas exploration areas near the Queensland-South Australia border, as well as a 750-kilometre exploration tenement in the Taroom Trough. It presents the potential to open up Australia's first new oil province since the 1970s. We are protecting regional employment, growing the economy and continuing to get projects to market.

In Queensland we are sitting on a treasure trove of critical minerals. During a speech at the National Press Club I was able to reveal to the country that Queensland is home to 51 of the world's most sought after critical minerals. In the coming weeks I will lead a trade delegation to the United States to ensure we capitalise on the next generation opportunity. We want to see the federal government come to help us expand critical mineral processing in Mackay and increase production in key locations following the historic deal that has been struck between Prime Minister Albanese and President Trump. Investment in the common user facility outside Townsville and funding support for the Mount Isa to Townsville rail line can open up untapped opportunities and get product to market faster. Mr Speaker, the member for Cairns, who is not engaged at the moment—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, just stop for a moment. I asked for less chatter in the chamber. I can see three or four members outside their seat engaging in conversation. Take it outside; otherwise, I will start warning you.

Mr CRISAFULLI: One of the projects is north-west of Cairns.

Mr Healy interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Take it outside, member for Cairns, if you want to have a conversation.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is about being the local member for Cairns; he will have more time for that soon.

Our government will push hard to secure critical minerals investment from the United States of America. Queensland is open for business and we are not going to wait for it to come to us. We are banging down doors across the globe, and if you are ready to invest in Queensland we are ready for you.

Ms Farmer interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bulimba, you are warned. I have three times this morning said, 'Take your conversations outside,' so you are warned.

Resources Industries

 **Hon. DR LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development) (9.41 am): Mr Speaker, I do not know about you but I am not all that keen on paying \$3 a litre when I fill up my car. That is one of the reasons why today I am opening competitive tenders for 18 new resource exploration areas right across our great state. These include 12 petroleum and gas areas totalling more than 7,000 square kilometres in the Bowen-Surat and Cooper-Eromanga basins. Four of the petroleum and gas areas will be released subject to an Australian market supply condition, ensuring any gas produced from those tenures is supplied to the domestic market.

The Crisafulli government is delivering certainty for the resources sector and a plan for Queensland's energy future by unlocking more areas for exploration. This is how we drive energy prices down for Queenslanders—by unlocking more of these areas and mandating their use for domestic consumers. It is the second time the Crisafulli government has released land in the gas- and oil-rich Cooper Basin after Labor effectively locked up the area during their decade of decline. It follows our announcement last month about securing investment in the Taroom Trough near Miles that could pave the way for Australia's first major new oil province since the 1970s—as mentioned by the Premier—with serious potential to revive a domestic oil production industry.

We are also releasing four coal areas in the Bowen-Surat basins. That is right: we are backing our coal sector and driving further investment because we know that our key trading partners in places like South Korea and Japan want more of our Queensland coal. You may have heard about the so-called 'big Australia' not being interested in Queensland. Well, we are interested in creating a great Australia. Make no mistake, we will throw our support behind those companies that want to invest here in Queensland.

Today I am also releasing two areas north-east of Julia Creek, an area which contains one of the largest known vanadium resources in the world. These areas are particularly exciting because Queensland is on the cusp of a critical minerals boom. We have the resources below the ground and we are giving companies the confidence to do business here.

Exploration is where every major project begins, and without it there is no pipeline of future supply. Today's tender process is part of a broader plan to ensure Queensland continues building its pipeline of petroleum, gas, coal and mineral projects, delivering long-term energy security and economic growth. We have recently appointed preferred tenderers to explore for petroleum and gas in the Cooper-Eromanga basins and the Taroom Trough, with the potential to bring more than \$100 million of new exploration activity into the state and, importantly, into regional Queensland.

Queensland is open for business, and the resource industry is responding to that call. Under our government we are restoring confidence, and investor sentiment has shot up the charts—from a dismal 37 world ranking under those opposite to 13 in just 12 months. We are positioning ourselves at the forefront of resource investment in this country. We do that by giving industry certainty around exploration, certainty around regulation and certainty about the approvals process. The current turmoil in the Middle East underscores the importance of driving domestic investment to develop our energy commodities and natural resources. The industry now has a government working in lock step with them to unlock supply, drive down energy prices and create thousands of jobs for Queenslanders, and today's tender process is just the beginning.

Defence Industries

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.45 am): The Crisafulli LNP government is securing Queensland's sovereign manufacturing capabilities through our significant investments in the defence industry. Queenslanders recognise the geopolitical tensions that are escalating and that in some cases are bubbling over around the world, including in our region of the Indo-Pacific. This House would be well aware of Queensland's significant geostrategic location, being Australia's gateway into the Pacific, as well as the strong defence personnel and veteran population based in Queensland.

This government has been unafraid to make clear that defence investment is a significant priority of the Crisafulli government. The former Labor government had a scattergun approach when it came to driving investment in state development, with no clear directional vision for the future of the Queensland economy and 11 priority areas which failed to make a dent. This House knows that upon coming to government we have refocused my department and reprioritised our efforts into industries where Queensland has a competitive advantage—biomedical, biofuels and defence.

While Labor were not only embarrassed to highlight the significance of our local defence sector but also susceptible to chasing fantasy industries, this government has its priorities in order. I was pleased to speak recently at the Australian Defence Magazine ADM Congress in Canberra to highlight to defence primes, SMEs and Department of Defence representatives that Queensland sees the opportunity for investment in this state. Assets such as the Cairncross Dockyard, a \$2.5 billion dry dock facility along the Brisbane River, which this government declared a prescribed project, have the opportunity to deliver thousands of jobs and significantly bolster our maritime maintenance capabilities. This government will never talk down our defence industry.

I was also pleased to meet with both the Chief of Defence and the Chief of Army to reaffirm Queensland's significant interest in getting more investment from the Department of Defence and the Commonwealth. The catalyst of our commitment to building our defence manufacturing capabilities is the landmark \$180.6 million Sovereign Industry Development Fund. The SIDF has been designed to attract private sector investment in our key priority industries, including defence, and to assist in the construction of catalytic infrastructure to secure our sovereign manufacturing capabilities and build on the capabilities that we already have.

I can advise the House today that there has been overwhelming interest from industry in the Sovereign Industry Development Fund, with my department advising that more than 250 applications have been submitted, amounting to over \$1.8 billion in funding sought through the Sovereign Industry Development Fund. There is not enough at the moment to go around—that is the problem—because there are so many great projects.

Mr O'Connor: Come on, Treasurer!

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the housing minister. It is clear that our message to industry and the private sector that we are actively seeking opportunities to collaborate in the national interest is being heard far and wide. Industry knows that when we say 'Queensland is open for business' we mean it, and the overwhelming success of the SIDF reinforces this government's priorities are aligned with securing our economic prosperity and security, particularly in a destabilised geopolitical environment around the world.

On that note, I am significantly concerned by reports that some people in Queensland have memorialised the death of the Iranian Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and claimed that he is a martyr. Queenslanders are safer now that he is dead. In response to these deeply troubling reports the Premier of New South Wales said it best, stating—

I think it's atrocious to use an opportunity to commemorate or memorialise an evil person. It says a lot about those people conducting the memorials.

The Queensland government condemns the terrible atrocities committed by the Iranian regime against their own citizens as well as sponsoring terrorism around the world. The world is safer now that the regime has been brought to its knees and we stand firm in our support of the Iranian people's resistance to this theocratic dictatorship.

Jewish Australians have suffered terribly over a number of years now following 7 October, with years of anti-Semitic attacks, some sponsored by the Iranian regime, and culminating in 15 innocent people brutally murdered at Bondi last year. That is why it is so important this House takes strong action against anti-Semitism by passing the laws that are before it and calling it out. Everybody should call out anti-Semitic behaviour. We, the LNP Crisafulli government, will do whatever is necessary to protect Jewish Queenslanders because they matter to us.

Skills and Training

 **Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training) (9.50 am): The Crisafulli LNP government is delivering a better lifestyle through a stronger economy by helping Queenslanders into secure, well-paying jobs which build the houses, support the health services and deliver the community care that our great state needs now and into the future. My top priority in employment and training is to help more Queenslanders into these jobs by ensuring the

programs and the services we deliver are targeted, matched to current and forecast job shortages and fit for purpose. We are investing in the vocational training educators, the best-in-class facilities and the qualifications Queenslanders need. Unlike those opposite, who neglected TAFE and created the current dire skills shortage during their decline, the Crisafulli LNP government is ensuring Queenslanders can gain the qualifications they need.

The benefit of our investment shines brightest at this time of the year—graduation season—with over 1,500 graduates from Cairns to Ipswich, Toowoomba to Brisbane. Last week I attended TAFE Queensland's South Bank ceremony to celebrate graduating students and recognise their outstanding achievements. I was particularly moved by the valedictory speech given by Elmi, who graduated from a Certificate IV in Justice Studies. Elmi shared her incredible story about how, at the lowest point in her life following a personal tragedy, she discovered vocational training. She said she chose justice studies because she wanted to right the wrongs others had endured and to help others who, like her, had lost hope. That is the power of vocational training. It provides a direct pathway from training to employment. Employers are consistently telling me that job readiness is what they need, which is exactly what we are delivering.

In 2025 the Crisafulli LNP government saw more than 120,000 students choose to train with TAFE Queensland. They are choosing the hands-on learning and transferable skills that will equip them for secure, well-paid and critical jobs which will deliver them a better lifestyle. These results show that, yet again, and despite the ongoing efforts of the member for Cairns, the scare campaign is over. We are delivering for TAFE after a decade of decline under those opposite. We will continue to deliver the skills and the training that Queenslanders need.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I made a comment not long ago about quarrelling in the chamber.

Ms BATES: It was the Crisafulli LNP government that saved 336 FTE TAFE staff who would have been out of a job under those opposite. It was the Crisafulli LNP government that saved the regional jobs committees. It was the Crisafulli LNP government that saved the Back to Work program. It is the Crisafulli LNP government that continues to boost Skilling Queenslanders for Work, and it is the Crisafulli LNP government that funded 2,000 new free TAFE diplomas of nursing. It is the Crisafulli LNP government that is delivering \$201.1 million worth of funding for four new TAFE centres of excellence—at Rockhampton, at Moreton Bay, at Caloundra and the marine centre of excellence in the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. It is clear that under the Crisafulli LNP government TAFE, the vocational education system and Queensland as a whole have a much better future.

E-Mobility Safety; Public Transport

 **Hon. BA MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.54 am): Yesterday the chair of the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee, the member for Lockyer, handed down the committee's report into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland. As members are aware, the report recommends giving police the powers they need, amending age limitations and ensuring there are consequences for actions when it comes to those who do the wrong thing. It is regrettable that these measures were not addressed during the decade of decline under Labor—another example of a government that was not interested in keeping people safe and was ignorant of serious issues.

Mr Crisafulli: They are not listening now.

Mr MICKELBERG: I take the interjection of the Premier; they are not listening now.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Morayfield, will you resume your seat. Conversations can cease. You have plenty of time to have them outside. You have been on your feet for 15 minutes. One person should be speaking in this chamber and that is the minister.

Mr MICKELBERG: The Crisafulli government will take strong action to deliver nation-leading change, but it is important that we do not forget the reasons we are in this situation. The failure to take action is one thing, but exacerbating the problem through the former government's botched e-mobility rebate scheme is taking things to a whole new level. Today I can reveal that in amongst the devices that received a rebate under Labor's botched scheme is the Rovo Triscoot. I table a description from Harvey Norman's website, where they are for sale.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 5 March 2026, from Harvey Norman website depicting children's electric scooter [\[281\]](#).

The Rovo Triscoot is recommended for kids aged three to eight years of age. To be clear, in Queensland the minimum age to ride an e-scooter under the current laws—Labor’s laws—is 12 years old when supervised. The committee has recognised the risks of riding even at that age and have recommended a minimum age of 16 years old—twice the age recommended for the scooter that Labor gave a rebate for under their botched scheme.

Some of the other greatest hits under Labor’s botched rebate scheme included e-scooters that had a top speed of 70 kilometres an hour and e-bikes that could have the speed restrictions removed with the touch of a button on a screen. They gave rebates for those devices knowing there was a problem. That is Labor’s record. Make no mistake, Labor put people’s lives at risk. It was reckless and it did not respect taxpayers’ money. By contrast, the Crisafulli government will make our roads and our footpaths safer. We will consider the committee’s report in detail and we will deliver the nation-leading reforms that Queenslanders are calling for.

I am pleased to share with the House that under the LNP’s permanent 50-cent fares—a great LNP initiative—Queenslanders have now taken over 216 million trips and saved \$462 million through to the end of February 2026 compared to the previous fare structure, where Queenslanders paid more for public transport under Labor. That is what delivery looks like. We are getting on with the job.

Primary Industries

 **Hon. AJ PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (9.57 am): I call on the federal government to come to the table and work with our state and local communities to deal with illegal fishing vessels in the Torres Strait. This is not just a sovereignty issue. I am deeply concerned about the risks these illegal fishing vessels pose to our precious biosecurity, fish stocks and the local cultural and natural environment. It is serious.

Last week I travelled to Thursday Island, at the invitation of Mayor Phillemon Mosby of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, along with the hardworking member for Cook, David Kempton. The people of the Torres Strait are rightly concerned about illegal fishing vessels. Let me be very clear: I do not accept weak border controls. I do not accept the increased threat these vessels pose to community safety, biosecurity, the local environment and fish stocks. I convened a meeting which also involved Torres Shire Council Mayor Elsie Seriat OAM, Torres Strait Regional Authority chair George Nona, GBK Sea and Land Council chair Ned David and representatives from the Defence Force and QPS. In the meeting I was told numerous times by the locals that the Torres Strait is ‘the weakest border in the country’. It is deeply concerning. The Torres Strait is a high-risk pathway for risks. More needs to be done.

The state government stands ready to assist but, as we know, border security is a Commonwealth responsibility. They need to do everything possible to ensure the integrity of our borders. The locals want buy-in. They said they are ‘confused’ by the current approach. They feel they are not being heard. They feel the federal government is not listening and is not consulting. It is a mess. Locals do not want the same messy fly-in fly-out approach they have had from the Commonwealth. They do not want more confusion. They do not want to see more money wasted on so-called solutions that do not fix the problem.

I have raised this matter before with the federal minister, Tony Burke. Disappointingly, he has not even given me the courtesy of a response. I have now written to the assistant minister, Julian Hill, whom I met on Thursday Island on Friday. We cannot delay action. Through the leadership of the local member for Cook we will continue to make sure this important community is represented, and we hope the federal government comes to the party to lead a response that works. This is our doorstep. I urge the federal government to undertake meaningful consultation and to provide a local presence.

The risk these vessels pose to biosecurity and border protection cannot be overstated; nor should it be underestimated. The Crisafulli government is strongly committed to ensuring we have robust biosecurity measures. Biosecurity is the linchpin on which our primary industries rely. We must be vigilant and do everything possible to prevent and reduce risks.

Last week I also visited Julia Creek, Normanton and Cooktown to follow up on how the recovery is going following the floods and to be briefed on significant concerns those communities have about biosecurity issues. It was my third visit to Julia Creek this year. In Julia Creek I met with Mayor Janene Fegan, local vets and graziers, including those involved in the fodder drops. In Normanton I met with Mayor Jack Bawden and graziers. While in Cooktown I met with Mayor Robyn Holmes and the Operations Manager and Secretary of Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals, Trevor Meldrum.

During the decade of decline, communities across the cape, the north and the north-west as well as the primary industries that many of them rely on were ignored by the former Labor government. It treated them with disdain and contempt. They were out of sight, out of mind. The Crisafulli government values their importance to this state. They are not forgotten. The Crisafulli government has their backs.

Local Government, Weather Information

 **Hon. A LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers) (10.01 am): I rise to deliver good news to the House. Enviromon is not a luxury. It gives local councils access to life-saving weather information that keeps communities safe during floods, cyclones and other natural disasters. In its wisdom, the federal Labor government decided that this was a cost best shifted onto councils. That would have meant more than \$10 million of spending pushed onto our already stretched councils. Our councils should never be forced to choose between life-saving information and fixing potholes, between disaster preparedness and keeping the lights on at the local library.

For months we have advocated for the Commonwealth to reverse this decision. We said clearly that this is not a line item; it is public safety. Last week the federal government walked back their decision. They say they will now continue providing this service to councils at next to no cost. This is a win for Queenslanders, for councils and for common sense. However, there is something curious about this whole affair.

Across the chamber sit a number of members of parliament who did not make a squeak—not one call to Canberra, not one public statement, not one word—defending Queensland's front line during natural disasters. The member for Murrumba, a former local government minister, was silent. From the member for Pine Rivers, the shadow local government minister, we heard crickets. From the member for Cairns, which is one of our most disaster-prone councils, we heard not a word. He was too busy trolling Jews on Facebook. Did anyone opposite pick up a phone to defend Queensland councils?

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

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, the member has taken personal offence and I ask you to withdraw. I also ask you to remember the protocol around ministerial statements.

Ms LEAHY: I withdraw. Did anyone pick up a phone to defend Queensland councils? No, I do not think so. It is disappointing that those opposite refuse to back Queensland when it matters. There are two types of people in this world: those who back Queenslanders and Labor Party MPs.

Women's Week

 **Hon. FS SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (Minister for Women and Women's Economic Security, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Multiculturalism) (10.04 am): Almost 100 years ago, 24 years after women won the right to vote for these seats, the first woman was elected to this parliament. Irene Longman and those who voted for her were shaping tomorrow together. Back then, many of the opportunities we now enjoy were still out of reach of women. Women in Australia could not open a bank account without a man, never mind getting a mortgage or a loan. Those rights were fought for and won by people who were serving others with passion and purpose to elevate women to overcome the barriers to equal opportunity. They were shaping tomorrow together.

One of those who fought to elevate women was Queensland Merle Thornton, who in the 1960s helped end the bar that banned married women from the Public Service. The Crisafulli government is delivering on our promise to erect a statue to that incredible Queensland woman. She acted, and others joined her to remove barriers that unfairly blocked women's access to opportunity. They were shaping tomorrow together. Recently I sat with some incredible Indigenous women who said it beautifully: 'We are living the life our ancestors never thought was possible.' Their input was part of this government's commitment to listen to women across our state about what economic opportunity means to them.

Sunday is International Women's Day and the beginning of Queensland Women's Week with the theme of 'Shaping tomorrow together'. We have come so far, but our work is not done. It requires partnerships between government, business, community and individuals. That is why we are working to ensure women in Queensland have more opportunities than ever. This will shape a better tomorrow.

We in the Crisafulli government are investing in women in ways that Labor never did. We know that women carry an enormous share of vital and valuable unpaid care work for children or elderly parents. We see that value. If and when those women are ready to return to paid work, we want to back

them to do that. That is why I am working to ensure our Women's Career Grants are helping women who want to get back into the workforce with support for practical things like recertification, new work clothes or a laptop to apply for jobs. That is practical and commonsense support that delivers real opportunity right across Queensland. Labor gets caught up in ideology and division, but Labor's division does not deliver. The Crisafulli government is delivering more opportunities for women.

The progress of the past 100 years did not happen by accident. It happened because people chose to work together. This Queensland Women's Week, we will continue to shape tomorrow together.

Children, Out-of-Home Care

 **Hon. AJ CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.07 am): Today I rise to update the House on the Crisafulli government's reforms. We are well underway in undertaking reform of the Child Safety out-of-home-care system with a sharp focus on residential care following its growth as a billion dollar industry as a result of Labor's decade of decline. The over-reliance on residential care became the norm under the former government, with thousands of Queensland's most vulnerable children calling those places home. It is one of the significant issues that drove the Crisafulli government to call for a commission of inquiry into the broken child safety system, which has received over 960 submissions.

It took a decade for this system to grow into what it is today and it is going to take time to reform, but we are committed to reform and to those children. It will take a whole-of-sector and community approach to turn it around. The Crisafulli government will update the sector next week in a forum that I am hosting that will include peak bodies, along with the Queensland Family and Child Commission and a raft of providers and stakeholders who have a vested interest in getting the best outcome for our most vulnerable children.

Our government is well progressed with reforms in the out-of-home care system. We are reforming the residential care system to ensure young people with complex needs and disabilities are living in environments that not only are therapeutic in nature but also maximise disability support that will underpin opportunities for them to succeed. We have already transitioned a number of residential care providers who provide placements for hundreds of Queensland kids from the expensive individual placement service model to an outsourced service delivery model which we expect to save millions of taxpayers' dollars in the coming years whilst also providing better opportunities for our children. We are on track to deliver the Crisafulli government's SecureCare facility, which is about protecting young people and the community after those opposite failed to, after the Carmody inquiry.

Our professional foster care pilot will be operational in the coming months, taking children out of residential care and placing them in loving family homes. We are returning respect to foster and kinship carers and enhancing support and valuing them, because it is our belief that family-based care is the best care for our children.

I want to take the opportunity to thank our current foster and kinship care families we have across this state for opening their homes and their hearts to vulnerable kids. From the member for Glass House, I want to give a shout-out to Mr Phillip and Mrs Diane Wilson who have been foster carers for 44 years, which is an amazing achievement and service to our community.

Mr Powell: Over 200 children.

Ms CAMM: Over 200 children—I take that interjection. They have left a lasting imprint on those children and their lives.

Last month I hosted Queensland's first adoption round table with key stakeholders, including people with lived experience, advocacy groups from across the state and service providers. At this forum, I heard about the challenges and opportunities for adoption, permanency and stability for children in our state. I want to thank those who came to the round table for sharing their experiences and their honest and frank feedback based upon lived experience; on adoption practices past and present; and also on new models that exist right across the globe. The Crisafulli government will take on board these insights as we progress with further reform of the Child Protection Act and the Adoption Act with an aim to ensure children who are currently placed in long-term care arrangements in the system have an opportunity for stability in a loving home.

We have made it clear that more needs to be done to protect children who come into the care of the state as we, for many of them, are their only parent. The Crisafulli government is on track to deliver this reform and will ensure the best possible outcomes for our most vulnerable children, who deserve every opportunity to thrive.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Question time today will conclude at 11.12 am.

Victims of Crime, Data Reporting

 **Mr MILES** (10.12 am): My question is to the Minister for Police. On 3 October 2024 the now Premier said there would be no changes to how domestic violence victims were reported. The minister has now confirmed that on 28 April the way domestic violence victims were recorded changed. Why did the minister break the Premier's promise?

Mr PURDIE: I am not sure if the member was here on Tuesday or during the debate yesterday afternoon or if he was not listening—and I know he has checked out in that seat and is only keeping the seat warm—but this was their legislation. I am happy to unpack their legislation—from 2015, actually. Let's talk about victim numbers and let's talk about their legislation because they obviously did not understand their legislation and the dire consequences it would have in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 when they came in here and proudly watered down the laws which led to 289,000 victims of crime in Queensland. The *Courier-Mail*, in mid-2024, announced that officially Queensland was the crime capital of Australia. These questions that they have been asking all week relate to their legislation—the Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024.

I tried to explain that to them. I even spoke about needing a prop—butter's paper and crayons—to explain it, but they do not understand. I do not know at what point they stop asking the same question over and over again. I am happy to explain their legislation to them.

I know they will be talking about an audit and a deep dive into victim numbers in Queensland, so that prompted me late last night to start having a look at that. Why did victim numbers explode under those opposite? We all know—it is an undeniable truth—that Labor watered down the laws which created the youth crime crisis in Queensland and, as reported, thanks to the *Courier-Mail* in mid-2024, that officially Queensland was the crime capital of Australia. Was there more to that? I dusted off my detective skills—

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. The question was specifically around domestic violence statistics. I ask you to bring him back to a relevant answer.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you have one minute left, but the question was around DV reporting and any changes in that reporting method.

Mr PURDIE: I am happy to get to that because victims of crime went up 198 per cent, but DV victims went up 219 per cent under those opposite. I am happy to get to that because I have numbers for all their electorates. I dusted off my detective skills late last night and I found my magnifying glass in a box and I started, in a bit more detail, doing an audit, doing a deep dive, into victim numbers in—

Mrs Frecklington: You only have 20 seconds left.

Mr PURDIE: Well, I am happy for this to be continued because I did some work on it. I took the magnifying glass out. As I said, we all know that Labor generally created the youth crime crisis, but was there someone in particular who was the catalyst for that? You might have to stay tuned!

(Time expired)

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: We are going to have silence.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Logan, you are warned. I just called the House to order.

Victims of Crime, Data Reporting

Mr BUTCHER: My question is to the Minister for Police. When did the minister become aware of the change to the recording of some domestic violence victims as per the 28 April 2025 change?

Mr PURDIE: I am getting to that because in my audit of the legislation—their legislation; all their legislation from 2015 to 2024 that they are now asking me to explain—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister has just risen to his feet. He has just begun. If you want to hear the response, the minister has the call. Minister, you heard the question.

Mr PURDIE: Getting back to explaining to those opposite their legislation, I did a deeper dive, a forensic analysis, with my trusty old magnifying glass and went back through *Hansard* to try to work out why not only victims of crime rates went up 189 per cent but also domestic violence rates in Queensland rose by about 219 per cent. How did we get to a point in Queensland where we became officially the crime capital of Australia? I went back through *Hansard* to look. Has anyone come up with a guess as to who they think the individual—

A government member: Jackie Trad.

Mr PURDIE: Was it Jackie Trad? That is a good suggestion.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, come to the question, please.

Mr PURDIE: Mr Speaker, I am getting to it. They have asked me to explain their legislation—

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask the Deputy Premier to stop leering across the chamber. I am not interested in what his comments are.

Mr SPEAKER: Do you have a point of order?

Mr de BRENNI: I do, Mr Speaker. The point of order is on relevance. We did not ask the minister to explain anything other than when he knew about the change.

Mr SPEAKER: Your point of order is on relevance. You would have heard me ask the minister to come to the question. You would have heard me say that before you rose to your feet. There is that much noise over here you would not know what was being said. If you have an interest in the answer, listen to it or else I am going to start warning people in bulk. Minister, you have heard the question. It goes to DV reporting.

Mr PURDIE: Specifically on that question, I have been trying to find the exact date they passed the Queensland Community Safety Bill in 2024. It was in that bill they made the change. I answered that question on multiple occasions on Tuesday, and those opposite obviously were not listening.

Ms Fentiman interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Waterford, you are warned.

Mr PURDIE: What I have done, and what they have been asking me to do, is a deep dive and a forensic analysis of victims of crime in Queensland—how we record them and how we got to the point where in 2024 Queensland officially became the crime capital of Australia. I went back through all of the legislative amendments and there was one person, prouder than most, who kept coming up in 2015, 2016 and 2017 watering down the youth justice laws. Does anyone know who it was? It was the member for Waterford! As I said, the person opposite—

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. You drew the minister back to relevance. My point of order is, again, on relevance. The question asked when he knew about the change.

Mr SPEAKER: I have been listening to the minister. He was talking about amendments to that, as I understood it, so he was being relevant. It might not exactly be the answer you are after, but he was being relevant talking about changes to the law, as I understand it. Minister, you have 26 seconds left.

Mr PURDIE: The answer is that I have been trying to find it. Mr Laurie might be able to help. The date—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for McConnel, you are warned.

Mr PURDIE: Was the date of Labor's Community Safety Bill August or September 2024? That was when I was tabling amendments for tougher gun laws to crack down on criminals with guns, to crack down on drive-by shootings and to increase the penalty for stolen guns. It was 22 August 2024.

(Time expired)

Community Safety

Ms DOOLEY: My question is to the Premier and Minister for Veterans. How is the Crisafulli LNP government leading the way on community safety, and is the Premier aware of any approaches that abandoned community safety during a decade of decline?

Mr CRISAFULLI: We are leading the way by taking action and calling out bad behaviour when we see it. After all the shambolic scenes we saw from those opposite during ministerial statements—people coming and going, factional meetings being held out the back—I was very hopeful that the member for Cairns might be put on the backbench as a consequence for his actions, which the member for Redcliffe asked about. Alas, no. The Leader of the Opposition is sitting there, refusing to act.

On Tuesday he said that those disgraceful comments—multiple of them across multiple platforms—were a distraction and theatrics. I did not think it could get any worse or more disgraceful for the Jewish community than to have a leader of a mainstream political party refuse to take action. Alas, yesterday it went to the next level. The Leader of the Opposition now says that those comments and a cartoon depicting bloodshed and the media turning a blind eye were not anti-Semitic. He has turned his back on the Jewish community. How on earth could that be? It was not a cartoon about Israel; it was a cartoon of a Jewish baby wearing a Jewish star and it alleged that the media were part of some sort of conspiracy. He has not held the member for Cairns accountable.

The Leader of the Opposition and I might come from different political movements but I would take action if I were him, and I believe that good Labor people would as well. This Leader of the Opposition is so hard left and under so much pressure that he will not take action against the member for Cairns, who has displayed anti-Semitic traits at the worst possible time—at a time when this state needs leadership from those—

Mr HEALY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence and I ask that the member withdraw.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I withdraw. How can those comments and that cartoon not be anti-Semitic, as the Leader of the Opposition says, when the Jewish community say they are? The Jewish community have said they are anti-Semitic but the Leader of the Opposition says they are wrong. The Jewish Board of Deputies stood up and demanded action. He is so weak he will not hold the member for Cairns accountable.

Here is the bad part: I am not sure if the Leader of the Opposition is being dishonest or just trying to cover up when he says that. I think he believes it. I think he believes in his heart that that is not an anti-Semitic approach.

Mrs Stoker: That's worse!

Mr CRISAFULLI: That is worse. The member for Oodgeroo is spot-on. That is the real issue here. They are so blinded by political ideology that they would refuse to hold someone accountable for the most disgraceful anti-Semitic attack at the worst possible time.

(Time expired)

Victims of Crime, Data Reporting

Mr MILES: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier support an independent Queensland Audit Office review into the reporting of police crime and victim data?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I will start by saying that victims of crime matter to this side of the House, and we will do everything we can every day to implement stronger laws, recruit more police, implement early intervention and help with domestic and family violence to make sure we end up with fewer victims of crime. I want to pick up on something the police minister said quite articulately.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I would not be giggling over domestic and family violence. We are taking action. Every time the Leader of the Opposition is under more pressure, the giggle gets a little more intense—every time. There is a little more giggling every time.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Premier has the call. Make your comments through the chair. Thank you.

Mr CRISAFULLI: If he did a little less giggling and a little more googling, he would see the problem with the member for Cairns and he would hold him accountable.

I am going to pick up on something the police minister said. He was reflecting on changes made by the former government. Here is the bad news for the Leader of the Opposition: every single child who makes a complaint will be recorded. I say that again: every single child who makes a complaint will be recorded. The difference will be the act that it will be investigated under because of the changes made by the Labor Party.

I am going to make a point. Here is a little audit that I have come up with. During Labor's decade of decline, victims of crime were up 193 per cent; car theft was up—

Mr Miles interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I take the interjection. They are the same rules, Leader of the Opposition. There is only one change.

Mr Miles: The Police Commissioner confirmed it.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I will keep taking interjections, and I will say this—

Mr Miles: You're going to keep lying.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask you to withdraw that unparliamentary language, please, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr MILES: I withdraw.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Some people do silly things when under pressure. We are witnessing it here. We saw earlier the coming and going, the back and forth—

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. The question was about the Queensland Audit Office. Will the Premier release—

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Premier is being relevant to the question as asked. It is a frivolous point of order by the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, you are talking about DV reporting.

Mr CRISAFULLI: For 10 years those opposite did not want to talk about victim numbers because they kept on increasing. They increased by 193 per cent. For the first time in a long time changes have been made, early intervention has been embarked on, rehabilitation is a thing and police are joining and staying. The days of denial of Labor's youth crime crisis are over. This is the government taking action.

Workplace Safety

Mrs YOUNG: My question is to the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the Crisafulli LNP government cracking down on poor behaviour in the workplace, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any instances where poor behaviour has been excused during a decade of decline?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member for the question. Yes, we are cracking down on bullying and harassment in the workplace, particularly on construction sites.

Mr J Kelly interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Greenslopes, you are warned.

Mr BLEIJIE: As I said yesterday, we have seen through the CFMEU commission of inquiry the terrible accusations that have been raised and allegations that have been put out there. It is important for all of us collectively as leaders of our communities and as Queensland parliamentarians to act on this type of behaviour and to call it out when we see it, particularly when it is targeting an element of our community—and this is the Jewish community. Whether it is going after the CFMEU or anti-Semites in this House, I am going to do it. We will stand up on behalf of the Jewish community because we owe it to the Jewish community.

This week I have tabled photos from Facebook from the member for Cairns with anti-Semitic posts, claims that 'Israel is a terrorist state' with activated 'cells' within the borders. The Jewish Board of Deputies said—

... Mr Healy has transitioned from political critique to the promotion of the 'dual loyalty' trope. This classic antisemitic slur treats Jewish Australians as a suspicious group ...

It is a horrendous. The member for Cairns has not even apologised, and do you know what? He has not even denied any of the allegations or any of the posts which means that all the Facebook posts and all the sharing was certainly by the member for Cairns. It is atrocious.

I tabled a cartoon yesterday. As the Premier said this morning, there was a baby not in the State of Israel but wearing a Star of David. It was a Jewish baby. It was a post of a cartoon that went around the world and it meant that there was a media conspiracy supporting the Jewish community. I can reveal

today that the member for Cairns is not the first political person to share that post. In fact, a Labour candidate in the UK, Alexandrina Braithwaite, also shared exactly the same cartoon that the member for Cairns did. I table the member for Cairns' post and that of the Labour candidate in the UK—and they are exactly the same.

Tabled paper: Extracts, dated 22 July 2014 and 6 May respectively, from the Facebook pages of Alexandrina Braithwaite, and the member for Cairns, Mr Michael Healy MP, regarding Israel [282].

There is a difference though. When this Labour candidate overseas posted that, she was kicked out of the Labour Party! Not only was she kicked out—you can shake your head, member for Logan: she was. Get this—you will love this one! Guess who kicked her out of the Labour Party? Far-left socialist Jeremy Corbyn! Jeremy Corbyn was kicked out of the Labour Party because he was breeding anti-Semitic views in the Labour Party, so they even kicked him out. Why is it okay for Jeremy Corbyn to kick her out of the Labour Party, yet opposition leader Miles will not kick the member for Cairns out for sharing exactly the same post!

(Time expired)

Energy Queensland, Small Business

Mr McCALLUM: My question is to the Minister for Energy. It is understood that Energy Queensland's efficiency program has seen cuts to after-hours work. How many small businesses have been impacted by power outages during trading hours as a result of this efficiency program?

Mr JANETZKI: I thank the honourable member for the question. I can assure the honourable member that employment is guaranteed and contracts will be honoured. Energy Queensland do an outstanding job. Last year in our first budget on this side of the House we saw a record \$2.74 billion invested into Energy Queensland and the outstanding work they do, because on the side of the House we value our government owned corporations. We value the work that Energy Queensland does, that Powerlink does, that our generators do. It is important work.

I reflect again on the work that Energy Queensland is currently doing right now ahead of the incoming cyclone to the east coast of Queensland—the pre-positioning of assets that is underway, the pre-positioning of workers that is underway, the pre-positioning of effort that is underway that Energy Queensland are undertaking across the North and the Far North to be ready, as they are always ready, for the challenges that the Queensland weather throws at our state.

We could not be any clearer in our support for the work Energy Queensland do. We are absolutely rock solid behind the work that they have done. We understand the challenging work that Energy Queensland workers do and we back them in 100 per cent. That is why we have a record investment into them.

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am sure you heard the question—

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, I did.

Mr de BRENNI:—about the impacts on small business and trading hours. My point of order is on relevance.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Manager of Opposition Business's point of order is puerile and facile. He has clearly answered the question in his initial response and he is providing broader context now. This is deliberately disrupting the response by the minister.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I will have order. Order! Treasurer, I note you have one minute and 17 seconds left on the clock. The question was about workforce and possible power cuts.

Mr JANETZKI: I will repeat it again for the honourable member. I have been clear. Employment is guaranteed. Contracts will be honoured. I cannot be any clearer. There is record investment of \$2.74 billion. Those opposite would never let the facts get in a way of a nonsense question. I reflect on their record. I note that the honourable member who asked the question was the assistant minister for hydrogen development. What a load of hot air that all was. I never even hear the honourable member talk anymore about hydrogen development.

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order and on a matter of privilege. My point of order, firstly, is in relation to the emergency minister's response on relevance. Secondly, my matter of privilege is that I take personal offence to the nasty comments of the Leader of the House and ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence.

Dr ROWAN: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer, you have 30 seconds left.

Mr JANETZKI: Those opposite would never let the facts and the hard work of Energy Queensland workers get in the way of a pathetic political effort. Their Energy and Jobs Plan was without credibility. Their hydrogen plan was without credibility. Their pumped hydro plan was without credibility—\$36.8 billion. Borumba was \$14 billion to \$18 billion with a less than one per cent chance of ever delivering any energy. They would never let the facts get in the way of a pathetic political effort.

Workplaces, Religious Freedoms

Mr CRANDON: My question is to the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations. What has the Crisafulli LNP government done to protect religious freedoms in the workplace, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternatives during a decade of decline?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the honourable member for the question. He believes in religious freedoms. He believes in people being safe in their workplaces, as does every LNP member of this parliament. We believe that when you go to work you should get a fair day's pay, be safe at work and go home to your families but also, if you have a religion, you want to practise it freely and feel safe in your workplace. They go hand in hand. That is the Crisafulli government's view on this. Talking about workplaces, imagine if you were a member of a Jewish family across Queensland at the moment, particularly in Far North—

Ms Mullen interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. Is she still the shadow minister for multicultural affairs? It is unbelievable that she would attack me when I am talking about Jewish communities wanting to feel safe in their workplaces. She is a former minister for multicultural affairs, I might add. It is unbelievable. I challenge the shadow minister to go to Far North Queensland—

Ms Mullen interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Jordan, that was unnecessary. You are now warned.

Mr BLEIJIE: I challenge the shadow minister for multicultural affairs to go to Far North Queensland, look the people in the eye and repeat what opposition leader Steven Miles said yesterday: 'The posts by the member for Cairns were not anti-Semitic.' I dare the shadow minister. Does the shadow minister agree? I take the gesticulating and nodding to mean that she agrees. It is unbelievable. The opposition leader, Mr Miles, was quoted in the *Courier-Mail* today. He was asked yesterday at a press conference about the cartoons and anti-Semitic posts on the member for Cairns' Facebook page and he said, 'I don't think the post was anti-Semitic,' despite the fact that the Jewish Board of Deputies says they are anti-Semitic. This is what words start. Words lead to violence, words lead to anger and words lead to anti-Semitic behaviour against our Jewish community.

The real question is: why did Mr Miles, the opposition leader, say yesterday that those comments and posts by the member for Cairns were not anti-Semitic when clearly they are? Any reasonable person would believe they are. Why is it that far-left politician Jeremy Corbyn thinks those posts were anti-Semitic but far-left opposition leader Steven Miles does not think they were anti-Semitic? Jeremy Corbyn was eventually kicked out of the Labour Party himself because he harboured anti-Semitic views. Is the reason the opposition leader will not take action against the member for Cairns that it is not just the member for Cairns amongst the ranks of those opposite who have and harbour anti-Semitic views in the Labor Party? I think it may not just be the member for Cairns. We are dealing with a broader issue here. There are anti-Semites sitting opposite and that is why—

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

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock.

Mr HEALY: I take personal offence and ask that the member withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: The member takes personal offence and asks that you withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: You have three seconds left.

Mr BLEIJIE: The Labor Party has anti-Semites in its ranks and it is time they disclose themselves to the Jewish community.

(Time expired)

Energy Queensland

Ms LINARD: My question is to the Minister for Energy. I refer to the minister's answer 'No' in February when asked if 150 Energy Queensland frontline contracted energy workers would lose their jobs. Has the minister met or will the minister meet with the Energy Queensland chair and CEO to ensure there will be no job losses?

Mr JANETZKI: I regularly meet with the Energy Queensland chair and CEO. They are doing a fine job leading an outstanding organisation that once again is preparing to support Queenslanders in their hour of need. I support their work and I support the workers. In relation to that particular matter, I have been very clear that all contracts will be honoured and employment will be guaranteed. We cannot be any clearer. With a record investment of \$2.74 billion in the budget into Energy Queensland, they do outstanding work for Queenslanders.

With our Energy Roadmap we have proven our clear vision for Queensland. There is accountability returning to the energy system in Queensland and we are delivering that. After a decade of decline by those opposite driving up costs, we have an Energy Roadmap that will deliver \$1,035 less per household per year for the next 10 years. That is the modelling as revealed in the Energy Roadmap. What did their Energy and Jobs Plan have? It had 37 pictures in 57 pages.

Ms Linard interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nudgee.

Mr JANETZKI: It was more a storybook than a plan for Queensland's energy future. Their Energy and Jobs Plan was a fantasy—a fairytale full of photos of fairy lights and campsites. How can they seriously come into this House and ask questions about energy after that record? Champions of hydrogen have disappeared. The former assistant ministers for hydrogen development never even whisper a word about hydrogen anymore. Tens of millions of hard-earned taxpayers' dollars have gone to 'Twiggy' Forrest so the Leader of the Opposition can get on the boat with Twiggy. That is their record when it comes to energy policy in Queensland.

On this side of the House, our Energy Roadmap has been clear. We will improve and invest in the assets we have while we build what we need for the future. That is our Energy Roadmap. Their record is a decade of decline. We have delivered an Energy Roadmap that puts downward pressure on power prices and delivers \$1,035 per household per year for the next 10 years for the people of Queensland, and that is what we will continue to deliver.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nudgee, you continued to interject after I cautioned you. You are warned.

Victims of Crime

Mr HEAD: My question is to the Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services. How is the Crisafulli LNP government delivering support to victims of crime across Queensland, and is the minister aware of any approaches that chose to support offenders and reject victims during a decade of decline?

Mrs GERBER: I thank the member for Callide for his question and for supporting victims of crime right across this state. He is supporting the Crisafulli government in our strong new laws, the early intervention and rehabilitation we are delivering and all of the support we are providing victims. We know that supporting victims of crime is not just about stronger laws and programs. It is also about the culture that leaders set in this state. What we are seeing from the opposition leader is a failure to act in relation to the member for Cairns, who still sits on his front bench and still sits in his party room when he has been proven to share anti-Semitic cartoons and when he has been proven to spew anti-Semitic commentary on his social media.

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

Mr Bleijie: Take offence? You shared the cartoon. You shared it, mate!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member still has the right to take personal offence. Those are the rules. He has taken personal offence. Minister, I ask that you withdraw.

Mrs GERBER: I withdraw.

Mr HEALY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe there was another statement made by the Deputy Premier. I take personal offence and I would like him to withdraw, too.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask that you withdraw, Deputy Premier.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mrs GERBER: The member for Cairns shared a cartoon that was shared by a Labour Party member—the exact same cartoon—in the UK, and that person was removed because it is anti-Semitic. The cartoon was condemned by Jewish communities around the world. It was condemned by the Jewish Board of Deputies here in Queensland and it is condemned by Queenslanders, but do you know who is defending it, Mr Speaker? The Leader of the Opposition is defending it. The Leader of the Opposition said that the post was not anti-Semitic. He thinks it is not anti-Semitic. Jeremy Corbyn, the chief anti-Semite himself, was removed for the exact same post, yet the Leader of the Opposition is harbouring anti-Semites within his own ranks. He needs to go out there and front the media and explain why he thinks this cartoon is not anti-Semitic.

Mr SPEAKER: No props.

Mrs GERBER: I table it.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 6 May, from the Facebook page of the member for Cairns, Mr Michael Healy MP, regarding media reporting [\[283\]](#).

He needs to explain why he thinks this cartoon is not anti-Semitic when the Jewish Board of Deputies says it is and when Jewish communities right around the world say it is. A member of the Labour Party in the UK was suspended and dismissed because it is anti-Semitic. We have Queenslanders who say it is, yet the Leader of the Opposition says he does not think it is. He needs to go outside to the media and explain his position, because the member for Cairns' spot in his party is untenable.

If the explanation is, as the Premier has said, that in fact the Leader of the Opposition harbours those views himself, then we have the Jeremy Corbyn era all over again, where they were exposed for harbouring anti-Semites within their party. That is happening all over again here in Queensland. If we do not stand up for our Jewish community in parliament and say that this is absolutely unacceptable in Queensland and in our communities, then shame on this House. The Leader of the Opposition needs to go to the media and explain his views.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I go to the member for Woodridge, there are way too many conversations and chatter going on, with people hanging around in walkways everywhere.

Gold Coast, Development Application

Mr DICK: My question is to the Premier. The developer behind the proposed very, very tall and very, very beautiful tower, the most beautiful Trump Tower in the world, on the Gold Coast ran two insolvent businesses. Has the Premier provided advice to the developer—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We will hear the question in silence. Can you please start again.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. The developer behind the proposed very, very tall and very, very beautiful tower, the most beautiful Trump Tower in the world, on the Gold Coast ran two insolvent businesses. Has the Premier provided advice to the developer about running an insolvent business and then going on to build a very tall building, albeit not in Bulimba?

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

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I still do not have silence. I will hear the point of order in silence.

Ms Camm interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Whitsunday, you are warned.

Dr ROWAN: Speaker, my point of order is in relation to seeking your guidance with respect to whether the question as asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is seeking an opinion.

Mr SPEAKER: I will take some advice.

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, on a point of order in response to the Leader of the House's point of order and to assist you in your deliberation, I table the liquidator's report and the company extract that demonstrate the Premier was the sole director of a company that was trading while it was insolvent. That will assist you in addressing that point of order.

Tabled paper: Document, dated 31 October 2019, Price, Waterhouse, Cooper Report titled 'Report to Creditors' [284].

Tabled paper: Document, dated 31 July 2024, titled 'Australian Securities and Investments Commission—Current and Historical Company Extract: Southern Edge Training Pty Ltd' [285].

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: I am going to rule that question out of order. It contains a clear imputation. I go to the member for Cook for the next question.

Mr Mellish interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Aspley, you are warned.

Transport and Main Roads, Workplace Safety

Mr KEMPTON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. How is the Crisafulli LNP government ensuring workers on TMR worksites across Queensland, including in the Far North, are treated with dignity and respect, and is the minister aware of any worksites where dignity and respect are not a priority?

Mr MICKELBERG: I thank the member for Cook for his question. I want to acknowledge his work on the parliamentary inquiry in relation to e-mobility safety, alongside the member for Mulgrave, the member for Lockyer as the chair and the Labor members of that committee. They have provided us a framework to consider—something that those opposite never did.

I am asked about safety on job sites and worksites across Queensland. What we saw under those opposite was the CFMEU calling the shots. We saw fear, intimidation and misogyny presided over by weak Labor ministers and a weak Labor leadership under former premier Palaszczuk and the former premier and now opposition leader, the member for Murrumba. They were aiding and abetting the CFMEU—with their bullying and thuggery and them storming TMR offices and job sites, like the Centenary Bridge upgrade. That thrived under weak leadership, and we are seeing the exact same traits again.

Just as bullying and thuggery from the CFMEU is unacceptable, so too is anti-Semitism in Queensland. We have seen anti-Semitism writ large by the member for Cairns' actions as ventilated in this House this week.

Mr HEALY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence and I ask the member to withdraw.

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

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw. I refer to media reports last night that the member for Cairns has been sharing Russian propaganda suggesting that Israel was using Palestine as 'a weapons testing laboratory' and 'experimenting on Palestinians'. The member for Cairns shared that on 13 December 2018 when he was a member of this House. They are vile comments that equate the actions of Jews in Israel to those we saw perpetrated and perpetuated by the Nazi state back in the 1930s and 1940s. It is just like we saw under the Nazi regime, because we are now seeing the member for Cairns sharing the exact same tropes. It begs the question: what is the member for Murrumba going to do about these disgraceful slurs from the member for Cairns?

Mr HEALY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence and I ask the member to withdraw.

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

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw. I table a document which summarises the video which was ventilated in the media last night.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Antisemitic 'Experiments' Propaganda' [286].

Mr O'Connor: It has screenshots.

Mr MICKELBERG: There are screenshots of the exact same content shared by the member for Cairns.

The Labor Party are morally bankrupt. The Leader of the Opposition is morally bankrupt because he is choosing to side with the member for Cairns, who is weaponising the fact that he wants to walk. I hear that he is spending more time on Seek than Facebook at the moment because he is looking for

jobs in Sydney. The people on the street in Cairns tell me that the member for Cairns wants out and he is weaponising that against the Leader of the Opposition to keep him on the backbench. The question then is: will the Leader of the Opposition show leadership and stand up against this vile anti-Semitic behaviour, or will he side with self-interest and the member for Cairns?

(Time expired)

Noosa North Shore, Airstrip

Ms BOLTON: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation. Regarding the Noosa North Shore landing ground, will the minister: make available the results of the department's community consultation held in April and May 2023, requested since June 2025; provide the extension of time for recreational users; and hold a meeting of departments, groups and Noosa council, also as requested?

Mr POWELL: I thank the member for Noosa for her question, for her correspondence and for her advocacy regarding what was the former landing ground reserve on Noosa North Shore. I also acknowledge the advocacy of the various recreational aviation groups that operated on that landing strip and, importantly, LifeFlight and those associated with it. I think every member in this House would appreciate the amazing work that LifeFlight do. I acknowledge that they have had an interest in that landing strip at Teewah for many years to undertake training and operational matters.

In answering the member for Noosa's question, I need to explain a bit about how we got into this situation. The former government had a goal of reaching a certain percentage of protected area estate, but over a decade they only added one per cent—one per cent—and they did not add the rangers who were needed to look after it. I can say that on this side of the House the Premier has given me the goal of delivering that same one per cent in four years—that is, in less than half the time of those opposite. Importantly, we have committed to More Rangers, Better Neighbours, where we are in the process of putting 150 extra rangers out on the ground as we speak. I believe we are up to 60 already.

I go to the reason we got into this situation at Noosa North Shore. As they were not reaching their target, they hastily converted land into national park to try to reach their target, and they did it without considering the impacts on the community groups that use parts of it. In this instance, for those community recreational aviation groups to continue to use that landing strip, it is completely and utterly inconsistent with the Nature Conservation Act. I can consider giving them extensions but at some point it is inconsistent with the Nature Conservation Act and it must stop.

We have a dilemma and it is a dilemma I have written to the member for Noosa about. In one of my responses to her correspondence I stated—

As the local Member, I would welcome your advice on whether you supported the original tenure change or whether you believe the site should be revoked to allow continued club use.

I want to put into *Hansard* the member's response. She stated, 'Revoking land from National Park status is a serious matter,' and that 'we could not support such a radical undertaking'. On the one hand we have had a petition in this House about allowing ongoing use that had some 3,210 signatories. On the other hand I have a message from the member for Noosa saying that I cannot revoke the land.

Ms BOLTON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Can I ask that the minister answer the question about releasing that community consultation, please?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, the point of order was on relevance, I believe. You have five seconds left.

Mr POWELL: There were elements to the question. I was addressing a number of the elements. The survey has been released to a number of community groups who asked for it under RTI.

(Time expired)

Health Services

Mrs KIRKLAND: My question is to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. How is the Crisafulli LNP government delivering health and wellbeing services across Queensland, and is the minister aware of any instances where Queenslanders have been impacted during a decade of decline?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for her question. She is a hardworking assistant minister for mental health who does a tremendous job reaching out to affected communities and interest groups. The Crisafulli government is delivering improved services in mental health after more than a decade of decline under Labor. That includes the new 32-bed mental health unit progressing at pace at

Rockhampton in the member's electorate, one of the very first places we investigated. It also includes the two new six-bed step-up step-down facilities, one in Rockhampton and one in Townsville. We are also delivering 30 new perinatal mental health beds across the state—undelivered and unfunded by those opposite. Investments in mental health services under the Crisafulli government are proceeding at a pace. We are delivering after a decade of decline.

Investments in mental health services are even more important during times of heightened national and international tensions. Following the terror attacks by Hamas on 7 October 2023 I met with Queenslanders—Jewish Queenslanders—and I relayed in this place their stories and the anxiety they feel and the problems they face because of the repeated and continued propaganda that was being put out by the supporters of Hamas, Hezbollah and other organisations. One family came to me and said, 'We moved here for peace but now we feel threatened in our home.' In the statement yesterday, the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies noted warnings from ASIO director Mike Burgess regarding inflamed language from public figures and the direct correlation to increased community tensions and potential violence, a further risk of language and other actions increasing anxiety.

I was contacted by Ayelet Rinon, who said it is generally not one major incident; it is rather the cumulative effect of many smaller incidents. We have seen this in recent days and we have seen it from the member for Cairns, whose actions are condoned and supported by a weak Leader of the Opposition, who simply calls it out as dramatics and theatrics—smaller things adding up over time. We have seen it with the posts that have been referenced by the Premier today, by the Deputy Premier today and by the Minister for Transport today—all posted, all set out by the member for Cairns. We heard from the member for Cairns his mealy-mouthed response on Tuesday. Not once did he come back in here and deny posting that material.

Mr HEALY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence and I would like it withdrawn.

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

Mr NICHOLLS: I withdraw. I noted the member for Cairns' comments on Tuesday and not once did he resile from having posted those documents. Not once today has he said, 'These are not mine.' Not once has he said, 'I did not like them.' Not once has he denied making those comments and not once has he apologised for making those comments. Not once has he responded to the Jewish Board of Deputies' complaint and not once has the opposition leader held him to account.

(Time expired)

FutureFit Academy

Mr POWER: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Will the Crisafulli LNP government save the FutureFit Academy in Mackay to ensure there is a public training facility for regional Queenslanders?

Mr LAST: I thank the member for the question. Of course, the FutureFit Academy in Mackay is an important facility. One thing I will say at the outset is that this government is backing those companies who back Queensland. We will work with those companies who believe in Queensland, who provide the jobs in Queensland and who invest in Queensland, and we will continue to do that. If honourable members have a look at recent decisions—Argo and their commitment, the Centurion Mine commitment and the work that is being done to reopen the Moranbah North mine—they will see jobs, jobs, jobs and a clear decision to continue investment in this state.

When we look at that FutureFit Academy and the role it performs, I am pleased to inform the House today that Central Queensland University, to their credit—I want to recognise them today and give them the big tick—have agreed to step up and ensure all those community students who were at that academy will be able to complete that course. Full marks to CQU for stepping up and agreeing to undertake that role to ensure those students get those qualifications to enable them to secure a job in the resources sector.

Ms Enoch interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Algester, the minister is being directly responsive to the question. Cease your interjections.

Mr LAST: Those 107 students who are at that facility at the moment can rest assured that they will not be abandoned and that we will support them. We will work with CQU to ensure they complete their course because we want them in the resources sector. We want to support them into their role and their careers in the resources sector because that is so very important.

As I said in my ministerial statement earlier today, we are opening up more areas for exploration with a clear intent to continue the development of the resources sector in this state, whether it be gas, coal, vanadium or critical minerals. That was reaffirmed last week on our trade mission to South Korea and Japan. There was massive interest in the resources sector in this state—massive interest in investing in this state. We are going to see over the next 12 months how these projects are going to come to fruition and generate those jobs in this state. Facilities such as the FutureFit Academy are an integral part of that because we want that pipeline of future workers in the resources sector. This is an opportunity now to step into that space to continue that training. As I said, we will back those companies that back Queensland.

Community Cohesion

Mr CHIESA: My question is to the Premier and Minister for Veterans. How is the Crisafulli LNP government leading condemning division in our state, and is the Premier aware of any policies that, through their silence, allowed division to fester during a decade of decline?

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is a great question from a member of parliament who has made a great start to his political career and I want to thank him for it. The best way leaders can do that is by acting decisively and calling things out. We collectively owe it to the people we represent to do it. Right now there is one community that is desperately under siege, and that is the Jewish community. We all acknowledge that. That is the reason we are here this week doing what we are doing. That is what leadership is about—and it has to be, because that is the community that cannot go to their place of worship without looking over their shoulder because someone is reversing into the gates. That is the community where kids are going to school and begging their parents, 'Don't tell them what our religion is.' That is happening in Australia. That is why we must call it out. When you have businesses that are being starved of opportunities not because of the quality of their product but because of the colour of their faith, that has to be called out. That is what leadership is and it has to be.

In a week when we are standing here responding to bloodshed in Bondi, the Labor Party are dismissing anti-Semitism as a distraction and theatrics. In a week when we are standing here responding to Bondi, the Leader of the Opposition is telling the Jewish community what is and is not anti-Semitic. In a week when we are here responding to Bondi, the Leader of the Opposition will not even accept the same standard that his own political movement in another jurisdiction is willing to set and abide by. That is why we are here, and on the opposition front bench there remains someone whose position is untenable.

I say to the Leader of the Opposition: there is good news, and that is that it is not too late. I will tell him why it is not too late. Holding the member for Cairns accountable and asking him to relinquish his position on the front bench would send a message not just to this House and not just to his own colleagues but also to the Jewish community that there are consequences. Yes, it is a test of leadership, but it is also the right thing to do. I say to the Leader of the Opposition: we must all stand up together and take action to keep people safe, hold those accountable for things they say that hurt, accept a standard that has been set in another place or, if I can put it in a way that the Leader of the Opposition might understand, it is about doing what matters.

Influenza, Vaccination

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: My question is to the Premier. Which arm will the Premier get his flu shot in this year?

Honourable members interjected.

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am going to rule that question out of order.

Rural and Regional Queensland, Manufacturing

Mr BAROUNIS: My question is to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development. How is the Crisafulli LNP government backing in manufacturing in the Wide Bay region, and is the minister aware of any approaches that fail manufacturing in rural and regional Queensland?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you have one minute.

Mr LAST: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I only need one minute to acknowledge the work that the member for Maryborough is doing in his patch and his passion for the QTMP program, and I know that he is a regular visitor. In good news for the House, the commissioning of specialist equipment at that facility has commenced. All of those jigs, the head welders and the state-of-the-art robotic equipment is being installed as we speak. Later this month the first welding of the undercarriages will commence, so work is commencing there. I saw the first prototype in Korea last week. It is there in the flesh. We walked through it; we sat in the seats. Those prototypes will be delivered before the end of this year. Recruitment for all of those blue-collar workers who will work at that facility has commenced. There are 51 currently onsite, with the full complement to be in place by the middle of next year. This is a good news story for Queensland. This demonstrates very clearly what this government can do in this state because we make it happen.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

FIGHTING ANTISEMITISM AND KEEPING GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF TERRORISTS AND CRIMINALS AMENDMENT BILL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (EMPOWERING COUNCILS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Declared Urgent; Allocation of Time Limit Order



Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP) (Leader of the House) (11.12 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That, under the provisions of standing order 137:
 - (a) the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill, with the minister called to reply to the bill by 4.30 pm on Thursday, 5 March 2026 and all remaining stages of the bill to be completed by 5.00 pm on Thursday, 5 March 2026; and
 - (b) the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill, with the minister called to reply to the bill by 8.30 pm on Thursday, 5 March 2026—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I will hear the motion in silence.

Dr ROWAN:—and all remaining stages of the bill to be completed by 9.00 pm on Thursday, 5 March 2026;

2. If all stages have not been completed by the time specified in 1., Mr Speaker shall put all remaining questions necessary to complete consideration of the bills, including clauses and schedules en bloc and any amendments to be moved by the ministers in charge of the bills, without further amendment or debate.

In briefly addressing this motion, this is a procedural motion which provides for the orderly management of the business in the House today, including arrangements for concluding debate on the important legislative issue of anti-Semitism. We also need to ensure the passage of the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Both pieces of legislation are significant and reflect important commitments that were given to Queenslanders by this government.

This week there has been a fulsome and important debate on the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill, and that debate will continue throughout today. The Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will also progress important reforms to local government councils across Queensland. This legislation will empower councils and mayors, remove unnecessary red tape and address a range of practical matters affecting the operation of councils across the state, and it has to be remembered that these are important reforms that have been called for.

Providing a structured framework for debate on these bills ensures that members are aware of the arrangements for the final sitting day of this first sitting week in March 2026. Members of parliament will have an opportunity to contribute and the Queensland parliament will be able to manage legislative decisions in a timely and responsible manner. I have to point out that I note statements made previously

by the Manager of Opposition Business in the House that the Labor opposition does not object to provisions that facilitate the orderly conduct of the House. Indeed, the Manager of Opposition Business has stated that Labor supports the concept of the orderly management of this parliament and, on that basis, I look forward to the Labor opposition's support for this motion today.

The Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government is continuing to ensure that the Queensland parliament functions with clarity, discipline and a strong focus on delivery with respect to the passage of legislation. The Crisafulli government is setting out the program for today clearly, providing certainty to members and ensuring the legislation progresses in a structured and orderly fashion. Once again, this motion strikes the right balance. It allows for meaningful debate while ensuring the parliament can progress its responsibilities and deliver outcomes for all Queenslanders. What is being undertaken today is very similar to what was undertaken on numerous occasions by those opposite when they were in government.

This is a procedural motion. It gives people certainty. It gives all members certainty with respect to what is going to be occurring throughout this sitting day. It is very important that we pass these two pieces of legislation which are important for people across Queensland. This week we have seen many aspects in relation to important public policy matters, particularly with respect to anti-Semitism, and I know those opposite do not have their hearts in it when it comes to addressing those significant issues which have faced communities right across Queensland. It is important that we—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Leader of the House, I just remind you to talk to the procedural motion, not the substance of the bill that is before the House.

Dr ROWAN: I am, Mr Deputy Speaker, so this motion strikes the right balance and—

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Pine Rivers, you are warned.

Dr ROWAN: This motion strikes the right balance when it comes to the order of the business today, ensuring the passage of two important bills that need to be passed today. As such, I commend this motion to the House.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (11.17 am): I agree with the Leader of the House that the management of the business before the House should be orderly, but that is not what this motion is about whatsoever. What this motion is about is the continuation of chaos going on within the Liberal National Party in Queensland. What this motion is about is the shameful way that it has treated Queenslanders in the development of this bill, in the execution of this bill through this House and in the way in which it has been sneaky and underhanded with its amendments. The debate on this bill has been conducted in a way that can only be described as chaotic. The development of this bill can only be described as shambolic. That is why the amendments were made in the way that they were.

I remind the House that the amendments in relation to which this motion proposes to curtail debate were hidden from this House for two days before they were provided. That is a shameful approach to parliamentary democracy. They hid the amendments that they had to bring to this House because the Premier was rolled by his own party room. Here they are gagging debate. I am advised that this motion allows for just 10 minutes of consideration in detail on an incredibly important bill—just 10 minutes.

They are shutting down debate on one of the most significant pieces of reform to come to this House purely because the Premier does not want to listen to criticism of him. He does not want to listen to the criticism. This is a Premier who is happy to come into this place and abuse the conventions of the time provided for ministerial statements and a Premier who is happy to come into this House and abuse the conventions of questions from his own party to attack individuals, not to be held to account. He spends all of his time talking about the Labor opposition. He does not talk about what his government is doing; he wants to talk about us. He is so focused on what he can achieve for his own political gain that he has completely forgotten about Queenslanders. This motion again demonstrates that. This is a Premier who is so scared of scrutiny that he is gagging debate in this parliament on his own legislation. He is gagging debate in this parliament on his own amendments that he had to sneak in here, that he did not want to show Queenslanders, because he got rolled by the members of his own party room.

The Leader of the House talked about clarity and discipline. There has been no clarity and discipline in the development or execution of this legislation or the way in which the LNP government has handled these matters whatsoever. It has been a manifest disaster for this Premier—an absolute disaster. You would think those opposite would have learned from the train wreck they saw involving

their federal colleagues in Canberra. In Canberra, the minute the leader of the Coalition chose to politicise these matters, disaster ensued. That is exactly what they have done here in Queensland. They have done that here in this parliament this week. They have sought to politicise matters of community safety that should be above politics. That is why it has been an absolute shambles for this Premier.

I want to remind the House what the Deputy Premier said about the rights of members to debate matters of importance in this House. He said—

What we want is freedom of speech. We want the ability for members to talk about issues important to members' electorates.

He went on to say that this is what we as parliamentarians are 'paid to do', but this Premier wants to stop parliamentarians from coming into this House and representing their members because he does not want to be held to account for the shambles of the legislation he has brought into this parliament.

Ms Fentiman interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Waterford, you are on a warning. You have been interjecting. I will ask you to leave the chamber for one hour under the standing orders.

Whereupon the honourable member for Waterford withdrew from the chamber at 11.23 am.

Mr de BRENNI: This is a shameful motion in the context of the matters before the House.

Ms Pease: Even the Leader of the House is embarrassed about it.

Mr de BRENNI: I take that interjection from the member for Lytton. If I was the leader of the House being asked to bring this motion into the House, I would be embarrassed, too. In fact, I think most members on that side of the House would be pretty embarrassed about the conduct they have seen from particularly the Premier and the Deputy Premier. This is a bill the core elements of which will now see no scrutiny by Queenslanders. Its core elements will have no scrutiny by the parliamentary committee. It will be rammed through this parliament because it suits the Premier, because he does not want to be held to account by this parliament.

The Labor opposition cannot entertain the way the Liberal National Party treats this House with contempt. The media in Queensland have belled the cat on the way in which this government treats this place with disdain. They talked about the tone that is set for the leadership of the Liberal National Party getting lower and lower. That tone is set by the Premier and the members of his party room when they bring motions into this House to deal with important parliamentary matters in a way that treats Queenslanders with contempt. The Labor opposition cannot support this motion.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.25 am): Let's call this for what it is. This is not a procedural motion; this is a gag motion on the Queensland parliament—and this from the so-called champions of free speech on the other side of the House. This entire bill has been a debacle from the start. It has been rushed, and today we see it being rushed again. Can you imagine: the critical parts of this bill are the amendments the police minister will move in committee this afternoon. How much time do members of this House have to consider this? Ten minutes. The government has given members of this House 10 minutes to consider these amendments. That is the effect of this gag motion moved by the Leader of the House.

Let's look at the entire duration of this. Our anti-vilification bill took nine months. This bill took 17 days, and it was going to stand the test of time. Remember those words from the Premier? It was going to stand the test of time. It could not even stand the test of the LNP backbench. They rioted on Monday. The LNP MPs in this place are revolting on this bill. They revolted on Monday. Then we had the police minister come in and foreshadow the amendments—six words to foreshadow the amendments. He did not introduce them then. He hid them from the parliament, he hid them from Queenslanders and then he introduced them yesterday afternoon. Members of this House have not even had 24 hours to look at those amendments, and they are the heart of this bill and the heart of the chaos that is running through the LNP.

We had the Premier saying that this was going to stand the test of time and then the backbench revolted on Monday. This is a Premier who announces things without even going to the cabinet. When the backbench saw it they said no, because they are petrified of One Nation in regional Queensland. That is why they flipped. Forget this nonsense about standing up for Queenslanders. They are absolutely petrified by One Nation so they have to rush the amendments through the House tonight without any scrutiny at all. I echo the words of the member for Kawana—what a champion of free speech the Deputy Premier is—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Woodridge, I would ask you to address your comments through the chair, please. Apart from fleeting moments where you have been facing the chair, you have been facing the backbench.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I am very happy to address them through the chair. The Deputy Premier and member for Kawana, in a debate on 14 May 2019 in this House—I think from this seat in the chamber—said on the business program motion—

What we want is freedom of speech. We want the ability for members to talk about issues important to members' electorates. That is what we are paid to do.

The Premier said that this is the most important bill that will come into this parliament, but we get nothing. I cannot wait until the government outlaws people walking and sitting and drinking and turning around in the parliament! This is positively Orwellian. The Leader of the House said they had a fulsome and meaningful debate. It would be funny if it was not so serious. There has not been a meaningful debate because members of this House have been gagged and do not have an opportunity to speak on the bill. The Speaker has ruled that if you are on the speaking list you get a go. You do not get a go under the LNP because they are frightened of their backbench. The leadership of this government is in chaos. If this is calm and methodical I would hate to see panicked and chaotic.

Mr Kempton: Just look around you!

Mr DICK: Imagine the member for Cook lecturing to anyone about appropriate behaviour. I say to the member for Cook, through you, Deputy Speaker: how is your mate Michael Trout, the well-known basher, going?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Woodridge, I bring you back to the motion.

Mr DICK: Then the Leader of the House said we do not have our hearts in it. How would he know? He has not heard us. The government wants to shut us down in the parliament. Under the Labor government there was nine months for the anti-vilification law. There have been 17 days for this bill, less than 24 hours for the amendments and 10 minutes to debate them. Those opposite were going to lift the standards. The Premier said they were going to be a government of openness, accountability and transparency. We see none of that today. We see the parliament being gagged. There is no clarity, there is no discipline, there is no order. This event required serious people to take a serious, measured and methodical approach to the response. We had a chance to get this right for Queensland and for Australia. This parliament had the opportunity to show this country what we thought about the most horrific event that happened in Bondi on 14 December.

Mr Stevens: So you are voting for it?

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. Imagine being lectured to by the member for Mermaid Beach with all of his egregious behaviour in the parliament. The history of this matter is that it has been chaotic and it has been panicked. There has been fearful leadership. Why else would it have changed on Monday? Why else would they have had to move this motion? It is because they do not want scrutiny of their conduct and behaviour. The Jewish community in Queensland, multicultural communities, people of faith—in fact, all Queenslanders—are being dismissed and denigrated by this government as a result of this gag motion that is being rammed through the House. It will be to the eternal shame of this Premier. We all know one thing about this Premier: when he says something it means something else or nothing at all.

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (11.32 am): If ever I have heard a lament about incompetence it was that from the member for Woodridge. It was a lament about incompetence—about their inability to study something and to respond within 24 hours to amendments that have been circulated. Let us not forget that these are the people who authored a complete change to the voting system in Queensland with 18 minutes notice. Let us not forget that after cutting a dirty deal with their mates in the Katter party they walked in and did that. Let us not forget the amendments that the member for Morayfield circulated to his crime bill.

Ms Grace: Deputy Speaker, relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for McConnel, do you have a point of order?

Ms GRACE: Relevance, Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have sought some advice. Member for McConnel, there is no point of order at this point. I would also remind the member for McConnel that I did hear you calling out 'relevance' before you rose to your feet. I do not need that assistance. If you want to make a point of order, get up and make a point of order.

Ms GRACE: Thank you for your guidance.

Mr NICHOLLS: When it comes to the history of cutting debate short in this place the Labor Party has no parallel. They did it month in, month out while they sat on this side. Not only that, they sat fewer hours. We all had to shut up shop and go home at 7.30 under their family friendly hours. We have more hours for debate, we have more hours for committee consideration of bills and we have better debate on bills as a result of it. The member for Springwood was the author of it all. We remember him coming in, standing up and proclaiming in that very gravelly voice of his how serious it was and how important it was for the efficient operation of the House that we do not have any debate on bills. He changed the name on his office door so that it had 'Leader of the House' on it. Because he was not important enough he had to have his name put on the door. We remember that aspect of grandiose self-importance.

We have had a number of discussions. Firstly, let us get this right. Those opposite are not even right on a parliamentary procedure matter. This is not a gag. I am about to show them what a gag is. This is, quite simply, limiting the time for debate in respect of the speakers. I remember a former member for Rockhampton, Robert Schwarten, explaining the difference between a guillotine and a gag. Those opposite still do not know the difference. There is actually no need for it because when I look at the speaking list, in the last two days 25 non-government members have already spoken on the bill. Yesterday's list stopped at the member for Bundaberg. The member for Bundaberg has dropped off today's list. The member for Bundaberg is not known for his silence. He is not known for his contribution either, but he is not known for his silence. They are arguing about a list on which their own members are dropping off. At latest count there are only four of them to go. One would think they would be able to get through those four people at 10 minutes apiece. The member for Noosa is the tail coming in at the end. Our list of members continues onto the next page. Yet again, this is nothing but a shallow display of incompetence by those opposite who are unable to deal with it.

Those opposite talk about being rushed. Let us not forget the rush in Canberra. How well did that work out? We had a Prime Minister who rushed, we had a Prime Minister who had to split his bill, we had a Prime Minister who had to give up components of his bill because he did not allow debate on it and we have legislation that will not work. That is the outcome of the process in Canberra. We have taken our time. Despite that, the Leader of the Opposition wrote to the police minister and the Attorney-General saying, 'Please recall parliament. We want to get it done more quickly.' Having taken our time to get it right, having allowed three full days of debate in this place, having circulated amendments to legislation responsive to community concerns and giving those opposite 24 hours to deal with them, now it is all being rushed too much. Their contradictions are self-explanatory. Their inability to deal with the processes of this place, even understand the processes of this place, is on display for all to see. Their arguments are weak. Their claim is indefensible. I move that the motion be now put.

Division: Question put—That the question be now put.

AYES, 52:

LNP, 52—Baillie, Barounis, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Chiesa, Crandon, Crisafulli, Dalton, Dillon, Doolan, Dooley, Field, Frecklington, Gerber, Head, Hutton, Hunt, B. James, T. James, Janetzki, G. Kelly, Kempton, Kirkland, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lee, Lister, Mander, Marr, McDonald, Mickelberg, Minnikin, Molhoek, Morton, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Poole, Powell, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Stoker, Watts, Vorster, Young.

NOES, 35:

ALP, 31—Asif, Bailey, Bourne, Boyd, Bush, Butcher, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Grace, Healy, J. Kelly, Linard, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Nightingale, O'Shea, Pease, Power, Pugh, Russo, Ryan, Scanlon, Smith, Whiting.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 52:

LNP, 52—Baillie, Barounis, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Chiesa, Crandon, Crisafulli, Dalton, Dillon, Doolan, Dooley, Field, Frecklington, Gerber, Head, Hutton, Hunt, B. James, T. James, Janetzki, G. Kelly, Kempton, Kirkland, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lee, Lister, Mander, Marr, McDonald, Mickelberg, Minnikin, Molhoek, Morton, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Poole, Powell, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Stoker, Watts, Vorster, Young.

NOES, 35:

ALP, 31—Asif, Bailey, Bourne, Boyd, Bush, Butcher, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Grace, Healy, J. Kelly, Linard, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Nightingale, O'Shea, Pease, Power, Pugh, Russo, Ryan, Scanlon, Smith, Whiting.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

Resolved in the affirmative.

FIGHTING ANTISEMITISM AND KEEPING GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF TERRORISTS AND CRIMINALS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 4 March (see p. 494), on motion of Mr Purdie—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Miss DOOLAN** (Pumicestone—LNP) (11.44 am), continuing: One of the most significant reforms in this bill is the introduction of a new offence for acts done in preparation for or planning an attack likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm. This is proactive lawmaking. This means terrorists can be stopped before they strike. It means law enforcement has the tools to intervene early. It means we are not waiting for the next headline; we are acting now. Queensland will not be reactive; we will be preventive.

Let us also address the broader national security context. Across Western democracies we are witnessing rising extremism, online radicalisation, conspiracy-fuelled hatred and the weaponisation of identity politics. We cannot pretend Queensland is immune. The events of 14 December shattered that illusion. This government took the time to calmly and methodically develop legislation that is specific and targeted to address those shocking events. This is not a kneejerk reaction; this is responsible leadership.

There will always be those people who say this goes too far but I ask the House: how far is too far when it comes to protecting a 10-year-old child? How far is too far when it comes to preventing terrorism? The community expect us to act and they expect us to draw a line. Labor had years to strengthen these frameworks and they chose not to. We chose to act because community safety is not negotiable, because hate cannot be normalised and because prevention is stronger than regret.

To the Jewish community here in Queensland and across Australia I say: we see what you have endured, we recognise your fear and we will not allow you to stand alone. Queensland stands with you.

This bill is about restoring confidence. It is about protecting communities. It is about ensuring that what happened on 14 December can never happen again. In Queensland we do not tolerate hate, we do not ignore the warning signs and we do not wait for a tragedy to strike. This is a government that is serious about community safety, serious about national security and serious about standing up for every Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.47 am): I rise to speak on the bill before the House and, in particular, the amendments to be moved by the police minister. The fact is that this debate should be about honouring 15 Jewish Australians whose lives were stolen by hate—15 Jewish Australians who were and remain deeply loved, 15 Jewish Australians whose lives were stolen by a perversity that has no place in our nation. What happened at Bondi has left a scar on our nation's soul. What happened at Bondi can never be forgiven and never forgotten. It can never be understood by people of good faith, good heart and good intent. What happened at Bondi was a shocking tragedy—a tragedy driven by anti-Semitism.

I reject and condemn all forms of bigotry, racism and hatred and I condemn the evil of anti-Semitism absolutely. The tragedy at Bondi also presents an opportunity to act to prevent anything like this from ever happening again. However, in the LNP's haste, in the LNP's thoughtlessness, in the

LNP's failure to apply themselves carefully, diligently and thoughtfully to the legislative task and in the LNP's desperation to take political advantage, that opportunity has been squandered by Premier Crisafulli and his government. In December last year the Queensland Labor opposition wrote to Premier Crisafulli offering to work in a bipartisan manner to get this legislation right. That offer was ignored. In fact, the state Labor opposition is still waiting to receive a reply from the Premier.

Premier Crisafulli has consistently said that he has got this legislation right. At the National Press Club in Canberra, on national television, the Premier declared that his legislation was nation leading. The Premier referred to the chaos in Canberra, driven of course by federal LNP senators and members of parliament from Queensland, including the leader of the federal National Party, David Littleproud. The Premier said that the chaos in Canberra would not be repeated in Brisbane. When talking about the bill now being debated by this House, Premier Crisafulli told the national audience—

If you read the legislation, it's very tight, it's very specific, and it will stand the test of time.

The legislation has stood the test of time alright. It stood the test of time for a grand total of 19 days—from the date of introduction on 10 February until Monday, when the Premier was rolled by his own backbench. Fair dinkum! The Premier has run insolvent businesses for a longer period. Standing the test of time? This bill could not even stand the test of the LNP backbench. Flatter than an MCG wicket the Premier was rolled. Back and forward the heavy roller went, driven by the LNP backbench. LNP members of parliament are simply revolting on this bill. The Premier's backbenchers were ready to vote with Labor to avoid giving the Attorney-General carte blanche to criminalise any phrases or statements she might have chosen. What a stunning and stinging vote of no confidence in the competence, judgement and ability of the Attorney-General by her own parliamentary party.

To be fair to LNP members of parliament, after hearing two rambling, contradictory and incoherent speeches on the bill and the proposed amendments by the Attorney-General during the debate, you cannot really blame them, can you? Instead of defeating anti-Semitism, this bill became an attack on free speech. The self-proclaimed LNP champions of free speech who thought they were politically wedging Labor finally realised they were just wedging themselves. The Premier may not have a backbone, a moral compass or a political conscience, but he does have a backbench and on Monday the backbench reminded the Premier of that fact. After the LNP backbench revolt and the mad scramble by the Premier to respond, late yesterday afternoon members of this House finally got to see the amendments to be moved by the police minister.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Whilst it is interesting to listen to the member for Woodridge, his imaginings have nothing to do with the long title of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): What is your point of order?

Mr BOOTHMAN: Relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I was just at that moment seeking some advice from the Clerk. However, member for Woodridge, I have been listening carefully and I consider you have been relevant. If you were beginning to be irrelevant, I would ask you to come back to the bill, but you have the call.

Mr DICK: This House finally got to see the amendments foreshadowed by the police minister yesterday afternoon. If this is calm and methodical, I would hate to see panicked and chaotic. This legislation that we are debating was meant to be a serious response to an incredibly serious event. What happened at Bondi demanded that serious people respond in a serious, careful and precise manner. Instead, Premier Crisafulli has presided over chaos.

Those words of the Premier again in relation to the bill before the House: 'It's very tight, it's very specific and it will stand the test of time.' Another quote from the Premier about this legislation: 'We are delivering a strong and considered response.' Can you believe that, Deputy Speaker? Yet another example that when the Premier says something, it means something else or nothing at all. The Premier stood by this legislation for weeks. He said he got it right. The Premier said he was not for turning—until he turned, because the political winds changed.

This poorly constructed LNP legislation has been dogged by confusion and uncertainty from the outset. What confidence could any member of this House or any Queenslanders, for that matter, have in the validity or efficacy of the police minister's amendments when the police minister did not understand the very laws his government was purporting to implement in the first place? On Tuesday, 24 February on 7News, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services said about the bill that he introduced into the parliament, 'The parliament of the day will have—will determine in the future if any other slogans or phrases will be included.' That was just plain wrong.

Mr PURDIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am being misrepresented and I take personal offence.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Ninderry. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the minister has taken offence. Would you withdraw, please?

Mr DICK: I withdraw. This from the man who introduced the bill we are debating in the House. It was never going to be the parliament that decided which phrases could be captured under the bill currently before the House. It was going to be a matter for the Attorney-General to proscribe words and phrases to be criminalised under the law of Queensland by regulation. In one phrase, the police minister himself was wrong not just once but twice. First, the minister was flat out wrong that statements would be outlawed by the parliament. That was never the intent of the bill, it was never the words in the bill and it was not the case when he spoke on the news on 24 February.

Mr PURDIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I again take personal offence because I am being misrepresented by the member for Woodridge. I ask that he withdraw.

Mr DICK: I withdraw. The police minister's second mistake was this: his pronouncement that other slogans or phrases would be added in the future. That was a direct contradiction of the Premier's declaration, the Premier's solemn promise, his 'you betcha' guarantee straight down the lens of the television camera that only the two nominated phrases would ever be captured by this legislation.

Mr PURDIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I was being asked about future governments. I am being misrepresented. I ask that he withdraw. I take personal offence.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just one moment on that one, minister. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the minister has taken offence. Would you withdraw, please?

Mr DICK: I withdraw. What about the after-the-event justification of the amendments by members of the LNP? That is if you could call their pathetically weak, gossamer thin arguments justification at all. What about the LNP chair of the parliamentary committee, the member for Nicklin, Marty Hunt, who in the debate said, 'We accept the amendments that came from listening to feedback given by the community.' What rubbish! Listening to a panicked LNP backbench, fearful of One Nation more likely.

The member for Mundingburra said in this debate—

Our government has listened to concerns during the parliamentary process, and that is why these expressions are included directly in legislation ...

For the benefit of the member for Mundingburra, the LNP government did not listen to any concerns expressed during the parliamentary committee process. The LNP majority on the committee recommended that the bill be passed in its current form, without amendment, with no change to the proposal that the Attorney-General be given almost unfettered discretion to criminalise words and phrases in Queensland at her own discretion. We had this from the police minister in this debate—six words only to justify the amendments: 'We have listened carefully to Queensland.' They were listening to a panicked LNP backbench in revolt, more accurately.

This would be funny if it were not so serious. If only the LNP had bothered to listen to Queenslanders, listened to people who had expressed genuine and deep concern about this bill—submissions from the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane, the Anglican Church, Muslim organisations, the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, trade unions, legal and academic experts, or even the LNP's own go-to think tank, the Institute of Public Affairs. But, no, Premier Crisafulli with his tight, focused legislation that would stand the test of time knew better than everyone. So, here we are.

Let's be very clear, there are elements of this bill that the Labor opposition support, like protections for places of worship and stronger penalties for weapons offences, and I associate myself with the arguments brilliantly put forward by the Labor team on this side of the House. However, in the end, this bill is an opportunity comprehensively missed by the LNP, an opportunity to implement strong, nationally consistent gun reforms that avoid turning Queensland into a safe haven for gun-wielding gangs, criminals and terrorists, and to protect Queensland's multicultural communities without compromising freedom of speech. On all these matters and more, Premier Crisafulli has failed the test of leadership, and even his own LNP MPs know that.

 **Mr CHIESA** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (11.59 am): I rise to speak in strong support of the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026. This bill goes to something fundamental: the standards we set as a parliament and the standards our communities expect. They say that the standard you walk past is the standard you accept. I would go further: the standard you walk past does not merely get accepted; it lowers the standard for everyone.

We have seen that when standards drop and laws are weak communities do not just feel less safe; they become less safe. We saw that in reality in the horrific terror attack in Bondi late last year—an attack targeting Jewish people, an act of hatred designed to terrorise not just individuals but an entire community.

That tragedy did not happen in a vacuum. It followed a rise in anti-Semitic rhetoric, symbols and intimidation. It followed a period where hateful narratives were far too often dismissed as fringe or excused as mere political speech. Anti-Semitism is not political discourse; it is hate. Hate, when allowed to circulate unchecked, can progress from rhetoric to intimidation and, ultimately, to catastrophic violence.

This bill draws a clear line. The bill does exactly what it says: it fights hate and anti-Semitism and keeps guns out of the hands of terrorists and criminals. The Crisafulli LNP government are taking clear, deliberate steps to protect Queenslanders, and we are doing so in a way that is specific, targeted and measured. These laws are not abstract. They are not theoretical. They are not kneejerk. They are a direct and considered response to the anti-Semitic terrorist attack that occurred on the shores of Bondi late last year where 15 innocent people lost their lives. It was an anti-Semitic terrorist attack, and this bill takes the necessary steps to address what led to those shocking events.

Our response was not rushed. We did not lurch from headline to headline. We calmly and methodically considered the situation and developed legislation that addresses the travesty that occurred in a way that is proportionate and precise. We must be honest: the attack did not happen in isolation. We have seen the rise of unchecked anti-Semitism in this country over recent years. It was allowed to run rampant. It was allowed to grow unchecked and unabated. What started as vile ideas became hateful words. Hateful words turned into symbols sprayed on walls and threats hurled at families. Places of worship were violated and vandalised. Eventually, those embers of hate—allowed to burn uncontrollably for too long—culminated in a terrorist attack at one of our nation's most iconic places. That is why we are here today.

The bill draws a clear line. Two hateful phrases—phrases that call for the destruction of a people based on their faith—will be outlawed as part of this bill not because we are policing thought but because when those phrases are used in a way that intimidates, menaces or incites hostility they cease to be debate and become threat. Freedom of speech does not mean freedom to menace. Artistic licence does not mean licence to incite hatred.

This legislation is targeted. It applies where conduct could reasonably be expected to make a reasonable member of the public feel menaced, harassed or offended. It includes safeguards. It is not to stifle genuine debate, education or historical discussion. It does say this, though: if someone's conduct spreads anti-Semitic hatred in a way that intimidates others, there will be consequences. This is what social cohesion requires. This is exactly why strong laws matter. We know that when standards slip or when laws are weak negative consequences follow—and don't the people of North Queensland know about it after 10 years of Labor!

This bill is not just about words; it is about protection. It strengthens protections for faith communities. It modernises offences relating to assaulting ministers of religion and disturbing religious worship. It introduces a new offence for intimidating and obstructing people entering or leaving places of worship. Let's think about what that means in practical terms. Families should be able to walk into a synagogue, church, mosque or temple without fear. They should not have to wonder whether someone outside the gates intends to intimidate them. This bill sends a powerful message: Queensland will not tolerate attacks on faith communities. Let me be clear: these protections apply to all religions.

This bill also ensures guns are kept out of the hands of terrorists and criminals. That matters deeply in regional Queensland. In my electorate of Hinchinbrook, firearms ownership is practical and responsible. Primary producers rely on firearms for pest management. Sporting shooters are members of disciplined, law-abiding clubs. These Queenslanders follow the rules. They are not the problem.

This legislation is specific and targeted. It does not punish lawful owners; it targets terrorists and criminals. It introduces the toughest penalties in the world for people carrying and dealing in illegal weapons. It increases penalties for stealing firearms and ammunition because stolen firearms feed the illicit market and pose a direct risk to community safety. It strengthens penalties for trafficking and unlawful supply because trafficking is the pipeline that arms organised crime. It creates a new offence for reckless discharge of a weapon towards a building or vehicle—conduct designed to terrify communities and often linked to criminal organisations. It tackles the emerging threat of 3D printed firearms by criminalising the possession and distribution of blueprint material used to manufacture untraceable weapons. Technology has changed. The law must keep pace.

This bill also ensures only Australian citizens are able to hold a firearms licence, aligning Queensland with national decisions, but includes reasonable carve-outs for genuine occupational and sporting needs. It tightens storage requirements to reduce the risk of theft, because secure storage is one of the most effective preventive measures available. It strengthens firearm prohibition orders so high-risk individuals can be restricted quickly. It broadens what can be considered in determining whether someone is fit and proper, because when it comes to firearms we must err on the side of community safety. It empowers police not just to investigate crime after it happens but to disrupt and frustrate serious criminal activity before harm occurs. This is not overreach; it is responsibility. Our response is deliberate and targeted. It targets terrorists, criminals and those who seek to spread anti-Semitic hatred, and it does so while respecting the rights of law-abiding Queenslanders.

Queenslanders expect leadership. They expect strong standards. They expect governments to act when hatred spreads. For far too long the embers of anti-Semitism were allowed to burn. This government has made the tough calls necessary to extinguish them. We are making Queensland safer. We are protecting faith communities. We are ensuring guns are kept out of the hands of terrorists and criminals. We are sending a clear message that anti-Semitism has no place in this state. This bill does exactly what it says. For those reasons, I commend it to the House.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (12.06 pm): This bill is about two important issues that matter to Queenslanders after the Bondi massacre: stamping out anti-Semitism and keeping guns out of the hands of terrorists and criminals. Queensland Labor will always back action that protects our multicultural communities and keeps weapons out of the wrong hands. On one hand this government has failed on gun control, putting Queensland out of step with other states and jurisdictions; on the other it has attacked freedom of speech. We have seen appalling anti-Semitism and racism flare in our country, and we have seen the hurt and the tragedies that hate-fuelled violence leads to.

Labor wrote to the Crisafulli government offering to work in a bipartisan way on tough action, because if ever there was a time for sincere bipartisan cooperation it is now. That offer was ignored by Premier Crisafulli. This was a failure of leadership.

There are some provisions in here that are sensible, proportionate and necessary, but part of this bill goes too far. Criminalising widely contested phrases that the government of the day deem are offensive, with jail time attached, is an outright attack on freedom of speech by Premier Crisafulli and his government. The bill creates a new offence for public recitation, distribution, publication or display of a prohibited expression, punishable by up to two years imprisonment. Those expressions will be set out in the act, and the bill also captures anything substantially similar, so someone could be prosecuted for something the government of the day decides is close enough.

This is not the 1970s under Bjelke-Petersen; this is 2026 under Premier Crisafulli. Why would anyone trust the Crisafulli government, or any government, with the most sweeping powers to restrict freedom of speech? This is a government that operates by ambush: rushed processes, token parliamentary committee consultation, decisions made behind closed doors and last-minute amendments. This government gagged free speech in the first session of this term of parliament. Now it wants to gag freedom of speech across Queensland.

We know how this will play out. Everyone knows this will not stop at two phrases. Every Queenslander knows that. No-one believes that this attack on freedom of speech will stop at this. The Minister for Police has already given the game away. He admitted that any other slogans or phrases could be included in the future. When Premier Crisafulli says, 'Don't worry, we won't add more,' or 'Don't you worry about that,' for those who know Queensland history, Queenslanders are entitled to ask, 'Why would we believe him when he has already been contradicted by his own police minister?' Why would you believe this clever politician who promised 'no new stadiums'? Premier Crisafulli—the clever politician who promised no health cuts and promised heavy rail to Maroochydore by 2032 and then dumped those election promises soon after the election—

Dr ROWAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kempton): You have been straying. Could you come back to the bill please?

Mr BAILEY: Certainly. I take your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. We have last-minute amendments from the government—another mess and another shambles. There has been no parliamentary committee scrutiny of note. For three weeks they have been telling Queenslanders their new laws are fantastic after their so-called 'calm and methodical' approach. At the eleventh hour, after chaos and division in a fractured LNP party room—

Government members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: There they go again—fractured up the back there. Only weeks after they split on the floor of this House, when the member for Mackay crossed the floor, we see the Premier buckling and folding on this. He caved.

Government members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: You can hear the fractured LNP party room trying to interject on this speech. There you have it. The Premier caved. It is the government that is in chaos and confusion. They have spent weeks refusing to work in good faith in a bipartisan manner and now they are scrambling shambolically to rewrite their own bill at the last minute after the embarrassment of Premier Crisafulli. They took a bill that gave them massive unfettered powers over freedom of speech. They thought they could use their numbers to jam it through and they have been caught out by their internal party room divisions.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, he is not taking interjections.

Mr BAILEY: They have been caught out by their internal party room divisions. We have an out-of-touch Premier and a lacklustre and talentless cabinet full of party hacks and drones. We have even heard that the bill they announced did not even go through cabinet beforehand. How shambolic a process is that! The reports are that LNP backbenchers were set to cross the floor this week, for a second time it would have been, to vote against Premier Crisafulli's gag on freedom of speech.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: There they go again—all fractured, all over the place. The members interjecting now are the ones who forced the buckling of the Premier. He lost control of his party room and the proof is here before the House with these last-minute amendments. The member for Mackay earlier in the week was seen being babysat around the halls of parliament while the party room had a very long meeting to deal with this legislation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I think you are straying again. Come back to the bill, please.

Mr BAILEY: 'This legislation' was actually in that sentence, Mr Deputy Speaker. I take your guidance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I really do not want to argue with you. Come back to the bill, please.

Mr BAILEY: Certainly. There was a very long meeting to deal with this legislation. First it was abortion. Now it is freedom of speech. The Premier is losing control of a divided party room when it comes to this bill, with a weak cabinet. The bill that went to the committee did not include the two phrases the Minister for Police now says will be incorporated in the bill, meaning the committee was unable to properly consider the very thing the government now wants to criminalise. That is absolutely extraordinary. Queenslanders were denied proper consultation and denied proper parliamentary process once again by Premier Crisafulli.

The phrases this government is already talking about banning are widely contested. That is a fact. Other jurisdictions have decided against proscribing them for that precise reason. Once you make 'offence' the criminal threshold, you are inviting the state to police politics, to criminalise protest, to criminalise debate and to return Queensland to a police state like we saw in the 1970s and 1980s before the Fitzgerald inquiry exposed the rotten core at the heart of the Bjelke-Petersen government. That is not a line Queensland should cross again.

This is not to say that hate speech should be tolerated. It should not. Queensland has existing criminal and civil protections—serious vilification provisions introduced by past Labor governments—but the real barriers to combatting hate speech are education, enforcement and resourcing, not a lack of criminal offences on the books to charge people with.

We know this government is not serious about protecting people. If they were, they would not have blocked the respect-at-work reforms that included strong anti-discrimination and anti-vilification laws to protect people in their workplaces that were consulted on, assessed and passed through parliament—

Dr ROWAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order again on relevance. I ask you to draw the member back to the long title of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I have been pretty patient. If you could stay within the long title of the bill, I would be far happier.

Mr BAILEY: Certainly—only to now ram through this rushed attack on freedom of speech after a sham 17-day committee process. This bill is about abusing the parliamentary process.

Peak bodies from across the spectrum have raised serious concerns including the Queensland Law Society and Legal Aid, warning about uncertainty, subjective tests and provisions capturing far more speech than first intended. The Attorney-General herself said when she was LNP opposition leader that there is ‘nothing more precious than the right to freedom of speech’. Back then even the Deputy Premier, the member for Kawana, said ‘what we want is freedom of speech’. How many times did he say that during business motion debates? The member for Scenic Rim warned that laws preventing words that may ‘insult’ or ‘offend’ are ‘incredibly broad’, ‘subjective’ and suppress free debate. They are their words, not mine. They are the words of LNP MPs when they were in opposition. It is difficult to fathom the hypocrisy of this government when it comes to freedom of speech.

On protecting faith communities: there are strong penalties for attacks on churches, mosques and synagogues; protections for ministers of religion; and new offences to stop intimidation near places of worship. These provisions are targeted, proportionate and necessary, and we support them.

On symbols: there are provisions to strengthen bans on hate symbols, aligning with Commonwealth-listed terrorist organisations and state sponsors of terrorism. Labor supports them.

On weapons: there are tougher penalties for trafficking and unlawful supply, new offences for reckless discharge and a cracking down on 3D printed firearm blueprints—serious measures that go to preventing serious harm. We support them. This bill is a missed opportunity on gun reform and exposes something Queenslanders already know about the Crisafulli government—that is, that Premier Crisafulli and the LNP are soft on guns.

When it comes to the hard work of gun reform—closing loopholes, lifting licensing standards, mandating mental health checks and resourcing enforcement responding to the gunning down and the murder of constables Arnold and McCrow at Wieambilla—they hide from that responsibility. You cannot be tough on crime if you are weak on guns. Increasing penalties alone will not stop the next Wieambilla. If a person who should never have had access to a firearm can obtain one, store it, transport it and use it then the system has failed before a court sentences anybody.

We know the LNP’s instinct when it comes to gun control. We saw it in opposition—voting against measures, trying to water down reforms and running interference for the gun lobby. The LNP is running a protection racket for the gun lobby. That is very clear. Where are the nationally consistent gun laws Queensland needs so that our state does not become the weakest link? They are not there. Where are the mental health checks, the safeguards and the buyback pathways? They are not there, because Premier Crisafulli and this government are the weakest link on gun control in this country. It is an utter disgrace that they are not locked in with other jurisdictions to support such appropriate measures.

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (12.17 pm): I would like to remind the member for Miller: who voted against tougher laws when it came to criminals with guns? It was the Labor Party. It was the Labor Party who failed to vote against the very important legislation that we are bringing into this House when it comes to getting tough on criminals with guns. I completely refute those comments from the member for Miller. He should hang his head in shame for having been part of a government, part of a cabinet actually at times, that watered down the laws when it comes to firearms and crime in Queensland.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence to the comments from the member and ask that he withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kempton): The member has taken offence. Could you withdraw?

Mr HEAD: I withdraw. There are few moments in your life you never forget—every detail: the room you were in, even the weather, and what you are meant to be doing at the time. Instead you are sitting there in disbelief, disbelief at the evil act unfolding in this great country. On 14 December last year, two days after the Wieambilla anniversary, we had the Bondi terrorist attack. The commonality here between the attackers is their pure hatred for this nation and their pure hatred for our way of life.

Sovereign citizen types, Hamas supporters and overall terrorists—those who love their country do not treat it in the way we have seen it treated by these people and other corners of society. If you love this country it will love you back. Too much hatred has been allowed to fester on our shores. If we do not change this trajectory there will be no Australia to love, which is exactly the goal of these very terrorists who attack on our shores. It is the very goal of many who spew hatred about our nation

generally. I hope this is the last time we see an attack like this on our soil. Until we not only as a government but also as a society at large call out hatred and rebuild our passion and patriotism for this great nation, hope is all we can do. We have many people who turn up to rallies across the country spewing this hatred and trolling people online. Frankly, it is not good enough.

This is good legislation, but as a state we can access only some levers needed to address these issues, not all. I ask those members opposite in the Labor Party whether they believe in this legislation, because I would suggest that some of their behaviour suggests otherwise. What we learned during question time today is that the scourge of anti-Semitism lies within the Labor Party itself. The member for Cairns, a member of the opposition front bench, has been espousing and circulating anti-Semitic garbage on his social media profiles. He has liked comments that can only be described as horrifically conspiratorial, suggesting that Jewish people have cells all over the world and are somehow controlling things. It is the oldest form of anti-Semitic trope that rose to prominence in the shadows of World War II through a Nazi regime that perpetrated the most horrific crimes imaginable against Jewish people. These are the kinds of views that the member Cairns has expressed and associated himself with.

Mrs Frecklington: And now the Leader of the Opposition is associated.

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection from the member for Nanango. Those opposite have refused to call it out. The member for Cairns has not even apologised or expressed regret over sharing these comments. These views are not reflective of, or compatible with, a modern Queensland, yet they sit in this very chamber. If these are the views of the member for Cairns, how will he vote on this bill? How can he possibly support the bill if he feels the way he says he does on Facebook? It is the reason we need strong laws to address anti-Semitism and it is why this government has taken action. The question now is: what action will the Leader of the Opposition take with regard to the member for Cairns? His position in this chamber is untenable. As we also heard in question time, members of Labour parties around the world have been sacked for sharing the same sorts of things the member for Cairns shared.

Like many in my electorate, I own guns. I use those firearms for controlling pests on the family property and at times, when I get the opportunity, recreational shooting as well. Firearms support many parts of life in the bush and across the great electorate of Callide, whether it is clubs and community groups or small and family business. I talk to a lot of our ammunition and firearms dealers regularly about the work they do and how it is tough to operate a business in that world in this day and age. They support pest controllers cracking down on feral pigs—

Mr Perrett: Wild dogs.

Mr HEAD:—and wild dogs; I take that interjection from the Minister for Primary Industries, who is working hard with his cabinet colleagues to address the failures we have seen from those opposite when it comes to pests in national parks and across our regions. The tourism hunting industry exists off the back of firearms in Queensland. I support law-abiding firearm owners. I support sensible laws that support law-abiding firearm owners and, importantly, the crackdown on criminals with guns.

We have worked calmly and methodically since the Bondi attack to give due consideration to all policy proposals to make Queensland safer. I know that the cabinet continues to consider all of the recommendations from the coronial inquest into the Wieambilla attack. Some of these laws reflect that. We have consulted with stakeholders and the community to address a serious and complex issue with a broader plan to strength community safety, disrupt activity and ensure Queensland has the toughest possible laws to keep weapons out of the wrong hands.

Hundreds of firearms are stolen in Queensland each year and recovery rates are low. Unfortunately, this is an issue I hear about too often. Stolen firearms directly contribute to the illicit firearms market and impose increased risks to community safety. I know that one of my local firearm dealers, Retschlag Firearms in Biloela, received a call from South Australian police recently trying to track down a firearm they sold many years ago. It is not just a Queensland problem; it is nationwide issue. This bill addresses this serious issue by increasing the maximum penalty for stealing a firearm or ammunition from 10 years to 14 years imprisonment. Stakeholders have been calling for change to strengthen offences for stolen firearms, yet those opposite—because they are soft on crime and they do not believe in getting tough on criminals—failed to act. We are focused on keeping guns out of the hands of criminals while supporting our law-abiding firearm owners.

This bill increases penalties for the unlawful supply, manufacture or trafficking of weapons, including shortening or modifying firearms. A new offence for acts in preparation to cause death or grievous bodily harm has been created to capture acts done in preparation to commit an offence likely to cause death or grievous bodily harm that sit outside the definition of terrorism. This offence carries a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment.

A new offence has been created for reckless discharge of a weapon towards a building or vehicle, with a maximum penalty of 16 years imprisonment. If the offender is a participant of a criminal organisation and in association with or under direction from that organisation, the minimum sentence is seven years imprisonment. This offence is also subject to Adult Crime, Adult Time sentencing provisions.

We are introducing limits with regard to citizens. There will be exemptions for noncitizens who require a weapons licence for genuine reasons such as sports, competitive shooting or occupational requirements. These are sensible laws to ensure that any noncitizen with a firearm in Queensland needs a very good reason to have it. 3D printed firearms are becoming a growing issue and pose a significant risk to community, and there are provisions in the bill to crack down on that. We first attempted to address the rise in 3D printed firearms in 2019; however, once again—as has been a theme throughout this speech—the Labor Party was soft on crime and failed to support it.

This bill provides greater community safety by strengthening storage requirements. I say to all of my constituents across Callide: if you still have a timber safe, once this bill receives royal assent it is time to upgrade. If you have category A, B, C, E or M weapons they will now have to be stored in solid steel containers. This is a sensible change to ensure it is harder for criminals to steal guns.

Mrs Poole: We have given them 12 months to do that.

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection. You will have 12 months to do that. This is a great bill. It is a sensible bill that will deliver for Queensland and I commend it to the House.

 **Dr O'SHEA** (South Brisbane—ALP) (12.27 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026. I acknowledge the work of the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee, the secretariat and the many organisations and individuals who made submissions to the committee.

This bill responds to one of the darkest moments in Australia's history. On 14 December 2025, 15 Australians, including a 10-year-old child, were murdered at a Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach. They were murdered for one reason alone: they were Jewish.

When I was younger I lived in Israel. I met many Holocaust survivors who had fled there from Europe after the Second World War. As a medical student I worked in a hospital in northern Israel alongside doctors of all different backgrounds and religions, united in the sole purpose of caring for and treating patients irrespective of their race or faith. It was therefore particularly shocking and shameful to me to see the rise of anti-Semitism in our beautiful country and how hatred and speech translated into attacks on Jewish Australians and their schools, homes, businesses and synagogues, ultimately culminating in the murder of 15 members of our Jewish community in the deadliest terrorist attack in our nation's history.

On that day we saw individual acts of incredible heroism—like from Chaya, a young teenager who used her body to shield two little children from the bullets, and from Ahmed, who wrestled the gun off one of the terrorists when he saw his fellow Australians being attacked. In the midst of horror, we saw the best of the Australian spirit that day, and I would like to thank all the emergency services, the surf lifesavers and the Australian public who ran towards danger and saved so many lives, often by using just their bare hands to stem the flow of blood from the gunshot wounds.

Australia is a multicultural country. Like so many of my fellow Queenslanders, I am a migrant and I am privileged to have been able to make my home in Australia alongside our First Nations peoples, the oldest continuous culture in the world. My community of South Brisbane is a vibrant multicultural community, with waves of migrants having made their homes there over the years. Coming from all different backgrounds, these new migrants left behind grievances in their home countries and worked together to build a strong, tolerant and cohesive community, and this migrant story has been repeated across our great state and country.

However, in recent years the erosion of mutual respect and division has crept into our wider community, fuelled by extremist ideology and conflict overseas. This threat to the social cohesion of our country has been evident in both the lead-up to the heinous terrorist attack in Bondi and its aftermath. This is what has happened in the past few weeks: there has been an attempted terrorist bombing of our First Nations people at an Invasion Day rally in Perth; the Muslim community at Lakemba Mosque in Sydney were targeted with death threats as worshipers prepared for the start of Ramadan; a man rammed his vehicle into the gates of the Brisbane Synagogue on Margaret Street, just around the corner from this House; we have heard horrific reports of Islamic State supporters attacking gay and bisexual teenagers in Sydney; in Western Australia the police have uncovered the planning of a

terrorist attack against mosques, police headquarters and Parliament House; and our Prime Minister has had to be evacuated from the Lodge due to a bomb threat linked to the performance of a Chinese dance group.

In a speech to the Lowy Institute a few months ago, Mike Burgess, the head of ASIO, warned that Australians were—

... losing the ability to converse with civility, debate with respect, disagree with restraint.

He advised that we needed to consider the consequences of our words and actions. He stated—

Every one of us has a role to play protecting our social cohesion. Our words matter, our decisions matter, our actions matter.

Queenslanders want a society where people of every faith and background can live without fear. As elected representatives, as parliamentarians, we have an obligation to do all in our power to ensure the safety of our fellow Australians. The Queensland Labor opposition condemns hatred and vilification in any form, and I stand here with great sadness today that there is a requirement for the need for mutual respect to be enshrined in legislation. Mutual respect irrespective of race, religion or sexual orientation is the essence of being Australian—one of the fundamental values of our Australian society—and incitement of hatred and violence to fellow Australians cannot be tolerated in Queensland.

This bill expands the existing prohibited symbols framework to include symbols used by organisations designated by the Commonwealth as terrorist organisations and known to be associated with ideologies of extreme prejudice. The bill seeks to prohibit the public display of these symbols if doing so would cause menace, harassment or offence to a person. The bill also introduces a new offence for publicly reciting or displaying prohibited expressions used to incite discrimination, hostility or violence towards a group.

These laws have been proposed as a response to chants and slogans that have resulted in intimidation of Jewish Queenslanders amidst a rise in anti-Semitism. However, it is important that any new laws prevent the public use of expressions that are weaponised to menace or harass any group in our society while not eliminating legitimate and respectful political discourse. It is essential that these laws get the balance right between protecting Queenslanders and freedom of speech.

Many stakeholders raised the extremely limited consultation undertaken as part of the review of this bill, as well as the need for appropriate safeguards for these new laws to reduce limitations on freedom of expression. Legal Aid Queensland in their submission suggested that—

... the list of symbols or expressions should be contained within a schedule to the relevant Act. Any amendments to the list of prohibited symbols and phrases would therefore be subject to consultation with the public prior to becoming law.

I see in the amendments released yesterday afternoon that the minister has now listened to expert advice and removed the regulation-making power for the proscription of a prohibited expression from this bill so that future changes will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny. Stakeholders also stressed the role of community engagement and education programs to address the root causes of anti-Semitism and racism in general, as well as educational campaigns to explain any new laws so Queenslanders are aware of which symbols and expressions are prohibited.

The bill also strengthens protection for religious worship, ministers of religion and places of worship, including introducing a new offence for obstructing or intimidating people entering or leaving a place of worship. In their submission, the Archdiocese of Brisbane strongly supported these provisions as addressing 'real and urgent threats'. These changes were also supported by the Islamic College of Brisbane and the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies.

The bill introduces new offences for reckless discharge of a weapon towards a building or vehicle and the possession of 3D printed firearm blueprints, and it requires a Queensland weapons licence holder to be an Australian citizen. These are welcome changes to strengthen gun laws in this state. However, with over one million firearms registered in Queensland, I would ask the government to implement the Coroner's recommendations from the Wieambilla tragedy regarding mandatory mental health checks for weapons licence holders as well as to listen to the Alannah & Madeline Foundation which, in their submission, asked the government to—

... reinstate the crucial recommendations from National Cabinet to limit the number of firearms to be held by any one individual.

and recommended that Queensland—

... participates in the Commonwealth gun buyback in order to provide appropriate compensation to legal firearm owners.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (12.37 pm): I rise to make a contribution on behalf of the people I serve as the member for Southern Downs on the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026. Like many before me in this debate, I wish to emphasise my deep sadness and regret at what the Jewish community in our country have suffered, most poignantly through the outrageous murders and terrorist attack which occurred on Bondi Beach recently where 15 Jewish Australians had their lives senselessly taken. They were slain, and many others were injured and will probably be scarred physically and mentally forever after what they have suffered.

One of the first things that happened in the days after the Bondi attack was that I got a phone call from the Premier, as did a lot of members of the LNP party room, I think. He asked us for our views and provided an assurance that the response to this outrage was going to be appropriate and make a difference. By that, he meant it would not be a kneejerk reaction which served only political purposes and was for the purpose of optics. That is exactly what this bill achieves.

In relation to firearms, the bill does important things like increase penalties for the distribution of 3D printed guns or the material and data from which they are made. It increases penalties for the theft of firearms and for the theft of ammunition. It also introduces the offence which we would call drive-by shootings, which is something that has long been called for in Queensland, and I certainly welcome that. It introduces other sensible things like, as my honourable friend the member for Callide said earlier, the abolition of timber gun safes as an appropriate way of storing firearms. I think these are things which the community accepts.

In my electorate of Southern Downs, where many people are lawful users of firearms occupationally, as collectors or as members of various gun clubs throughout the electorate, I know this bill has been received very well. It was a relief to see that out of all of the state and territory leaders in this country it was the Crisafulli government which said, 'Hey, we're not going to be taking measures which don't make a difference except for perceptions. We're going to be thinking this through and making reforms which will actually make a difference.'

I want to make it very clear that anybody who says you cannot be tough on crime if you are not tough on guns is proposing an argument that is aimed at deceiving the people of Queensland. I doubt any of those people know—or if they do know, they are being deliberately dishonest to the people of Queensland—just how hard it is to be a licensed firearms owner, just how stringent and exhausting the checks are for applicants of firearms licences in Queensland. It is not a walk in the park. I have seen many good people who were refused the renewal of a licence or not given the licence they needed for what I thought to be rather arbitrary reasons. I have frequently had to correspond with ministers of both governments to advocate on behalf of good people in my electorate who have experienced difficulty in that area. The suggestion that our gun laws are not tough now, which is implicit in that statement, is false.

Mr Head: They oversaw them for a decade.

Mr LISTER: I take that interjection from my honourable friend the member for Callide. He represents the same sorts of people as I do in his large electorate. It was the Labor government that ran the show for so long. What you want to be tough on is criminals with guns, not law-abiding firearms owners.

Mrs Poole: And we know their stance on that.

Mr LISTER: The member for Mundingburra knows a thing or two about these sorts of things, having been a police officer for many years before coming to this place.

I think it is very important that we rejected the kneejerk reactions. We have heard many Labor Party members talk about the Coroner's report and they have said incorrectly that the Coroner recommended that mental health checks mandatorily be implemented for firearms owners. What the Coroner said was that that should be investigated. It has been and it has been found wanting.

I can say to the House with total certainty that I have a problem in my electorate with having enough clinicians to see kids who are suicidal. The idea that a clinician who is qualified to make an assessment of someone's mental fitness to be issued with a firearms licence could make such a determination in a single meeting or even in five or six is ludicrous. I think they would need 10 or a dozen meetings, perhaps of an hour at a time, to make a full assessment of the mental health of an applicant. That is simply impossible to implement. I will certainly argue that it is more important that the

few mental health professionals we have in my electorate of Southern Downs—not that there is a great surfeit of them everywhere else in the state—should be focused on the mental health of country people, which is challenged by droughts, isolation and the difficult economic circumstances that we face, not as a punitive measure to further marginalise and punish law-abiding gun owners.

Those people I know in my electorate who are firearms licensees and use firearms are good people. They are local businesspeople. They are the local teacher or butcher. They are retirees. As I have heard said earlier by members on this side of the House, they are disciplined people; they are used to the discipline of safely handling firearms and are aghast at the idea of using them for unlawful purposes. It is not just for sporting purposes; it is also an absolutely essential tool for the many people who have large land holdings in my electorate. There is a general biosecurity obligation which was introduced by the Labor government that all landowners have a legal obligation to eradicate pests on their land. In my neck of the woods we have an explosion of pigs, dogs and deer. We also have rabbits and all of the damage they do and the potential to spread diseases which would decimate our rural industries.

I am very comfortable with the provisions of this bill in terms of firearms. I think they make very useful reforms which needed to be done, but they do not—

Mr Dalton interjected.

Mr LISTER: It is common sense. I take that interjection from my honourable friend the member for Mackay.

I will move on now to the proscribing of phrases. I would like to expose the shameful deception that has been perpetrated on this House and on the people of Queensland by the Labor Party in the course of this debate. In fabricating stories of dissent in the governing party over this bill, they are wickedly deceiving the people of Queensland. It is entirely false. None of them were in the party room. In my recollection there was no dissent whatsoever. That is because this bill is necessary and the measures in it are necessary. One of the measures, which I know I have heard the Attorney-General talk about—and I see her in the House—is necessary because we cannot leave it to a future Labor government to be able to remove these important protections with the mere stroke of pen through regulation without oversight.

Mrs Frecklington: What we have seen today shows us that.

Mr LISTER: I take that interjection from the Attorney-General. She said that we have seen that today in the course of the debate in the House; that is correct. These phrases ‘from the river to the sea’ and ‘globalise the intifada’ are sinister phrases and it is entirely disingenuous to portray them as merely a slogan used in the course of peacefully pushing a particular point of view in a public forum. They are phrases which axiomatically call for the destruction of Israel and all that that implies. Given that Israel is the only Jewish state on the surface of our world, it is ipso facto an attack on Jewish people. The use of these phrases and other creeping anti-Semitism in the community has increased in recent years, bizarrely in response to the attacks on Israel which occurred in 2023 when many people were murdered. The left, which have used these phrases, have engendered a creeping disobedience to normal Australian values to take everyone as you find them and to be accepting and comfortable with difference. We have seen growing anti-Semitism of which the Labor government in Canberra was informed on many occasions, publicly and otherwise. That has come to light and I am sure more will come to light throughout the inquiry. When I hear Labor MPs in this House say, as I heard one say last night, this breakdown of deference is the result of conservative politicians, I want to call that out. The left of this country is not least to blame in the growth of anti-Semitism, and these measures in stopping the use of these shameful, disgraceful terms are necessary. I do not see any other cohorts of multicultural Australia needing to have armed guards outside their schools.

I support this bill. I support the amendments. I commend them to the House. I thank the Attorney-General for her work in preparing them.

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (12.47 pm): What happened at Bondi on 14 December was a national tragedy. Fifteen innocent lives were taken in an act of hatred and anti-Semitism. More than 40 others were injured. Families were shattered. A community was traumatised. A day meant to mark the start of Hanukkah became a day of grief that will live in our national memory forever. The Queensland Labor opposition condemns anti-Semitism in all its forms and we condemn hatred in all its forms. Everyone deserves to be safe, everyone deserves to feel safe and everyone deserves respect.

In the wake of such horror, all of us in public life have a responsibility to lower the temperature of debate, to avoid inflaming divisions and to instead focus on healing wounds and strengthening the bonds that allow our diverse communities to live well together. Social cohesion is not automatic. It is a

dynamic process that demands constant care, investment and effort to build bridges between groups, foster mutual respect and preserve the shared values that underpin our society. On 17 December we offered bipartisan support to the Premier to take strong, considered action on anti-Semitism and gun violence. That offer, disappointingly, was ignored. Instead, the government rushed forward with laws without meaningful consultation, without clarity and without full regard for the consequences.

The bill before this parliament is troublingly broad and, in parts, vague. It bundles multiple complex issues—protection of places of worship, new criminal offences around speech and symbols, and firearms reforms—into one package. The challenges faced by religious communities are real and demand careful, evidence-based responses. Let me be clear: Labor supports measures that genuinely protect places of worship. People should be able to attend synagogues, churches, mosques and temples without fear. Students, staff and families should be able to pray, learn and live safely. We welcome provisions like the new offences for intimidation or obstruction at places of religious worship and increased penalties for assaults on ministers of religion. Protecting faith communities is essential, but they deserve better than rushed legislation.

Yet after weeks of defending its original approach, the government is now scrambling. It has been forced into eleventh-hour amendments—changes not released publicly in advance, not consulted on with stakeholders and not properly scrutinised by this parliament or the people of Queensland. The bill has faced overwhelming criticism from legal experts, civil liberties groups and community organisations—so much so that the Premier has been rolled by his own party room on key elements—yet we are now asked to vote on amendments the public has barely seen. Criminalising speech is never simple. Social harmony takes leadership and clarity. It is more about listening than suppression. The offences proposed will be very difficult to prosecute and the vagueness risks creating confusion rather than clarity or, worse, chilling legitimate debate. Queensland already has strong vilification laws introduced by the former Labor government. Police and individuals can act when conduct crosses into serious incitement of hatred. Submissions to the committee urged targeted refinements, not broad new offences that could undermine freedoms.

On firearms, the shortcomings are equally glaring. This bill increases penalties for gun crimes and introduces new offences like reckless discharge toward public buildings or drive-by shootings at places of worship—measures we can support in principle—but penalties alone do not prevent weapons from falling into the wrong hands. It fails to implement key recommendations from the State Coroner following the Wieambilla shootings. It does not commit Queensland to the National Gun Buyback Scheme agreed at National Cabinet and it lacks mandatory mental health checks for licence holders or significant new funding for licensing and compliance.

If we are serious about preventing another Bondi or another Wieambilla, prevention must be the focus—robust screening, consistent national standards, early risk identification and keeping firearms out of the hands of those who intend to harm. The Labor opposition will always support action that keeps people safe, but the legislation must be clear, consultative, enforceable, evidence-based and it must protect without confusing or overreaching. This parliament does not need to choose between safety and freedom of speech or between confronting hatred and maintaining community cohesion. We can achieve both with proper consultation, careful drafting and genuine bipartisan cooperation and, as the Prime Minister has urged, a shared commitment to lowering the temperature of debate so we build trust rather than division. That is the standard Queenslanders deserve. That is the standard we must meet for the victims of Bondi, for every faith community and for every Queenslanders who wants to live in peace and security. We owe it to them to get this right—not in haste, not in chaos, not for political pointscoring. Labor stands ready to work constructively to deliver better laws.

 **Hon. AJ PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (12.53 pm): I rise to speak on the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill. The title of this bill could not be clearer about its goals—to address anti-Semitism and to prevent terrorists and criminals misusing firearms. This has originated from the most vile, evil and horrific Bondi massacre, and I pay my respects to those who lost their lives and their families.

We will tackle these issues through measures including prohibition of hate symbols and expressions to incite discrimination, hostility or violence; tackling intimidation in places of worship; and modernising offences relating to worship. The bill will also make several changes regarding firearms. It will increase stealing penalties, introduce new offences, clarify offences and impose new offences to deter criminal behaviour, reckless discharge of a weapon to a building or vehicle and possession and distribution of blueprint material for the manufacture of firearms on a 3D printer or electronic milling machine. It will also require a licence holder to be an Australian citizen and history checks to include violence or weapons related offences, make changes to deter high-risk individuals from acquiring a

weapon and strengthen storage requirements. It will also enhance police powers to frustrate criminal activity and make changes regarding surveillance in controlled operations, intelligence and information sharing.

Anti-Semitism has taken root because it has been enabled by a weak federal Labor government and weak Labor jurisdictions which failed to call out abhorrent behaviour and commentary. Labor gave succour to the hateful activists and anarchists because it is beholden to them. Anti-Semitism does not occur in a vacuum. It does not stop at being a Jewish problem. The Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies made it very clear—

Antisemitism is not only a Jewish problem but a threat to democratic values and pluralistic societies, because the conspiracy thinking and hatred it fosters undermine trust and social cohesion.

It is also an attack on our democracy because our heritage, our values, our system of government and our court system are all built on Christian values and it is who we are. I am disappointed that Labor members cynically manipulated the Bondi event to once again demonise law-abiding firearm owners, whether they are primary producers, landowners, pest controllers or recreational and sporting shooters. I am pleased to be part of a government which takes a careful, calm and methodical approach to dealing with the issues of firearms. The Gympie Pistol Club submission to the committee said it strikes—

... an appropriate balance between community safety and the rights and expectations of law-abiding citizens ... the Bill reflects careful consideration of those most directly affected by the reforms and demonstrates a commitment to proportionate and principled lawmaking.

The club compared what we are doing with other states, saying—

Unlike legislative developments in some other jurisdictions, the proposed reforms preserve the viability of lawful sporting disciplines, including Olympic-recognised shooting sports, and avoid unnecessary restriction of compliant licence holders who have demonstrated long standing adherence to the law.

It continued—

We have observed with horror the destruction of legitimate sporting and recreational interests in New South Wales, and we thank the Queensland government for not going down that same path.

Alex Lawrie from my electorate wrote—

... I am a licensed gun owner who participates weekly in club competitions as well as recreational shooting ... This includes feral pest management at my own expense, my family members are also licensed shooters and we all felt the Federal Government laws completely ignored the issue. I ... congratulate the QLD Government on presenting sensible, well thought recommendations and targeting criminals not law abiding citizens. No firearm owner I know has any issue with these laws as well as the Hate Speech laws. If people want to incite hate and violence against others then they don't belong in our society or country.

My electorate office received 126 emails from constituents who have all supported the government's position. Interestingly, no-one was against our measures. Michael from Scotchby Pocket wrote—

Thank you for your honest, sensible support in this matter.

Gary from Traveston wrote—

I would like to commend you and the government on the way the state has responded to Bondi shooting as you stated it has nothing to do with gun owners in Australia. I am pleased to see some push back towards the Albanese Government.

Eric from Victory Heights wrote—

I have been talking to other firearm owners, and we all agree this is a reasonable response. Cracking down on criminals, organised crime groups, and people with ideological motives to harm people should be severely punished. When John Howard introduced the original gun laws to Australia, I thought they were reasonable also and most of my shooting friends thought so as well. I would like to thank you and David (Crisafulli) for a ... very good response to this terrible situation Australia sees itself in.

Alex from Gympie wrote—

Thanks again for your support in this matter and we thoroughly agree with the outcome.

These laws make Queensland safer while recognising that law-abiding firearm owners are not the issue. This government understands that firearms are a necessary and legitimate tool of trade for primary producers, landowners and pest control professionals. We support their needs and took them into consideration in the drafting of these new laws. The Labor Party has a history in demonising law-abiding firearm owners. In 2020 the former Labor police minister and the former Labor agriculture minister could not close firearms shops quickly enough. They used the cloak of COVID-19 to unilaterally close licensed dealers and armourers. They gave no notice to farmers, primary producers or affected businesses. I told parliament at the time that the anti-regional Labor government was taking our hardworking farmers and agriculture sector for granted. Labor's disdain for the sector was underpinned by a hapless and incompetent agriculture minister who sat back and allowed it to happen. The inaction

was in keeping with Labor's ideological position to these tools of trade. The mess was only fixed after pressure from the LNP. Labor's vehemence about firearms is disappointing when it translates to wilful ignorance about many law-abiding users. Despite many years of it being explained to members opposite, I am disappointed that they deliberately refuse to recognise that firearms are a tool of trade. Listening to the debate, they have learned little. Many have never seen a practical application of firearms in a rural or agricultural setting.

Debate, on motion of Mr Perrett, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Premier and Minister for Veterans

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): The Premier of Queensland is unbelievable. What I mean is: the Premier of Queensland is literally unbelievable—and not in a good way—because when the Premier of Queensland opens his mouth and speaks, you know his words have two meanings. The sad consequence is that you can never believe what this Premier says. Instead, always look at what he does.

The Premier said there would be universal power bill relief. Instead, Queenslanders are still waiting. The Premier said he would ease the cost-of-living pressures on Queenslanders. Instead, the LNP increased car rego by about 24 per cent. The Premier said crime would be fixed by the Christmas before last. Instead, it was not. On all of these issues the Premier has never explained why he has done a 180. The Premier never explains, even when he is asked by the media gallery, why he has done a 180 and the Premier never explains why he has done a 180 when he is asked by Queenslanders.

The Premier said the number of victims of crime would come down. Instead, the LNP have been caught out twice fudging crime victim numbers. It happened again this week. The *Courier-Mail* reported that around 1,000 children who were the victims of domestic and family violence were not counted as crime victims. It is the second time the LNP have been caught out like this. The LNP are serious repeat offenders when it comes to fudging crime victim numbers.

When it comes to the Premier, there is a readily identifiable pattern of unbelievable behaviour. The LNP are serious repeat offenders when it comes to misleading Queenslanders, and it is a very consistent pattern that goes beyond the world of politics when it comes to the Premier. When the Premier was running a private company, SET Solutions, the company traded while insolvent. The Premier was forced to pay \$200,000 to the creditors to make his problems go away. Then the Premier failed to declare these payments, even though by then he was a member of parliament. To this very day, the Premier has refused to tell Queenslanders the truth about SET Solutions and his failures of propriety, transparency and accountability. That is because the Premier is not transparent; the Premier is opaque. The Premier keeps secrets—secrets he fears others will find out.

What this Premier fears more than anything else is that Queenslanders will get to see his true character. Well, it is too late. Queenslanders are seeing the Premier's true character. They see through his actions, through his deceptions and through his unwillingness to be up-front with the truth, and when he is asked the Premier always does a 180. The fudging of crime victim numbers is another example of the Premier not being straight with the people of Queensland.

Glasshouse Electorate

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation) (2.03 pm): I recently had the pleasure of being part of the official opening of the Seven Hills Estate in Conondale. Owned by James and Michelle Burnett, it is a new, truly wonderful ecotourism offering in the electorate of Glass House nestled on a 420-acre property at the foothills of the Conondale National Park, roughly between Maleny and Kenilworth. I mentioned James and Michelle, but the reality is that there are four generations of the Burnett family involved in the opening and the operation of Seven Hills. It is entirely off-grid and is a sanctuary for nature lovers who want to immerse themselves in the rural landscape. It has three fantastic lodges that offer sustainable living, modern comfort—trust me, very modern comfort—and a genuine and unique farmstay experience. The other really wonderful thing about Seven Hills is that it exemplifies our approach to

private protected areas. As part of that 420-acre property, 250 acres has been turned into a nature refuge. It epitomises the type of voluntary, manageable and productive farming land that we want to have as part of the LNP Crisafulli government.

I also acknowledge the school captain at Mooloolah State School, Ethan Maguire, who set up a new breakfast club for his classmates. The idea began when his teacher asked the class who had eaten breakfast. Ethan noticed that some of his fellow students did not put up their hand so he decided to take action and help. He brainstormed with his mum and they launched the breakfast club, which is now running every Tuesday and Wednesday. It provides students with a free nutritious breakfast to start the day. His mum and the chappy also help out. It has great community support from the Mooloolah bakery, the Woollies at Beerwah, Gateway Care at Caloundra and the local Lions club. Even I chipped in with a Local Heroes grant of \$250. What a fantastic example of student leadership and community spirit. Well done, Ethan.

In the run-up to International Women's Day on Sunday, 8 March I want to acknowledge an incredibly inspiring young woman from the electorate of Glass House, Isabella Buckland, a year 12 student at Glass House Christian College. This young lady in 2024 spent one day a week at the University of the Sunshine Coast assisting PhD students with their laboratory work and research. She then went on to be a UQ science ambassador at her school last year, demonstrating science for primary students. This year she participated in year 12 biology camp at the Tangalooma wrecks conducting reef research. She studied human environmental impacts and completed scuba training for underwater surveys. The latest is that she is headed off to the National Youth Science Forum, a leading STEM program for our top senior science students. Well done, Isabella. It is great to support you. You are an inspiration to all around you.

Child Safety System

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (2.06 pm): I rise to address a betrayal of transparency. This LNP Crisafulli government and its child safety minister stood before the people of Queensland and promised a thorough, uncompromising investigation into our child safety system. They called the system 'catastrophically broken'. They promised to fix it, but now they have cut that investigation short by six months. Is the LNP attempting to cover up the government's significantly detrimental mistakes? We already know that the LNP implemented an IT system that is currently causing major departmental disruptions. We know this because the frontline staff—the ones trying to keep children safe—expressed their frustration in the Together union's department survey. Instead of allowing the inquiry to scrutinise these technological and operational failures in detail, the minister has pulled the handbrake. It is another slant on public trust in this LNP administration.

At the last election the LNP promised to govern with transparency, so where is that transparency now? The inquiry commissioner, Paul Anastassiou KC, took the extraordinary step of issuing a public statement voicing his concerns. This is a move almost unheard of by a commissioner. He was blunt. He said—

It cannot be denied the government's requirement the date for the final report be brought forward ... involves a significant change to the planned future progress of the Inquiry.

This child safety minister has made one horrendous decision after another and the Premier has supported every one. Those decisions are now the Premier's decisions. They have decided that this inquiry does not need to be thorough. They have chosen to dishonour the bravery of those bringing their stories forward. They have chosen not to listen to victims and experts. They deserve to be heard. They deserve advocacy that matches the gravitas of their pain. Whether it is rolling out a faulty IT system whereby thousands of children have been left unmonitored or fudging figures through clever accounting, the tactics are the same. It is time to stop playing clever politics and to start acting like leaders with integrity. If this Premier is going to stake his career on promises then this LNP government has no choice but to stop the clock and give this inquiry the time it and our children deserve.

Maryborough CBD; Australia Day Awards; Prep Teacher Awards

 **Mr BAROUNIS** (Maryborough—LNP) (2.09 pm): I rise today to acknowledge the welcome announcement made yesterday in Maryborough by our Premier, the Hon. David Crisafulli, and the Hon. Dan Purdie, Minister for Police and Emergency Services. For far too long antisocial behaviour has been a growing issue in our community. Over the past 12 months, with the support of the Premier, a humane, multilayered taskforce has been working to address the complex issues surrounding antisocial

behaviour in our CBD. While this approach has not always been welcomed by those engaging in this behaviour, the Premier assured me that if we remain committed to a clear and well-executed plan we will begin to see positive change.

With new legislation our local police also have the powers they need to ensure residents and visitors feel safe again. This is critical for our small business owners, many of whom have struggled due to the ongoing situation. Maryborough will be one of the first towns in Queensland to trial exclusion zones for individuals engaging in antisocial behaviour. As a community we are turning a corner. With the right support and the right powers for our police we can restore the Maryborough CBD to the welcoming and community-spirited place it has always been.

I would also like to acknowledge some wonderful community achievements in my electorate. On 22 February Maryborough hosted the Tones and I concert which attracted more than 8,500 people. Emma Newman, who received the Fraser Coast Regional Council Australia Day Arts and Culture Award, performed at the concert and represented our community on the national stage. Congratulations, Emma. Our community is incredibly proud of you.

Teaching is never an easy profession, yet three local teachers have recently been recognised as Fraser Coast's favourite prep teachers. Congratulations to Emma Ricciardi from Howard State School, Erin Burrows from St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Raelene Hedberg from Riverside Christian College. Each of these teachers spoke about their passion for shaping young minds and the joy that comes from watching the curiosity and confidence of young children grow. Finally, I would like to thank everyone in the Maryborough electorate who contributes to making it such a diverse, supportive and inspiring place to live.

Secure Communities Partnership Program

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.12 pm): During the last election campaign Queenslanders heard a lot of promises from the now Premier, most of which we have since heard he has not delivered. One of those promises was the Secure Communities Partnership Program—a \$40 million program that was supposed to help small businesses improve safety and security directly. When one scratches beneath the surface we see a familiar story: big promises in front of the cameras, confusion afterwards and small businesses left feeling used.

In Bundaberg during the campaign the now Premier stood alongside Warren, the owner of Network Car & Truck Rentals, or 'Wazza' as he likes to be called. The now Premier promoted the policy as something that businesses like Wazza's could apply for: funding to help improve safety through measures like CCTV, even security upgrades. When Wazza went to apply he discovered something very different. He was told he could not apply; the grant was restricted to local councils only. That was confirmed during the estimates hearing when I put questions directly to the minister about the eligibility criteria. Here we had a situation where a hardworking small business owner had been used by the now Premier as a backdrop for an election announcement, only to discover that the very program that he was promised access to was never actually open to him. Mr Crisafulli is a smooth operator. Is he clever or is he just slick? I am not sure which. Either way, it is not good enough. Wazza from Bundy deserves better. Small businesses deserve honesty, not to be campaign props.

The story does not end there. After our questioning at estimates the government has quietly changed the rules. This week the small business minister was duly dragged out and dusted off to do a ministerial statement to remind Queenslanders that in round 2 small businesses can now apply for these grants. That is great news for small businesses. Let us be very clear about what this means. It means that without scrutiny, without questions being asked in this chamber, small businesses like Network Car & Truck Rentals would still be locked out of the program that was advertised to them during the election. Sadly, Wazza himself told Channel 7 last week that he felt abandoned and used. This is not the sentiment of someone who wants to feel supported by the government; it is the sentiment of someone who believes a promise and was let down.

This program was supposed to support safer communities and stronger small businesses. Instead it has become an example of a shambolic government, poor communication and shifting rules. Who is left out—small businesses owners in Bundaberg like Wazza who was left wondering whether he was part of a policy or just part of a photo opportunity. Queensland small businesses deserve better than that and this opposition will continue asking questions to make sure they get it.

Surf Life Saving

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.15 pm): I rise to advise the House of a wonderful new manufacturer who has started up business in the legendary electorate of Mermaid Beach since last December and, believe it or not, it is Surf Life Saving Queensland. With great wisdom and foresight Surf Life Saving Queensland, under the brilliant stewardship of Nathan Fife, have relocated their Queensland headquarters to a fantastic new purpose-built headquarters in Mermaid Beach on the fabulous Gold Coast. Included in the three-storey building is a facility for manufacturing inflatable rescue boats—IRBs; the surf lifesaving world's 21st century answer to quick and rapid rescue. I witnessed 18 being manufactured for sale to lifesaving clubs across the nation. Plans are also in place to manufacture these IRBs for use by disaster management groups across the country for use when flooding from rivers engulfs our towns. They are light and incredibly quick, holding six persons and are amazingly durable, with some existing ones already lasting 20 years. What a wonderful initiative to locate the Queensland headquarters of surf lifesaving in the middle of the Gold Coast, the nation's tourism and surfing capital and home regularly to Australia's national surf lifesaving titles as well as international surfing contests.

Surf lifesaving is a unique Australian family endeavour, starting from a very early age with cute-as-pie pink-shirted nippers on weekends, graduating to full-blown surf club members donating thousands of volunteer hours patrolling to keep our beaches safe. Nippers must have a parent with them so they cannot be used as babysitting facilities, which encourages parents to become emotionally involved. I am privileged to have four great clubs in my electorate: North Burleigh, Nobby Beach, Miami and, of course, the electorate's namesake club of Mermaid Beach. I am proud to support them all in any way I can and proud to be a financial sponsor of several of their events with great gusto. I love the family tradition of the clubs, with generations of families involved. Their magnificent locations lend themselves to fine eating, meeting and socialising hotspots for our local communities.

For Surf Life Saving Queensland to position their headquarters in the very heart of the Queensland surf lifesaving community for the next part of this century is both inspirational thinking and strategically dynamic placement to take advantage of a population boom in the backyard of their most important natural asset, the 42 kilometres of Gold Coast beaches. The red and yellow iconic brand of lifesaving is as Australian as football, meat pies and Holden cars.

Mr Mander: And Kangaroos!

Mr STEVENS: I forgot the kangaroos. Thank you, member for Everton. Well done, Nathan, and your very happy team at the Mermaid Beach Surf Life Saving Club.

Sport Infrastructure

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.18 pm): Across South-East Queensland grassroots sport continues to reach new heights, which means our fields and our courts rarely get a rest. Grounds that once hosted casual kickabouts, dog walkers or people wanting to get out and get some exercise themselves are now fully booked out by organised sport, and even then it is not enough. In my electorate I have teams that are playing their home games away because there simply is not enough field time available at their own clubs. Clubs are having to turn people away. Waitlists have blown out. Families are driving up to an hour just to find somewhere for their kids to play. Some people, particularly women wanting to get back into sport, are simply giving up. It is a travesty. It is not just happening in my electorate.

Hockey Queensland needs seven additional synthetic fields to meet future demand. Football Queensland needs 10 full-size fields, three junior fields and 40 field upgrades in Brisbane alone. Basketball Queensland needs 223 additional courts across Queensland. Netball Queensland needs more than 40 additional courts.

It is clear that right now infrastructure is falling behind participation, and that is before we get into the extraordinary challenges faced by our para-athletes. While local clubs are spending hours a week trying to find and schedule field space and volunteers are working overtime to keep competitions running, this government seem far more interested in Olympic headlines than grassroots realities. While billions of dollars are being allocated to Olympic venues and precincts, the clubs where future Olympians start their sporting journeys are still waiting for a plan from the sports minister.

Last year I wrote to the sports minister and asked how he and his department were undertaking strategic demand mapping alongside all sporting codes across Queensland. I asked whether he was engaging with schools and local governments to identify and open up land for courts and fields and about the government's approach to investment in grassroots sports. His response was that all would be revealed in Queensland's sports strategy.

In estimates last year, the minister told the committee that that sports strategy would be delivered by September last year and then he advised that it would be November. We are four months into extra time and the sports minister has absolutely dropped the ball. There is no strategy. There has been no update to clubs on when it is even going to come. There has been no explanation for how it is months overdue, just a quietly revised note on the department's website saying that maybe we will get it sometime this year.

Today I call on the sports minister to get off the bench and release Queensland's sports strategy. It is well overdue. He needs to release the files because in this state grassroots sports and our athletes have been waiting long enough for that whistle to blow.

Capalaba District Meals on Wheels; Aliotta, Mr M; Surf Life Saving, Red & Yellow Day

 **Mr FIELD** (Capalaba—LNP) (2.21 pm): As an elected representative it is both a responsibility and a great privilege to acknowledge the fantastic work that goes on in our local areas, particularly some of the most important work that happens quietly and without fuss. Capalaba District Meals on Wheels is a great organisation in my electorate that provides real support to some of our most vulnerable residents by delivering nutritious ready-to-eat meals directly to homes. Meals on Wheels volunteers do far more than simply drop off meals. They offer regular social contact for people who may be isolated or lonely. They take time to check in on and build genuine relationships with those they support. All of this forms part of a service that makes a meaningful difference in people's daily lives.

This weekend, Capalaba District Meals on Wheels will be celebrating their 50th anniversary. I look forward to going along to offer my congratulations, as their local member, to the hardworking team. I believe it is worthwhile mentioning that, as a not-for-profit, Meals on Wheels are always grateful for any support that the community is able to provide, whether it be by volunteering or donating, to ensure they can continue to offer quality meals at a low cost to their clients.

I take this opportunity to also recognise the hard work of a local hero, Michael Aliotta. Everybody in the Birkdale South State School community would be familiar with Michael as he has been their crossing guard for the past 16 years. Michael is a Sicilian-born Australian who moved to Sydney as a young child. He has been a resident of Birkdale for around two decades and is proud to call that wonderful part of the world home. Michael is now in his late seventies and could be relaxing in retirement, but he is at the school every day. He told me he would happily do the work for free. It was a real treat to pay a visit to Birkdale South State School and witness firsthand the pride that Michael takes every day in keeping local kids safe and ensuring they see a friendly face as they go to and from school. Dedication like that leaves a lasting impact and really represents the best of the Redlands. On behalf of the whole Capalaba community, I take this opportunity to thank Michael for his years of service and for the care that he shows local families every day.

Finally, those passing my electorate office this week could be forgiven for thinking they are at the beach because I have a red and yellow flag set up outside the front door and flags on either side in support of Surf Life Saving's annual Red & Yellow Day. My family and I have been a part of the Point Lookout Surf Life Saving Club for the best part of 25 years and we know how much hard work goes into keeping our beaches safe. We have a QR code set up in the office near the front door that can be used to make donations for this great cause.

North Brisbane, Transport Infrastructure

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (2.24 pm): During the last sitting week I spoke about how this LNP Crisafulli government is cutting transport projects on the Sunshine Coast. If we go just a little further south, there is an area that the LNP is neglecting just as badly. When it comes to north Brisbane and the Moreton Bay region, the LNP are simply cutting every project they can get their hands on or pushing off every project they are too scared to say they are cutting.

We kicked off an early works package on the Linkfield Road project in 2024. That majority federally funded project took a few years to get off the ground, back when the former members for Petrie and Dickson—Luke Howarth and Peter Dutton, of course—first promised the project without actually putting any money in the forward estimates. It took years of lobbying by the member for Pine Rivers and me to get it back in the federal budget and the election of a federal Albanese government to actually get it into gear. However, now the LNP have put it on the never-never.

In a recent ABC Radio interview, when asked a very simple question about what is happening with the project the transport minister gave an essay. I would read out the full response but it goes for about half an hour. Steve Austin asked a question from one of his listeners: 'Is there any plan to upgrade the Linkfield Road overpass at Bald Hills?' Bear with me here. The minister said—

Another bridge unfortunately we've seen impacts on, I think it's 4.6 metres off the top of my head so it has been struck in recent years and probably as well has not coped with population growth, that whole corridor whether its Linkfield Road, Beams Road, just up the road. I'm a Sunny Coast local so every time I drive to Brissy I hit traffic through that stretch of road.

We made an election commitment at the last election to upgrade Beams Road intersection, we're getting on with that design work at the moment and that's linked to the Linkfield Road work as well, we need to ensure that we stage that appropriately ...

He goes on to say—

What we need to ensure is that we stage this, we can't fix everything at once, for all sorts of reasons ...

And the answer goes on.

What a cop-out. The minister used to say he would deliver these projects on time and on budget, but now the timeline and the funding have seemingly disappeared. The LNP are now breaking transport election commitments right across the state for 'all sorts of reasons'. The members for Sandgate, Pine Rivers and I will not rest until this project is started.

In a similar manner, this government has completely stopped talking about the Gympie Road bypass tunnel project, after campaigning strongly on it during the 2024 election campaign in Aspley. They had trucks, they had billboards and they had mail-outs saying how committed they were to that project, but it is not even in their Olympics transport plan. Can the north side kiss goodbye to the Gympie Road bypass tunnel being delivered before 2032? Sadly, I think we can assume so. The minister has even kicked it off for review—not that you would know that from this slick Premier who refuses to acknowledge that he has cut any project. He just slogans his way through. Of course, before the election the Premier promised that he would honour everything in the 2024 budget, which both of those projects were in. Clearly, that was just more spin.

When it comes to buses, in a similar vein last week it was revealed by the Brisbane City Council—not even the state government—that the state government has scrapped both the zero emissions bus program and the northside bus network review, which was set to get underway this year. In 2024 I sat at the negotiating table across from Brisbane City Council and they agreed to a northside bus network review, but this state government is not holding for that. That is poor for transport and it is poor for congestion. This is a poor government.

Hanrahan, Mrs V

 **Mr DALTON** (Mackay—LNP) (2.27 pm): Today I rise to recognise a proud local who has been recently appointed to an important role in Queensland: Mrs Vivien Hanrahan, the newest member of the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council. Vivien's appointment by the Crisafulli government is well-deserved recognition for her longstanding commitment to community inclusion and service. The Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council plays an important role in helping government understand the experiences of culturally diverse communities and ensuring policies support stronger, safer and more cohesive communities across our state. It is fitting that a regional voice from Mackay will now be part of that conversation.

Mackay is a community that continues to grow and diversify. We are proud of the many cultures that call our region home and the way they contribute to the social fabric of our city. Vivien has been a strong advocate for the Filipino community in Mackay. It is a community that continues to grow and makes an enormous contribution to our region. Vivien is also a member of Zonta and the Mackay Musical Comedy Players. She attends and is involved in her local church. At one of the largest schools in the Mackay electorate, students from the Philippines now make up 24 per cent of enrolments across all year levels, and in years 11 and 12 some 26 per cent of students are from the Philippines. That is a powerful reminder of how multicultural our regional communities have become and why having voices like Vivien's at the table matters.

Vivien brings not only cultural understanding but also local connections and a genuine passion for building bridges across communities. Her appointment ensures that regional Queensland and the diverse communities that make places such as Mackay so special are heard at state level. On behalf of the Mackay community, I congratulate Vivien on this achievement and thank her for the work she continues to do to bring people together and strengthen our community. Mackay is incredibly proud of you.

Health Services

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (2.29 pm): Before the election, Premier Crisafulli promised to reinstate maternity services at Biloela and Cooktown, but being in power for over 490 days—nearly a year and a half—Cooktown and Biloela are still without restored birthing services. Premier Crisafulli called it 'unacceptable' when the closure was at 300 days. I call on Premier Crisafulli and his out-of-touch health minister to tell Queenslanders when full birthing services will be restored at both Biloela and Cooktown—not a partial service, but fully and properly staffed birthing services that give women confidence that health care will be there when they need it most. Queensland mums are not asking for anything special, just safe, accessible, reliable health care. They are asking for a government that treats women's and girls' health as essential health care. The members for Cook and Callide have been totally ineffective to date.

Premier Crisafulli's credibility is in question because Queenslanders have watched the Premier fudge the figures. Twice now he has been caught out on victims of crime data. We saw the Crisafulli government's arrogance when Premier Crisafulli and Minister Nicholls went to Toowoomba for a photo op, trying to take credit for the new Toowoomba Hospital—planned, funded and commenced by Labor—but when Toowoomba mums raising questions and issues with maternity services requested a meeting, they were coldly ignored and refused by Premier Crisafulli and his aloof minister. It was only after weeks of pressure, after the Miles Labor opposition forced the issue, that Minister Nicholls finally announced a review just one day before the last sitting of parliament, forced to act once again by Labor and by local mums on the Darling Downs.

Incredibly, Minister Nicholls is trying to cut the pay of radiation therapists and nuclear medicine clinicians by 25 per cent—25 per cent. That is a deliberate, savage pay cut aimed straight at the clinicians whom Queensland cancer patients rely on when they battle cancer. Nuclear medicine clinicians run the scans that identify cancers, show whether a tumour has spread, show whether treatment is working, show whether a patient is responding. Radiation therapists plan and deliver radiotherapy with extraordinary precision, down to the millimetre, targeting tumours and protecting healthy tissue, and they do it while supporting cancer patients through the hardest periods of their lives day after day. For cancer patients, this health care is quite literally the difference between life and death. Now our so-called health minister wants to cut a quarter of their pay. Anyone with a brain cell knows what happens: if you cut their pay like that, you lose them to interstate. Queensland waitlists then blow out, treatment is slower and outcomes are bleaker. This is a Grim Reaper move by the minister. Shame on him! The Grim Reaper pay offer from 'Grim Tim' should be condemned and reversed right now.

Cairns Southern Growth Corridor

 **Mr JAMES** (Mulgrave—LNP) (2.32 pm): The Cairns Southern Growth Corridor is the primary region designated for the long-term expansion of Cairns, stretching south from Edmonton to Gordonvale. This corridor is expected to support roughly 37 per cent of Cairns' total population growth between 2021 and 2046. Gordonvale serves as the southern anchor for this growth corridor.

There is a growing emphasis on harnessing Gordonvale's rich history and heritage through the development of cultural tourism opportunities. This unique character of Gordonvale is shaped by multiple layers of architectural styles, each reflecting the town's evolving social and economic landscape, closely tied to the gold, tin, timber and sugar industries. Importantly, Gordonvale's distinct country town atmosphere remains largely intact which contributes significantly to its appeal.

Initial meetings have begun regarding possible land acquisition to enable the relocation of the Mulgrave History Museum. The vision is to establish a substantially larger, modern, interactive history museum and community facility designed to attract visitors with an interest in local history, stories and cultural experiences. The proposed facility will feature a research centre for the Mulgrave Shire Historical Society, a community meeting room, workshop spaces, long-term archival storage and information centre. This strategy supports the preservation of Gordonvale's unique character, while expanding the region's traditional tourism offerings which are primarily focused on reef and rainforest attractions. By enhancing its cultural tourism options, the Cairns-Mulgrave region can appeal to a broader range of visitors.

In addition to its cultural assets, Gordonvale is home to natural landmarks like Walshs Pyramid in the picturesque Mulgrave Valley. This feature further enhances the town's attractiveness for tourists seeking combined cultural and outdoor experiences. The emphasis on cultural tourism aligns with the region's economic prospects and residential attractiveness, positioning Gordonvale as a balanced and desirable destination for the future. In support of these aims, collaboration is underway with the

Gordonvale Cultural Precinct Steering Committee to initiate planning for the Gordonvale Cultural Precinct. This includes a landmark three-storey cultural facility designed to reflect Gordonvale's architectural character and tropical setting while also meeting contemporary museum standards. The overarching goal is to preserve the village atmosphere of Gordonvale—Gordy, as the locals call it—and find opportunities to celebrate and showcase this unique identity to both residents and visitors.

Energex, Workforce

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (2.35 pm): On 11 February this year, the energy minister was asked a simple question about whether or not there were cuts to the jobs of Energex contractors, and in his answer he said, 'No.' It is there on the parliamentary record. However, since that time, there is more and more information coming to the opposition that clearly demonstrates there are cuts, and these cuts are continuing to impact workers as well as small businesses. The opposition understands that the energy minister has not even met with the chair or the CEO of EQL since he gave that answer in question time on 11 February. No wonder there is confusion out there. Asked again this morning to clarify whether or not there were going to be any cuts to Energex contractors or if there were impacts to small businesses, we received more obfuscation and more confusion from the energy minister.

What is happening outside of this place, as the government continues to obfuscate, is that there are workers who are stressed, their families are being impacted and small businesses are having to shut their doors. Take Don from Collingwood Park in our Bundamba community, a fourth-year apprentice who is working as a contractor who made the significant decision to move interstate and buy a house in Collingwood Park. He is now facing having his work hours cut or redundancy. This is causing immense stress for Don and his family, including his two-year-old child and his pregnant partner. He told me he fears that without stable employment he will not be able to meet his mortgage repayments.

Let's take a look at small businesses. Darren in Bulimba, with only a week's notice, was notified that his power was going to be turned off from 8 am to 5 pm during the working day. Darren asked if the shutdown could happen outside of working hours, from 8 pm to 10 pm, but he was told that that could not happen. He had to cancel a 50-person function, booked months in advance, with zero notice. Can you imagine the lost revenue as well as the impact that that has on the reputation of his business? It is the same for Di from Spring Hill, in the electorate of McConnel, who was told to organise a generator at a cost of \$2,000. These workers deserve their hours and these businesses deserve compensation from this government.

Burleigh Electorate, Infrastructure

 **Mr VORSTER** (Burleigh—LNP) (2.38 pm): As all members would be aware, a growing population has put an extraordinary burden on Queensland's infrastructure, so I am very pleased that we finally have a government that is committed to delivering the infrastructure we need to keep up with population growth. In fact, with programs like the Residential Activation Fund we now have the ability to deliver infrastructure before that population arrives.

There is, of course, much work to be done to deal with the infrastructure crisis left behind by those opposite after a decade of decline. So much of that infrastructure pinch is being felt around our schools. Many of us are ensnared in traffic during pick-up and drop-off. It is traffic that not only robs one of their will to go on at times but also is a significant drain on our productivity as a nation.

The schools in my electorate have been strong and ferocious advocates for change. At Varsity College they are calling for a reconfiguration of their pick-up and drop-off area on Christine Avenue, and I am working together with the local councillor on those plans. At Palm Beach State School they are calling for a new crossing over Nineteenth Avenue. They want council rules to be enforced to keep traffic moving. Burleigh Heads State School has had to contend with years of traffic chaos connected with the light rail stage 3, another project hopelessly mismanaged by the former Labor government. Caningeraba State School parents are calling for flashing school signs on Christine Avenue, not at the front of the school but metres away. They want safety signs where their children walk, and I support those calls.

At St Andrews college they are seeking help to plan the new bus set-down area. Although it is an independent school, state school buses currently use their turning circle to pick up and drop off kids because that road is so unsafe. I fully support their plans. It would be a great outcome for all. At Marymount College parents are calling on council and the state government to work together to move on permanently parked trailers from Reedy Creek Road to create more access to parking.

These projects are on my radar. These are projects that I will champion because they are important to my community. I am confident we will deliver results because we are a government that is interested in delivery, not false hope and false promises. We are a government that believes in infrastructure, not in glossy brochures that lead nowhere.

Greenslopes Electorate

 **Mr JKELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.41 pm): I will need all of my three minutes, that is for sure. We have had adjournment speech after adjournment speech here today. That can only suggest that the government is delivering absolutely nothing, as we heard in the member for Burleigh's contribution. I want to get on to the main topic that I want to talk about today: me. I am going to do something that has never been done in this chamber before: I am going to toot my own trumpet and talk myself up.

We know it has been a bad week for the government, full of complete and utter rabble and the backbench overruling the Premier. What I know is that on that side of the House—and this is where I get to toot my own trumpet—they love 'Dr Jo'. On this side of the House, these members love 'Nurse Joe'. They are lining up to do podcasts with me, and I am available this week. If anybody wants to do a podcast with Nurse Joe, come and do a podcast with me. Of course, I will not be in the botanic gardens; I will stay on the precinct and do my job.

I want to give the House a bit of an update on some important things that have been going on in my electorate and that we have been working on. Firstly, I want to talk about nitrous oxide addiction. The health minister introduced some changes. I was pleased with that. Of course, the LNP did it in the usual LNP manner: they brought the changes in and did not give anybody any time to see them or debate them. They simply rammed them through.

While those changes were good, they have missed some really important things. I was contacted by a number of people after those changes went through. They said, 'You were absolutely right in the speech you made in parliament that the biggest problem we have is the 24/7 home delivery of nitrous oxide canisters.' If I wanted to get a canister delivered here, I reckon I could get it delivered here before the time for private members' statements was up. We have to do something about this because young kids are getting a hold of these things and doing themselves irreparable damage.

I want to talk about the members for Mansfield, Miller, Toohey and Stretton. We all worked together to try to get a better outcome at the Mount Gravatt campus, and we have achieved that. We have protected the bushland, the school and the sporting infrastructure. The dodgy, slippery minister said that he would consult with the community about what would happen with the rest of the land, but that has not happened. It has had a big 'for sale' sign put on it, and I can guarantee the House that if it is sold there will be no social and affordable housing. There should be social and affordable housing in that place. I know that the housing minister loves to swan around cutting the ribbons on Labor projects—projects that were designed and delivered 100 per cent by Labor. He loves to snip those ribbons. The only thing he loves more than snipping a ribbon on a Labor project is the social and affordable housing commitments that we made. He is cutting them faster than he is cutting those ribbons.

Toowoomba Sports Ground, Upgrade

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.44 pm): I rise to give the House a quick update on the Toowoomba Sports Ground and some of the upgrades that have happened there. It is fantastic news for our community, and I would like to thank the minister for them. Over \$1 million has been spent in the off-season of the winter sports. We have planted new TifTuf grass and put in extra drainage which will make the playing surface more robust so we can have more competition more often in the facility. We have also upgraded the lights to 500 lux. It is not quite 4K quality yet, but I know the minister will do that for me over a number of years with his big fund.

The improvements have made it an exciting start to the year. I watched the men's and women's South West Queensland Thunder games on the weekend. They are two great football teams, and they did a really good job. They loved the new grass. It is probably just a fraction long for football—some in this place might call it soccer—but it is new and we have to make it survive the season. The extra drainage will mean that the ground will be more robust to play these fixtures on when the rain comes through.

It is really important to make sure we have a pathway from regional Queensland to what is an Olympic sport through a top-quality facility where people can come and watch and get inspired. The juniors also play there. It gives them a really good connection to those elite players and the pathways they can follow.

I was also pleased to be at the Western Clydesdales launch the other day. As the Hostplus Cup season kicks off this weekend in Toowoomba against Easts Tigers, we really need people from the community to get out of their armchairs at home and go and support our local clubs. The Clydesdales are looking in good shape, both men's and women's, and I am excited to see how we go this year. I think we will shock a few people in the Hostplus Cup this year.

As this stadium is slowly developing into a little regional pocket rocket, do not forget about what it means for the community and the pathways and opportunities for young regional kids to come and see their heroes playing the sport they love and aspire to play those positions. It means that we end up with regional people coming into town, going to our boarding schools and following those pathways to hopefully one day go on to bigger and better things in the sport that they love.

These upgrades are really important so people can be comfortable, enjoy themselves and see the game better. If the facilities are top class, the skills will be brought out and the spectators will be comfortable. I would love to see the seats we have getting filled so I can put some pressure on the minister to get us more seats for the stadium. I would love to see this stadium hold 10,000 people in the next decade.

Macalister Electorate, Road Infrastructure

 **Ms McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (2.47 pm): I rise today to alert the House and the minister that we are having issues on the M1 with lighting. I know that there are many other members here who are experiencing massive blackout patches across their important transport infrastructure. For us in Logan, it extends from Daisy Hill all the way through to Beenleigh. That is half of the M1 through Logan that is in complete darkness. I understand that parts of the M1 are three or four lanes. It is generally a fairly straight road there. If cars have their headlights on there are generally not too many problems. At the moment the M1 and Logan Motorway interchange is out. That is where two major road infrastructure pieces converge.

I met with Transport and Main Roads last year, and they advised that this particular intersection will be the first cab off the rank in Queensland to have the wiring changed to aluminium. That is a great initiative. Hopefully when that is in place it will change the issue that we have with copper theft. I was advised that that work would start in the new year. It is March and it has not started, so I am not sure what that means for everything else.

I want to draw the attention of members to not just the M1 but to our major exit in Macalister which is exit 34. In Beenleigh we like to pride ourselves on doing roundabouts just a little bit differently. We do not believe in those little normal four-point roundabouts. No, we do five- and six-point roundabouts. It is basically just to keep visitors out. What that means though is that at night anyone trying to exit at exit 34 is in for a nightmare because we have different directional arrows and lanes that really go where they should not go. That is what we are used to, but it means that traffic is coming under intense dangerous interactions as we have had vehicles going the wrong way around a roundabout. This is dangerous.

I have been told by TMR that there is no temporary lighting solution for this and that there is currently no money in the budget to fix these lights. Maybe in the budget this year there might be some money, but as of now Beenleigh will be in blackout for the foreseeable future. Compare this to when exit 35 went out a couple of years back due to a big weather incident over Christmas. We had temporary lighting up within months and we had the whole thing fixed within six months. Lighting was out due to weather which was then further complicated by copper theft, but we got on with it and we did the job because we know that full funding of road infrastructure makes sure that we are reducing road trauma. That has big implications for community. We want Logan lit up!

Gold Coast Sports Awards

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (2.51 pm): It was a privilege to represent the Premier and Minister Mander at the Gold Coast Sports Awards last Saturday. Now in its 57th year, these awards celebrate and promote the very best of sport on the Gold Coast. More than 500 athletes, coaches, volunteers, partners and business leaders gathered at The Star Gold Coast to honour those who continue to shape our city's proud sporting identity, from grassroots clubs to the world stage.

This year's event was one of the most powerful in the awards' history—a true celebration of excellence, resilience and community spirit. It was a pleasure to share the evening with Geoff Smith, Chair of Sports Gold Coast since its inception in 2015. Geoff's passion for sport on the Gold Coast

spans decades. From the fight to save the Chargers to major bid efforts and the success of the Commonwealth Games, his contribution to building our city's sporting reputation has been extraordinary.

As a founding director of the Gold Coast Titans, I was especially proud to witness Mat Rogers inducted into the Gold Coast Sporting Hall of Fame. An inaugural Titan, Mat delivered a heartfelt speech reflecting on his journey, his deep love for his family and his enduring passion for the Titans and the Gold Coast. He was certainly a hard act to follow.

The evening also recognised the extraordinary contribution of Daryl and Jo Kelly. It is no exaggeration to say that the Titans would not be where they are today without the Kellys. Over 13 years they helped secure the club's future, providing an incredibly generous financial lifeline and unwavering belief in its vision. Thanks to their commitment, the future shines brightly for both the NRL and NRLW Titans teams.

It was also wonderful to see Paralympian Alexa Leary receive her award. She lit up the room with warmth and positivity, a powerful reminder of the resilience and determination that define great athletes.

This year's winners included: Athlete of the Year, Matt Rowell from the Gold Coast Suns; Para-Sport Athlete of the Year, Alexa Leary for swimming; the Daphne Pirie AO MBE Spirit of Sport Medal, Daryl and Jo Kelly; the *Gold Coast Bulletin* Junior Athlete of the Year, Arisa Trew for skateboarding; the Eximm Junior Sports Volunteer, Noah Flaherty from the Gold Coast Touch Association; the City of Gold Coast Mayor's Sports Award, Kai Sakakibara for para-cycling; the Sporting Event of the Year, ASICS Gold Coast Marathon; the Use of Sport Technology or Innovation Award, Pitch Up; the Sports Photograph of the Year, Bailey Sands from Sandsy Creativz; the Triple M Club of the Year Award, Southport Sharks; and the Gold Coast Sporting Hall of Fame Inductee, Mat Rogers.

I look forward to seeing what the future holds for these amazing athletes, organisations and community leaders for the Gold Coast in the lead-up to the 2032 Olympics.

Stafford Electorate, Schools

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—Ind) (2.54 pm): I start by associating myself with the comments of the member for Aspley on the disgraceful way the LNP have done over the Gympie Road upgrade. When in government we had funded it and planned it, and there were project managers in place. It should be underway and it is terrible that it is not.

I want to speak on a lighter note and congratulate the Lions Club of Brisbane Inner North for their Youth of the Year event. Richard, Debbie and the team have done a fantastic job over many years not just at this event but throughout the community. Seeing those students present and be interviewed, as I have said before, I know the future is in good hands. I give a special shout-out to the awardee for the best speaker from Wavell State High School and the overall winner from Mount Alvernia College. I am not surprised that she won. I have seen her over the years receive academic award after award, and I look forward to seeing how she goes at the regionals.

Speaking of Mount Alvernia reminds me of the lack of delivery of pedestrian safety around the Turner Road precinct including Mount Alvernia, St Anthony's and Padua. I asked a genuine question of the Premier and, instead of actually answering the question about why this government is not delivering on what Labor had already funded, I received personal abuse. That is fine. I have thick skin. I have been around this place for long enough. But for those school communities that means nothing.

Talking about our schools, I look forward to seeing them next month at the upcoming school leaders and Anzac Day events. They always put their own little spin on them which I really appreciate. I also look forward to the Lutwyche Cemetery dawn service and then the service at the Kedron-Wavell RSL. The Lutwyche Cemetery is a special place for me. It is a beautiful service that is getting bigger and bigger. It is also where my grandfather is buried. He was a World War II veteran, so it means a lot.

International Women's Day

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (2.57 pm): I think it is very appropriate this afternoon in my private member's statement to speak on something very dear to my heart and on a matter of a private nature—that is, International Women's Day, which is this Sunday, 8 March. I must say that as a police officer I grew up seeing many households and families where women were treated very badly and very poorly, so it is quite appropriate that this year's theme is 'Balance the scales'. When I saw that and the topics of fairness, justice, safety and integrity for all women, I did not want to miss the opportunity to

contribute. I did not grow up in one of those households. I was fortunate that my dad regularly said, 'Be kind to each other,' and he always said, 'Our women make us better.' I grew up in a house that was very different to many others.

This International Women's Day we are going to be celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women in our community. I have to say at the outset that in my electorate office I would not be the success I am without Sharyn, Brooke and Grace, and Sarah and Angie in the past, and, of course, without the women in my life—my mum, Joan; my daughter, Millie, and a couple of granddaughters running around; and also my lovely wife, Deb, who definitely makes me better. Deb, thank you very much for what you do for our life and for my life particularly.

I also want to give a shout-out to two amazing local women whose achievements are quite stellar and demonstrate the strength, determination and community spirit that is possible. Firstly to Marie Kirby, who on 26 February was 105—to her and her family and the wonderful legacy that she has left, they are rightly very proud. I also recently had the opportunity of joining June Blaney, who is 98 years of age. She recently won a Stableford event at the Laidley Golf Club with an amazing 37 points. Both Marie and June are examples of strength, determination, vitality and community spirit. In the short time that I have left, I want to give a big shout-out to the women in our lives. We must make sure we are kind to all of the women in our lives because they certainly do make us better. Once again, Deb, thanks for all that you do for us.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SMALL BUSINESS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Resumed from 12 February (see p. 252), on motion of Mr Lister—

That the House take note of the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee Report No. 4, 58th Parliament—*Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland*, tabled on 18 September 2025.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (3.00 pm), continuing: The Crisafulli LNP government's response to the inquiry is quite frankly underwhelming, based on further investigation, further consultation, further planning processes, advisory panels and working groups. Another cycle of planning will not reduce the pressure now on volunteers facing burnout, declining participation rates, rising costs and administrative burdens. Regrettably, there are concerns that volunteer burnout, red tape and insurance costs are not being addressed. There is a growing compliance burden placed on small volunteer-run organisations, effectively requiring unpaid committee members to operate at near professional governance standards. We are expecting unpaid mums, dads and the elderly to meet governance standards that resemble those of small corporations. That is not sustainable.

In my electorate of Lytton I see this every single week. At St Pete's Pantry volunteers pack hundreds of food hampers for families doing it tough. At Wynnum Community Place volunteers support vulnerable residents and connect people to services. Local sporting clubs like Bayside United, the Wynnum Bugs, Little Athletics, Scouts and the Wolves all run on volunteer coaches, treasurers and canteen managers. The Rotary Club of Wynnum and Manly raises funds quietly and consistently for community projects. Local environment volunteers restore our foreshore, protect Moreton Bay and plant trees to preserve our coastline for the next generation. None of these are asking for applause. They are asking for practical support and they are telling us clearly that volunteers are the lifeblood of our community. But goodwill alone will not keep the lights on.

The inquiry heard that red tape, rising insurance premiums and growing compliance demands are pushing many long-serving volunteers to breaking point. This government's response simply does not go far enough to ease these pressures. Insurance costs in particular are biting hard. Small community organisations are reporting premium increases that threaten their viability. Others are fearful of personal liability. We heard volunteers say that they are effectively doing multiple jobs because no-one else can stand up. This must not be ignored. Burnout is real.

The committee made key recommendations including adopting a whole-of-government approach to volunteering, establishing a ministerial advisory panel, reviewing insurance premiums and streamlining onboarding practices. These are sensible and practical reforms. I welcome the acknowledgement within the report that volunteering is under threat, but acknowledgment alone is not enough. In the bayside and across Queensland, our volunteers deserve nothing less. I commend the work of the committee and urge the government to act with urgency and genuine partnership with the sector, because when we support volunteers we strengthen Queensland.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (3.03 pm): It is a true pleasure to rise to talk about the inquiry into volunteering in Queensland, a benchmark of what the Crisafulli government wants to achieve with our volunteering sector throughout our state. Just to show how important volunteering is and how dear it is to the hearts of Queenslanders, there were over 500 submissions to the inquiry and 15 public hearings. These public hearings were conducted across the length and breadth of Queensland including in Dalby, Toowoomba, Gympie, Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Roma, Cairns, Cooktown, Townsville, the beautiful Gold Coast, Emerald and Rockhampton.

We heard a diverse set of opinions and ideas about how to improve volunteering. It is very important to understand that we need to appreciate our volunteers. One of the issues we found during the inquiry was a concern from rural fire brigades. They felt they were not appreciated in the way they thought appropriate. For example, the rural fire brigade has seen quite a large decrease in the number of volunteers, from 35,000 in 2015 to 27,000 to June 2024. That is a huge drop in the number of volunteers.

Last year we introduced an omnibus bill into this chamber. Rural fire brigade volunteers were concerned about the legislation, which created confusion and stopped them from going out to serve their communities. The Crisafulli government listened to those brigades and enacted legislation to make it a lot clearer. This was when Cyclone Alfred came through the Brisbane region and dumped a lot of rain. Unfortunately, these brigades had to stay in their sheds because they were not allowed to leave.

Contrary to the submission of the previous speaker, the member for Lytton, that just shows how important it is that government listens. The Crisafulli government listened to those concerns and said, 'Here is a piece of legislation that needs to be fixed so power is given back to first responders so they can go out and serve their communities.' We all have wonderful individuals and volunteers who do fantastic work for our communities. We all have our Lions clubs and Rotary clubs, and the list goes on and on.

I give a big shout-out to Patrick Wells, a former school captain at Helensvale State High School. This young gentleman took it upon himself to fundraise to help people in need over Christmas. These are the types of people we need volunteering. We need more of these people involved. Patrick went out there and volunteered for his local community to fundraise. He organised walks around the park and he organised barbecues—he did a fantastic job. That shows what we can achieve if we can get young people enthusiastic. When it comes to mental health issues, volunteering and socialising with people go a long way to making our mental health a lot better.

It was so important that this inquiry proceeded, and I thank the Minister for Local Government for highlighting how important volunteering is to our state and our communities. The Crisafulli government is putting volunteers first. We care about our volunteers and we want our volunteers to have a better volunteering experience. That is what the Crisafulli government is about. This is proactive government making a real difference to each and every Queensland volunteer.

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (3.08 pm): I thank everybody who engaged in the committee process through submissions or appearing as witnesses. I acknowledge the paradoxical nature of the inquiry into volunteering in Queensland. The Queensland Volunteering Strategy 2024-2032 and the accompanying Queensland Volunteering Strategy Action Plan 2024-26 were released in September 2024 by the former Labor government.

It is important to acknowledge that this was developed through extensive consultation with over 110 sector representatives and more than 20 co-design meetings. It outlined a new, whole-of-government strategy to recognise, celebrate and grow volunteering in Queensland. The strategy drew on existing national and international frameworks and incorporated the largest evidence base of volunteering data ever collected in Queensland. This inquiry could and should have built on the former Labor government's strategy. Instead, the Crisafulli LNP government duplicated large amounts of work already undertaken, asking many of the same organisations many of the same questions at a cost to both taxpayers and the time-poor volunteers—so much for the slogan of being respectful with taxpayers' money.

It is, therefore, understandable that some stakeholders felt caught off guard when, only eight weeks after the strategy was released, the Crisafulli LNP government announced they were proceeding with their inquiry, particularly given that the strategy had identified nearly every matter within the committee's scope for consideration, with the first action plan providing the initial implementation plan.

This inquiry should have been an opportunity to test and advance reforms for the volunteering sector in Queensland. Instead, the Crisafulli LNP government sidelined weeks-old evidence-based policy, only to commence this committee process for political pointscoring, wasting considerable public resources to do so.

While we all wish to see meaningful support borne out of this inquiry, some were concerned that at an estimates hearing the minister refused to rule out having already told stakeholders that she wanted the inquiry 'to deliver three or four recommendations with no cost to government'. Coincidentally, the recommendations have pretty much made that conclusion, calling for very little financial investment from the government at all. I note the minister's poor and directionless contribution to this committee report. At no stage was any amount of money even mentioned—nothing.

Furthermore, most of the recommendations made by the committee have been couched with qualifying language—along the lines of 'that the government commit its determination to improve' and 'that the government investigate conducting a review'. Almost every recommendation delivered by the inquiry was qualified to be exploratory and investigative in nature, rather than delivering specific outcomes. In what is so typical of this Crisafulli LNP government, its response has accepted all the recommendations in principle, subject to further investigation.

These recommendations are, at best, mere suggestions for the government to commit to consider enacting, even though the inquiry has already re-prosecuted the exploratory process undertaken through the strategy's consultation. The government's position is: volunteering passport, to be explored; volunteering hubs, to investigate options; training and induction reform, to be investigated; blue card and background check reform, to be reviewed; and insurance and liability issues, subject to further review and consideration. Insurance and liability were a significant issue. We spoke to so many people, and the feedback was that insurance was a huge issue. All of these areas have just kicked the can down the road. We have not seen or heard anything.

The Crisafulli government inquiry into volunteering is impressively disappointing. Like so many of the government's commitments, it is extremely shallow. When we listen to the responses from the government members, there is no substance or concrete outcomes. All we hear are very big wishful statements with absolutely no substance whatsoever. When one looks at the magnificent contribution that volunteers made to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and the importance of volunteers and of growing volunteer numbers, this government's response to this report should be enormously concerning. It did not address any of the key components raised by so many of those who appeared before it, and that should be even more concerning.

 **Hon. AJ PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (3.13 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee's report *Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland*. I congratulate the committee on the comprehensiveness of this report into the state of volunteering in Queensland. Its extensive investigation included the experience of volunteers and their organisations, the challenges they face, how they have adapted to some of these challenges, the effectiveness of government support and opportunities to support this valuable support network.

Following wideranging and thorough consultation and more than 500 submissions, the committee has made eight recommendations. Submissions were provided by the Gympie District Show Society, Gympie Medical Transport and the Mary Valley Rattler. They were backed up by appearances before the committee from Sally Carkeet of Gympie Medical Transport, Sherry Lowe from the Mary Valley Rattler, Alexandra van Beek from the Gympie and District Landcare Group, Justin Choveaux of the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland, and the Gympie Regional Council.

Across the state, volunteers underpin communities with thousands of hours of work, support and fundraising. They hold communities together, keep us safe, supplement existing services, underpin government services and provide services where none exist. Gympie Medical Transport fills in the gaps where patient transport is outside the scope of the Queensland Ambulance Service and where it cannot be supplied by private or public transport. The submissions from the Mary Valley Rattler and Gympie Medical Transport highlighted that volunteer organisations also play a crucial role in supporting social security recipients who need to complete their 15 hours of community service requirements.

Volunteers make up the bulk of participants in many community organisations as formal or informal volunteers. This includes grassroots workers, fundraisers, volunteers and enthusiasts. These volunteers help those in crisis, keep our communities safe, lend an ear or roll up their sleeves, lend a hand to those in need, man stalls and fundraise for causes, keep the community ticking, champion social and community issues, or brighten the lives of those in need.

The inquiry found that volunteering contributes immense civic, social and economic value, which is estimated at more than \$117 billion annually. It also found that volunteer organisations are facing the loss of manpower, with participation rates declining significantly, having fallen from 75.7 per cent in 2020 to 64.3 per cent in 2023. That equates to a loss of around 200,000 volunteers. The Gympie District Show Society submission outlined the challenges of recruiting and retaining volunteers: changing expectations, with new generations sometimes slow to embrace traditional committee structures; succession gaps and the need to pass down years of knowledge to the next generation; and workplace time and cost pressures which impact the ability to commit to volunteering. While they appreciated the support they received, their submission identified that—

... bureaucratic and financial barriers can sometimes limit volunteer opportunities. Simplifying processes, reducing red tape, and providing funding for volunteer training and retention initiatives would go a long way in helping—

In my own electorate of Gympie, the community regularly punches above its weight when it comes to volunteering. In the 2016 census 21.4 per cent of Gympie locals had done voluntary work with a group or organisation during the previous 12 months. The Queensland figure was 18.8 per cent. Five years later the 2021 census recorded a drop to 13.4 per cent in the Gympie local government area, while the Queensland total was 10.7 per cent. I am cautious about the significance of that drop. Many organisations could not operate during the previous 12 months because it was at the height of COVID lockdowns and those filling out their forms were answering about that period.

The report found that the community service, charity, social cohesion and sense of purpose delivered by a strong volunteer culture are at risk unless the reasons for the decline are understood. It also means that organisations and community groups will have to adapt to the preferences, limitations and expectations of volunteers or potential volunteers. This includes issues such as aging demographics, time constraints, modern society's fast pace and expectations. This has resulted in increasing difficulties to fill the traditional positions of secretary and treasurer for many of our local halls, sporting organisations and community service groups. I commend the committee on its eight recommendations that seek to address some of these issues.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.18 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee's inquiry into volunteering in Queensland report. The work volunteers do in our great state cannot be underestimated. From social clubs to our firefighters, they take on work out of passion for what they do and a love to serve others. However, this does not mean they should be without support, and I urge the government to action the recommendations listed in the report.

Some of our volunteering organisations have the important job of saving the lives of Queenslanders who come to visit one of the many great destinations we have to offer. In my own electorate we have the Mount Gravatt Rotary Club, the Greater Mount Gravatt Mansfield Lions Club, the Queensland Koala Society, Mount Gravatt Meals on Wheels, Southside Community Care and many more. Each one of these volunteer-based organisations provides a service to my community. The Rotary Club provides much needed care packs for students in need in schools across the electorate. The Lions Club have collaborated with Southside Community Care on several projects aimed at helping people in need including setting up a thrift shop to help people doing it tough.

Alongside the residents in my electorate the animals need help, too. The Queensland Koala Society take care of a variety of native wildlife in need of rehabilitation including koalas. On Sunday night I had the wonderful experience of conducting our very own local toad hunt in Mackenzie in support of our environment. I acknowledge Mackenzie Bushcare Group as well as the Bulimba Creek catchment group, which assisted with that tremendous event. There were more than 60 locals in Mackenzie catching more than 1,600 toads—a really tremendous effort on behalf of the Mackenzie residents to support their local environment.

These are just a few of the functions of these fantastic organisations, but volunteer groups must have all the assistance we can give them, regardless of where they are in Queensland, and it needs to happen quickly. However, the LNP are already kicking the can further down the road by doubling up on the work that has already been completed by Labor. The former Labor government and the member for Algeester had already delivered the Queensland Volunteering Strategy 2024-2032. This was very timely in relation to the upcoming Olympic Games. We know from the Sydney experience that it was volunteers who made the success of the games. It is very sad to hear that the LNP have not begun to process, plan and prepare for that very special event.

Our Volunteering Strategy and its accompanying action plan were developed through consultation with over 110 sector representatives and more than 20 co-designed meetings. This inquiry was totally unnecessary. It simply duplicated Labor's work and asked many of the same questions at the cost of taxpayers and the time-poor volunteers. Now through released cabinet documents we know that those opposite did not even consider Labor's strategy and Labor's action plan. Queensland's volunteers are already stretched thin and facing burnout with administrative burdens and rising costs, particularly to do with insurance and liability, not to mention the ongoing training needed to run volunteer organisations. Our volunteers deserve better than a government that delays the implementation of these critical recommendations. I urge the government to get on with their strategy for volunteering in Queensland.

 **Mr DILLON** (Gregory—LNP) (3.22 pm): It gives me pleasure to also make a small contribution regarding the inquiry into volunteering that was led by the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee. It was an absolute pleasure to support that committee in the place of my good friend the member for Southern Downs as the chair for a small number of the public hearings and some meetings relating to this. In fact, we had a number of fantastic hearings across North Queensland—in Cairns, Cooktown and Townsville. From a process point of view related to the manner in which those public hearings unfolded, it was regretful that the Labor member saw fit to attend the Cairns public hearing but not the Cooktown and Townsville public hearings. Honourable members will recall what happened a month later in this place when the member for Cairns apologised, so no doubt at the time of the hearings he did not attend he was carefully planning his social media campaign, which has been discussed at much length. It was regretful that he did not attend the Cooktown and Townsville hearings or even deputise another Labor member to attend in his place—the former member for Hinchinbrook even attended the Townsville hearing—to hear from volunteers who, as this report has gone to great lengths to identify, are buckling under the pressure. Sometimes that is due to the administrative burden.

I want to go to the far north to Cook and the Cook shire mayor, Councillor Robyn Holmes, who pointed out some of the issues facing rural fire brigades which primarily are made up of First Nations people. On page 49 of the report Councillor Robyn Holmes is quoted as saying of the Laura Rural Fire Brigade—

... they have one current registered volunteer who is also their first officer and their fire warden.

He is probably the secretary, chief fundraiser, maintenance officer—you name it. It goes on—

He is roughly 80 years old. He is unable to attract volunteers because most of the Indigenous people who did support the rural fire brigade are unable to get blue cards, which immediately makes them unable to assist.

We heard in Townsville the following day from a number of not-for-profit organisations and volunteer organisations that provide support not just in the Townsville region but across North and North-Western Queensland. We heard about the work they do to centralise—and that is always a scary word—the administrative and regulatory oversight for things like blue cards, white cards and the various different cards or permits. We also heard of the accessibility issues that are required to be cleared before volunteers can commence some level of work. What we heard through those hearings was that the process to become a volunteer was tiring some small committees but also was acting as a deterrent for volunteers. In the Far North—and I have heard some of my colleagues from the Townsville region and also around Cairns mention this—they have a large number of interstate visitors during the winter months. These people have the accreditation that is required to volunteer or support volunteer organisations interstate; however, the lack of transferability of things like working with children checks and the trouble they have to go to in terms of accreditation often means they dedicate their time to other means. Consequently, the groups that historically would benefit from their support are unable to do so.

The electorate of Gregory, its social opportunities and most elements of our emergency services would not exist without volunteers. Unfortunately, the best rugby league side in the electorate of Gregory is the Alpha Brumbies, not the Brisbane Broncos, so it is fully resourced by volunteers, not paid staff. Our show societies do not operate on their own grounds and they are run entirely by volunteers, yet the WHS requirements—and this has been raised several times—and even just maintaining a register of volunteers, which is mentioned in this report, are onerous requirements.

When I hear Johnny Muscat, a Rural Fire Service volunteer with more than 30 years experience—I think he attended the Rockhampton hearing—talk about training and the need for a new recruit or new volunteer to attend somewhere that is over 700 kilometres drive or about \$1,200 in flights,

it points out to me that we had a volunteer system that was not being supported in Queensland. This inquiry and the background and the genesis of it has now delivered a report that will give the various ministers, especially in this case the Minister for Fire, every tool in the box to understand the need of locals and provide a better outcome for volunteers right across regional Queensland.

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (3.27 pm): I rise to speak on the inquiry into volunteering in Queensland and to first and foremost acknowledge the extraordinary contribution volunteers make across our state. We are incredibly fortunate to have so many volunteers whose work makes a real and lasting difference to people's lives. Volunteers and organisations are the heartbeat of a connected, kind and generous community. When I think of volunteers, I of course think of those across my own electorate of Nudgee. I speak of people like Olive from Compassion 4 Community, who delivers meal relief to those doing it tough in our local community, and her team. They offer dignity, connection and a safe environment for some of the most vulnerable across my community.

I think of the legal volunteers who do pro bono work at Northside Connect, of the women who support our northside Brisbane women's shelters, of Rosies volunteers, of Banyo District Community Group that helps bring our community together through local events from Diwali and Queensland Day to our much loved Christmas carols. These events build community connection and directly address social isolation. I think of the Friends of Nundah Historic Cemetery and Nundah & Districts Historical Society, who preserve our local history so we always understand from where we have come. I think of the work of people like Wayne Krueger and the local Men's Table and of the delightful team at the Nundah Men's Shed whose focus is on improving men's mental health through honest conversation and peer support. I think of my local Lions and Rotary clubs and the mums and dads across all our sporting clubs who, on top of everything else, also make time to coach, organise and clean up after a really long day so that our young people have every opportunity to themselves learn what it is to be a member of a team in a community.

There are so many volunteers quietly working, and humbly so, in the 150 community and sporting groups across the Nudgee electorate that I could never name them all. Our community is the better for their generosity and service and they will always have my sincere gratitude, which is why this inquiry is so disappointing. What does it deliver for them? Others have already established that this parliamentary inquiry ultimately, and sadly, delivered little. The inquiry should have built on our former Labor government's Queensland volunteering strategy through to 2032—a whole-of-government volunteering strategy publicly released only eight weeks before the Crisafulli LNP government announced it was proceeding with its own volunteering inquiry, a volunteering strategy and accompanying action plan that was developed through consultation with over 110 sector representatives and more than 20 co-design meetings. This inquiry was an opportunity to make progress and build on the foundation laid by the strategy if the now Crisafulli LNP government was of the view that further work was required, but instead it just reinterrogated many of the same challenges.

Seven of the committee's eight key recommendation areas reaffirm or partially replicate elements and actions already articulated under our plan and action plan that preceded it. Why did the LNP government start at the very beginning again? Could it not bring itself to support a strategy delivered by our former Labor government? That is politics and not real respect for volunteers. It could have just rebadged it and taken credit for it, as it does for most other things across government now. That inquiry could have been making a difference now. This inquiry does not make life easier for volunteers or the people those volunteers work so hard to support. This inquiry delivered no funding in the 2025-26 budget—no clarity on what additional funding, if any, will be allocated and, if it will, to what? What it did do is once again paint the picture that formal volunteering rates have declined in recent years and the volunteers who remain are often doing more with less resourcing. The recommendations in this inquiry are neither groundbreaking nor new. We know that volunteers would benefit from improved coordination across government and better systems to recruit, match and support volunteers. The report recognises the importance of tailoring support to different communities, including First Nations, multicultural, younger and older Queenslanders.

As I said, this inquiry and its recommendations are not groundbreaking. They reflect what I and, I am sure, many members in this House see and hear every day in our electorates and what was clearly articulated in our 2024 through to 2032 strategy and action plan that preceded it. This inquiry reminds us that volunteering does not happen automatically. It needs support, recognition and investment. When we back our volunteers, we strengthen community wellbeing, disaster preparedness, social inclusion and opportunities for people of all ages to contribute and connect.

 **Mr LEE** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (3.32 pm): I rise to speak to the 58th Parliament committee inquiry into volunteering in Queensland. I am pleased to be part of a Crisafulli government that recognises the enduring value of volunteers in our community. Dr Martin Luther King once said—

Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'

It is an insightful question, and the answer to that deep and probing question is clearly and tirelessly articulated in my Hervey Bay community. Mahatma Gandhi expressed a similar sentiment in saying that the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. It is well documented that volunteering is good for your mental, social and physical wellbeing. Indeed, it is good for the soul. Volunteering gets people out of the house and into the community engaging and building relationships. Volunteering builds social capital. According to the 2024 state of volunteering in Queensland report, in 2023 volunteering in Queensland contributed \$117.8 billion into our economy. Volunteering in Hervey Bay is strong, well established and intergenerational. Hervey Bay is a generous and charitable community and we have many Hervey Bay volunteers—young and older—who are the very embodiment of Martin Luther King's adage of doing for others. What a shame that Labor members are using politics today when they could take the opportunity to praise the efforts of volunteers in their communities.

Today in the short time available it is impossible for me to exhaustively canvass all of the Hervey Bay volunteer organisations and individuals who selflessly and tirelessly serve our Hervey Bay community, so here is a broad glimpse. With regard to the homeless, Toby Robinson—2024 and 2026 Young Citizen of the Year at just 14 years of age—has been integral to the success of the ZBus program. These are buses with private and secure sleep pods for the homeless. We also have J&T Supporting Homeless, Kindness Works and We Care 2 organisations that regularly provide food and support for the vulnerable in our community. They provide that five days a week, with some support over the weekends, and do a fantastic job in supporting the homeless. The We Care 2 movement also provides a food bank and for many years has provided invaluable support to the homeless and vulnerable in our community.

In terms of palliative care, we have the Fraser Coast Hospice association—a great organisation—and I was privileged to be on the board when establishing the hospice association. It provides free-of-charge end-of-life care to the terminally ill in our community. Since the doors were opened just three years ago, this service has provided amazingly comprehensive end-of-life care to over 600 clients and their families. Bernie Whebell—2026 Citizen of the Year—is the former Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre president who guided the organisation with integrity, vision and compassion. The Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre is recognised as the model neighbourhood centre throughout Queensland. It does a fantastic job in supporting the vulnerable in our community. Then we have Rally for a Cause. Founded on the Fraser Coast in 2015, this organisation has raised over \$5 million through Dunga Derby to support families facing life-limiting medical conditions. My good friend Elaine Gamer OAM has given 43 years of service through the Leukaemia Foundation. She fulfilled her 15-year-old daughter's dying wish, which was to help others with leukaemia.

In sport and recreation we have the Hervey Bay Girl Guides. They do a fantastic job supporting young girls in girl guiding, and I have been privileged to be associated with that organisation now for a number of years. I congratulate them on their successful grant for solar panels. We also have All Abilities Futsal, which participated in nationals in Malaysia, Hervey Bay Seagulls rugby league, Veterans of Australia, Hervey Bay Zonta Club and Hervey Bay View Club. In closing, our Hervey Bay volunteers give immeasurable economic and social value to our community. Our Hervey Bay volunteers are incrementally and cumulatively building social capital. Today I pay tribute to our hardworking volunteers in Hervey Bay.

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerger—ALP) (3.37 pm): From local sporting clubs to SES units, from pride networks to neighbourhood centres, from disaster recovery to daily acts of quiet service, volunteering is woven into the social and economic fabric of Queensland. It is how communities endure hardship, how they celebrate success and how they care for one another when government services alone cannot meet every need. I want to place on record my deep gratitude to the literally millions of Queenslanders who volunteer. Together they contribute millions of hours of service to our state. In monetary value, the overall value of volunteering to Queensland is estimated at almost \$120 billion. Those figures represent real meals delivered, real flood sandbags filled, real children coached and real lives supported. My own electorate has so many incredible organisations and incredible volunteers. I refer to organisations such as belong in Acacia Ridge; Volunteer Connect; all of the P&Cs in the schools; the Algerger and

Greenbank RSL Men's Shed; many sporting groups like Calamvale Leopards, which we share, Mr Deputy Speaker Martin; Souths juniors rugby league; Defenders for Hope; Helping Hand, and the list goes on and on.

That is why this inquiry into volunteering should have been an opportunity to strengthen the sector. You should have built on the strongest evidence base ever collected in the state. Instead what we have seen from the Crisafulli LNP government is duplication, delay and political pointscoring—sadly. Only eight weeks before this inquiry was announced I was very proud to release the former Labor government's *Queensland Volunteering Strategy 2024-2032* and its first action plan. That strategy was not written on the back of an envelope; it was developed through consultation with more than 110 sector representatives and over 20 co-design meetings. It embedded the largest volunteering dataset Queensland has ever seen. It identified declining participation post COVID, administrative burden, barriers for First Nations volunteers, challenges for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and the enormous opportunity presented by Brisbane 2032. In other words, it answered the very questions this inquiry was tasked to investigate yet, instead of building on that foundation, the LNP chose to sideline it. Stakeholders who had just contributed their time and expertise to shaping a whole-of-government strategy were hauled back again to repeat the same evidence. Volunteers who already struggle with burnout and red tape were asked to give even more unpaid hours to a process that retraced ground already covered. What have we received at the end of it? Recommendations that ask the government to commit its determination, to investigate the creation, to consider conducting a review—suggestions to consider considering.

At estimates the minister refused to rule out wanting only three to four recommendations with no cost to government. That mindset explains the outcome, because if you start with the premise that nothing can cost money you guarantee that nothing meaningful will change. Under Labor we recognised that volunteering is not free. Volunteers give their time freely, but systems, training, infrastructure and coordination require investment. That is why the action plan scoped a volunteer reimbursement fund. It provided support to help organisations navigate blue card compliance; funded Volunteering Queensland to strengthen recruitment and management capability; and continued funding uplifts for neighbourhood centres—the largest uplift in quite a long time, let me tell you—food rescue organisations and Meals on Wheels, recognising their reliance on volunteers to deliver frontline services. We recognised the unique barriers faced by First Nations communities and committed to streamlining blue card processes; we invested in micro-credentials to build volunteer capability; we supported young and older Queenslanders to engage in volunteering and recognised culturally diverse leadership. This was practical reform grounded in evidence.

Throughout this inquiry, witnesses told us what had already been determined. They spoke of COVID's impact on participation. They spoke of administrative duplication. They spoke of blue card barriers for First Nations volunteers. They spoke of the need to reduce red tape. Every one of those themes is reflected in the Labor strategy. Even in relation to Brisbane 2032, the former Labor government had already aligned volunteering growth with the Elevate 2042 legacy strategy. The LNP could have taken that blueprint and accelerated it. Instead they pressed pause, launched an inquiry and largely rediscovered what was already known. This is the difference between governments that do the work and governments that do the slogans. Labor delivered a comprehensive, evidence-based strategy for the next decade and we stand by it.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.42 pm): I rise to address the report No. 4 of the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee, *Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland*. This was a significant and much needed inquiry. It represents the first time a state government has actively and deliberately sought the views of volunteers and reported on the state of volunteering in communities across Queensland. That in itself is worthy of recognition. Importantly, this inquiry delivers on a key election commitment of the Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government. We said that we would listen. We said that we would respect Queensland's volunteers and take their contributions seriously, and through this inquiry the Liberal National Party have done exactly that.

Volunteers are the quiet achievers of our state. For too long their voices have not always been directly sought in a structured way at a state level, and this inquiry changes that. The Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee travelled, consulted, received submissions and heard firsthand about the challenges and opportunities facing the volunteering sector. It heard about the pressures of rising costs, regulatory burdens, volunteer fatigue, insurance complexities and the need to attract younger generations into service. It also heard about the immense pride and fulfilment that comes from giving back. The response issued by the Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government to the committee's report demonstrates a clear commitment to strengthening and sustaining volunteering across Queensland.

Whilst this is a statewide inquiry, I want to use this opportunity to highlight the extraordinary contribution of volunteers in my electorate of Moggill. In our local area, volunteering is not an occasional act; it is a constant and defining feature of our community. We see it in the dedicated justices of the peace and commissioners for declarations who quietly give up their time, often week after week, to assist residents. We see it in our emergency services and disaster management personnel—the volunteers of the Moggill Group SES and the Brookfield Rural Fire Brigade, which stands ready at all hours. In times of storm, fire and flood they do not hesitate. They leave their homes and their families to protect ours. Their professionalism and courage are nothing short of remarkable.

We see it in our schools. In recent weeks it has been a pleasure to attend a number of P&C annual general meetings across the electorate, with more to come. We see it in the enduring service of our local Moggill and Brookfield QCWA branches that continue to support local families and communities across our state. We also see it in the work of our local Bellbowrie and ShedWest men's sheds, which provide connection, practical skills and support—particularly for our senior residents and those at risk of isolation. We also see it in the Kenmore-Moggill RSL Sub-Branch, where volunteers work tirelessly to honour the legacy of our service men and women, to support veterans and their families and to ensure remembrance remains a living commitment in our community. I also want to acknowledge the many volunteers across our environmental and creek catchment groups and our local community garden clubs where residents give their time to protect our natural environment and foster friendship.

The selfless act of volunteering is something that we see each and every weekend across the fields and ovals throughout the electorate of Moggill. Whether it is our local Scouting and Girl Guide groups; football clubs including the Moggill Football Club and UQFC; AFL clubs including Kenmore and Moggill; our Kenmore and Karana Downs rugby clubs; Kenmore Little Athletics; or the Moggill, Karana Downs, Yarrowa and Brookfield horse and pony clubs, as well as our Rotary and Lions clubs—to name just a few of our local sport, community and recreation clubs—they simply would not be able to function without volunteers. That is why I am also so proud to have delivered significant investment, as part of my election commitments, to back the vital work of our community, environmental and sporting organisations and the volunteers who power them.

The Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government has delivered on our commitment to undertake this inquiry and we are committed to ensuring volunteering in Queensland is not only sustained but also strengthened for generations to come. To every volunteer in the electorate of Moggill and across our great state: this report is for you. It is an acknowledgement of your service, your sacrifice and your enduring contribution to the Queensland way of life.

I conclude by saying: for those who are not currently volunteering, there are certainly immense opportunities—not only in my electorate of Moggill but right across Queensland—to contribute in a meaningful way to their communities. I would encourage people to take up those opportunities because not only are they needed but also there can be immense satisfaction that Queenslanders gain from volunteering. We know that often in some areas there are smaller and smaller numbers of people who are contributing more and more in multiple organisations. Whilst that is welcome, they certainly would value the support of other people who would step forward, contribute to their communities and ensure some of the heavy lifting and the loads are spread evenly across communities right across Queensland. Volunteering is fantastic.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (3.47 pm): As we all know, volunteers are the social fabric of our communities. In my electorate of Toohey we see this every single day. Lions clubs across our suburbs tirelessly fundraise and support families in need. The Sunnybank RSL volunteers safeguard the memory of service and sacrifice while supporting veterans and their families. Meals on Wheels Sunnybank and Salisbury deliver not just food but also hope and reassurance and often the only human contact some residents receive. We have the wonderful St David's Neighbourhood Centre that is a welcoming place where people can connect, belong and find support to meet their community, family and personal needs. It provides a friendly and inclusive environment where everyone is valued. The centre is dedicated to empowering individuals to reach their full potential through friendship, learning opportunities, social action and strong community connections. With a diverse range of programs and services, St David's supports people of all ages and backgrounds, helping to build a stronger, more connected community for us all. Then we have ProCare, which every month provides fresh food, including bread and food staples, to those who are in need in the electorate of Toohey. Without volunteers many essential services simply would not exist.

These organisations represent the very best of our community. Without volunteers many essential services simply would not exist. The *Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland* confirms something deeply concerning: the spirit of service is under serious strain. Volunteering rates have fallen from 76 per cent in 2020 to 64 per cent in 2023—more than 200,000 fewer Queenslanders giving their time. Hours volunteered have declined sharply. Emergency service volunteers are decreasing just as disasters become more frequent and severe. In Toohey alone the SES numbers have dropped from 160 volunteers in 2022 to just 30 today. At the same time the economic value of volunteering remains extraordinary—more than \$117 billion annually in Queensland. For every dollar invested in volunteering, \$4.70 is returned to our state. Volunteers are delivering billions of social, civil and economic benefit. What are they asking for in return? They are asking for less red tape, lower costs, streamlined background checks, insurance certainty and practical support.

The inquiry was an opportunity to deliver that. Instead, what we have is a report heavy on investigation and light on action. Almost every recommendation is qualified or subject to further review: a volunteering passport, to be explored; volunteering hubs, options to be investigated; training reform, to be investigated; blue card reform, to be reviewed; insurance issues, subject to further consideration.

The Crisafulli LNP government has accepted every recommendation in principle subject to further investigation. Volunteers do not need another advisory panel, they do not need another working group and they do not need another consultation round; they need action now. What makes this even more frustrating is that Queensland already had a whole-of-government volunteering strategy in place—the 2024-2032 strategy delivered by the former Labor government. The strategy was developed through consultation with more than 110 sector representatives in over 20 co-design sessions. It had already mapped practical reforms: administrative streamlining, volunteer management uplifts, inclusion initiatives and regulatory reform. Just eight weeks after its release the new government announced a fresh inquiry, asking many of the same organisations basically the same questions. Seven of the committee's eight key recommendation areas reaffirm or partially replicate what was already articulated under that strategy.

 **Mr VORSTER** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.52 pm): In addressing the committee's report and the government's response, it would be remiss of me not to point out the obvious, which is that the need for Queenslanders to step up and serve their communities has never been greater—and the challenges have never been greater. If we aspire to build a Queensland that is resilient, a civil society that can meet the challenges of the day, so must we rediscover the spirit of service. There is no better mechanism to do that than through the act of volunteering because what volunteering requires of the volunteer is sacrifice. If we can build within the state a culture where we are able and prepared to sacrifice for our communities and our mates, then in times of difficulty we will have a state that can rise to any challenge.

After a decade of decline that spirit has been tested, that spirit has struggled and that spirit has wanted leadership to fan the flames of Queensland. I want to applaud the Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers and the work of the committee in carrying out this body of work. While those opposite have tried to lay claim to the significant LNP legacy, I want to point out a second very obvious thing, which is that the electorate rejected the work of the former Labor government. They voted for an LNP government that made an explicit promise to deliver a new volunteering plan. They voted for this because the former plan was not working.

One of the highlights of the committee's report and the government's response is its particular focus on reducing the barriers to volunteering and community participation for multicultural groups. I think that this is the sleeping giant of opportunity that we all have to stitch together a socially cohesive Queensland. In my capacity as the Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs I have had the opportunity to move about Queensland and to speak with multicultural groups on the frontline of community service. These community groups are not only meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in their communities, regardless of their race, their religion or their circumstances, but many of them have caught onto the opportunity to engage in broader Australian and Queensland civil society.

In the last few weeks, I have encountered the Muslim Crescent Scouts, the Buddha's Light Scout Group and the Brisbane First Chinese Scout Group. I have seen new Australians engaged in these incredible organisations taking young people on a journey of civic responsibility and learning great skills at the same time. I absolutely applaud the work of those multicultural groups. I hope that the fruit of this inquiry and the government's response is to reduce the barriers that others might feel in doing the same.

One of the great Australian cultural institutions is the surf lifesaving movement. I want to disclose that I am the patron of the South Coast Branch and vice patron of the Point Danger Branch of Surf Life Saving Queensland. Later today I will have the opportunity, with the Minister for Multiculturalism, to meet representatives from Surf Life Saving Queensland. I am excited about that conversation because they are doing incredible work in the multicultural space. If we can encourage new Queenslanders to get involved in that movement then they will be incredible ambassadors of what can be done not only to look after life, not only to contribute to one's community but also to build that united Queensland. There are incredible challenges in our society. There are global challenges that we may need to meet. A resilient community that looks after itself and has the capacity to do so will only be built through sacrifice and volunteering. I absolutely support the report.

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (3.57 pm): I want to begin by thanking all the community volunteers, groups and organisations that took the time to provide a stakeholder submission. I also want to acknowledge some of the incredible volunteers and community groups who make such a difference every day across the northside: P&C and P&F members of our local schools; Aspley Classes for Seniors, offering everything from computer literacy to crochet, creating a space where older residents can stay active, connected and learning; the Aspley branch of National Seniors Australia, a not-for-profit membership and advocacy network for older locals; Aspley View Club, whose partnership with the Smith Family supports children's education—and they have a great laugh at the Christmas party every year; the Brisbane Inner North Lions Club, whose community service is felt across the northside; Carseldine Probus Club, providing friendship and fellowship for retired and semi-retired locals; Geebung Meals on Wheels, delivering not just meals but care and connection in the local area; and Ridley Road Community Men's Shed, a place of skill-sharing, support and mateship.

Let us not forget the coaches, parents, managers and volunteers across our fantastic sporting clubs—I will leave some out as I cannot reference all of them. They include Little Athletics who can always do with more parent volunteers—the local group down the road do a fantastic job and I encourage anyone to join up if they are able to help out; the volunteers who keep our bowls clubs, Aspley Memorial Bowls Club and Geebung Bowls Club, thriving and running every single day; and our local church group volunteers who on not only weekends but also throughout the week do wonderful work in our community.

To every single volunteer in our community, thank you. What you do matters. This list only scratches the surface of the countless locals who give back to their club, group or organisation and who have an immeasurable impact on our community.

Turning now to the inquiry itself, despite the committee holding 15 public hearings and receiving more than 500 written submissions, the government's response has been to 'support all recommendations in principle, subject to further investigation'. It is worth remembering that this inquiry was the LNP's 100-day plan commitment. Here we are over 490 days into this government and what have they actually delivered? Once again, it appears the government's solution is to simply establish another panel. One can only hope the ministerial advisory panel does not become yet another talkfest. Throughout the inquiry, the committee heard many thoughtful and practical suggestions.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mellish, adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates and Referral of Auditor-General's Report

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (Leader of the House) (4.00 pm): I seek to advise the House of the determinations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly at its meeting today. The committee has resolved that, pursuant to standing order 136, the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee report on the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill by 17 April 2026; the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee report on the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority Bill by 17 April 2026; and the Primary Industries and Resources Committee report on the Resources Safety and Health Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 17 April 2026.

The committee has resolved that, pursuant to standing order 194B, the Auditor-General's *Report 10: 2025-26—Managing Queensland's finances 2025* be referred to the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (Leader of the House) (4.01 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 24 March 2026.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

**FIGHTING ANTISEMITISM AND KEEPING GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF
TERRORISTS AND CRIMINALS AMENDMENT BILL****Second Reading**

Resumed from p. 543, on motion of Mr Purdie—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. AJ PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (4.01 pm), continuing: Many have never seen a practical application of firearms in a rural or agricultural setting. It would be good for them to see how property owners deal with feral pigs, wild dogs and other feral pests.

I was surprised by the comments of the shadow minister for police. As a regional member of parliament, he should know better. He said that the laws should go further and that they are not tough enough. Labor is being duplicitous. He claimed that more should be spent on weapons licensing, but for 10 years under Labor's decade of decline they hamstrung weapons licensing. They did everything possible to make licence holders and applicants jump through manufactured hoops. Labor's solutions are just more excuses to make it harder for law-abiding firearm owners. I judge Labor on what it does, not what it says. I judge members opposite on what they do, not what they say. The truth is that they do not want anyone to own firearms.

There are several provisions in this bill that the former Labor government was forewarned could help make our communities safer and it did nothing. Former premier Miles and Labor voted against strengthening penalties for stealing a firearm or ammunition. We tried to assist them from opposition. We tried to make drive-by shooting a standalone offence. In 2024 the Crisafulli government tried to incorporate that in Labor's Community Safety Bill. The Miles Labor government rejected it. In 2019, Labor refused to support our attempt to strengthen the weapons laws regarding the manufacture of firearms on 3D printers or electronic milling machines. The former Labor government failed to require weapons to be stored in solid steel containers. Queensland was the only jurisdiction that permitted older and less safe timber and wooden storage containers. The former Labor government created a convoluted process to authorise firearm prohibition orders. We are fixing their botched laws. It did nothing because it is soft on crime.

We are delivering the strongest penalties in the country for the misuse of firearms. We have consistently put the rights of victims over those of offenders. The laws are consistent with the Crisafulli government's tough-on-crime approach. They will make Queenslanders safer. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (4.04 pm): Fifteen innocent Australians lost their lives in the Bondi Beach tragedy. At the last sitting we stood in this chamber to grieve for and honour them and all who have been impacted. There is no place in our country for violence and hatred. We should be able to gather to practise our faiths and go about our daily lives without fear. As we have heard, that targeted attack was an act of terrorism. It was the second deadliest mass shooting on Australian soil and one that will be forever imprinted in our memories and history.

Today we vote on legislation that endeavours to reduce risk through several amendments to the Criminal Code, the Weapons Act 1990 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 that include a ban on hate symbols and specific expressions used to incite or promote discrimination, hostility or violence. In addition, there will be new criminal offences regarding intimidation and increased penalties for attacks on people and places of worship. New maximum penalties of up to 14 years imprisonment have been included for stealing firearms or ammunition. Stricter licensing criteria will require a gun owner to be an Australian citizen. These are amongst a host of other changes. These include intelligence sharing with the ADF for background checks and stringent weapons storage rules. Specific new offences will help police target acts of preparation for serious violence and drive-by shootings.

The majority of these amendments have been welcomed. However, will they reduce hatred, incitement and fear? Support for the bill came from organisations including the Archdiocese of Brisbane, which stated that protecting faith communities is legitimately and morally necessary. The Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies said that the changes reaffirm that hate has no place in Queensland. Firearm owners supported addressing the safety risk from licensed gun theft and limiting access to high-risk individuals. Guns have a practical place in society for law-abiding Queenslanders, including sporting and recreational clubs, as I raised during the community safety debate, and our farmers require specific tools of trade in their efforts to grow our food. I thank those in my community who shared the realities, including our farmers who face endless stock losses because of wild dogs.

However, the 412 submissions raised widespread concerns, which I share. First, concern was raised about the one-week submission deadline, which was far too short. Also, the curtailed committee process yet again highlighted the system deficiencies for scrutiny and oversight which I have raised for many years in this chamber and again recently with the Premier. The Queensland Jewish community warned that the narrow focus of the legislation risked further polarisation and discrimination and less safety for affected communities. They joined with others, including the Australian Multicultural Action Network, to call for the wording to be broadened to a zero-tolerance approach to hatred and violence against all marginalised communities. This is essential.

Submitters also pointed out the duplication with existing Commonwealth and state provisions and called for the anti-discrimination and vilification reforms already within the Crime and Corruption (Restoring Reporting Powers) Amendment Bill to be commenced. The Wieambilla inquest recommendations must also be implemented, as future tragedies cannot be prevented unless the root causes of extremism are addressed. Change cannot occur in a legislation silo and it is not the only lever available to government, as reiterated by the Public Health Association and the Queensland Police Union. Walter Mikac, who tragically lost his wife and two daughters in the Port Arthur massacre, said that increasing penalties without preventive measures was like locking the gate after the horse had bolted. Rabbi Ari Rubin added that education is a far better solution to pre-empt any of these things. This echoes the historical calls for mandated whole-of-school life and personal development education incorporating cultural and religious awareness and perspectives.

As submitted, those who commit acts of extreme violence and hatred do not follow our laws, nor respect our shared humanity. Legal Aid Queensland explained that criminal law is a poor tool to improve social cohesion and other submitters suggested community-led restorative justice processes, as has been advocated for previously.

Academics had also cautioned on potential impacts to freedom of speech with decisions on specific expressions left with the Attorney-General, and that was a slippery slope that could be exploited beyond what was intended with this bill. I thank the government for responding to these concerns, with a last-minute amendment to ensure future changes are only through legislation, as they should be.

Freedoms, including to speak, gather, protest and debate are fundamental to our democracy, and with them comes a heavy responsibility to our country, our neighbours, our families and to each other. They should never be weaponised to promote hatred or violence, nor attack or divide communities online or on the ground—full stop. As an MP who opposes the gagging of debate in this chamber, urgency motions that limit scrutiny and prevent members speaking on behalf of those they represent and the failures of our committee system that include a lack of transparency, I acknowledge the responsibility that freedom of speech brings. Every day I will oppose, whether here in the chamber, on the street or online, language, intent and slogans that incite or promote hatred and division. There is no place for this now or in the future for this—again, full stop.

We must address the causes of division, whether religious or based on wealth or ideology, and not just the symptoms that emanate from that. Legislation must be underpinned by systems that work for everyday Queenslanders, not against. Zero transparency is not acceptable, nor is the endless blame and politicking around horrendous and abhorrent behaviours in our society.

Both sides of this chamber need to work together, and amongst the many speeches during this debate, none have mentioned our own behaviours in this House that contribute to increasing unrest, division, mistrust and hatred. To see deep grief and sorrow weaponised against one another has been incredibly saddening.

One of the greatest issues we face as a society and ultimately as representatives is do we go for the quick response to serve the need for instant gratification and to appear that we are doing something or do we take longer, through appropriate processes, to really listen to those impacted, to ensure our

actions will actually improve community safety? This is never an easy question, nor are the answers, as not supporting this bill could have one deemed uncaring and by supporting it we could possibly be creating greater harm and enabling the ongoing failings of this parliament.

In finishing, I want to thank the committee and its secretariat and all submitters who endeavoured to do the impossible in an unacceptable timeline. I can only say history will judge us, as will our next generations and all who may be failed by decisions made under this flawed system.

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (4.12 pm): I rise to add my contribution to the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill. I will confine my contribution to the firearms component of the legislation.

On 14 December 2025, at about 6.42 pm, two Muslim gunmen opened fire on about 1,000 members of the Jewish community who were peacefully and lawfully celebrating the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah at Bondi Beach in Sydney. What ensued was the worst mass killing using firearms in Australia in over two decades, which left 15 innocent people dead and 40 wounded. This was not a crime of passion or revenge, or a crime without reason as was the case in Port Arthur; this was a senseless murder of 15 innocent Australians driven by fundamental hate—hate generated by a diabolical organisation called Islamic State, hate based on anti-Semitic ideology, an ideology that should never be allowed to infiltrate the shores of our great nation, a nation that holds the values of freedom, peace and safety of its citizens at its very heart.

As these events unfolded in New South Wales, reverberations were felt around the nation. In the hours, days and weeks that followed, the leaders of our nation began to formulate their respective responses depending upon their particular areas of responsibility and roles. In Queensland, our Premier, backed 100 per cent by his members, refused to follow on the over-reactive response of other states and jurisdictions, but rather took a calm and considered approach that addressed the fundamental issue of anti-Semitism and the unlawful use of firearms by criminals and anti-Semitic terrorists, rather than punish lawful firearm holders such as farmers and recreational shooters.

My electorate of Cook is over 2,500 kilometres from Bondi Beach, the furthestmost place in Queensland from this tragic event. With over 20,000 licence holders in Far North Queensland, firearm ownership per capita would equal, if not exceed, the state average. There are members of the Muslim faith in my electorate, some farming families having been there for 100 years. The Jewish community is represented by Chabad of Rural and Regional Australia which is based in Cairns but extends into Cook. Mareeba, the major centre in my electorate, is home to about 30 different cultural groups, all of whom are peaceful and law-abiding citizens. Terrorism is unheard of in Cook, as is anti-Semitism, perhaps with the exception of the infamous 'Heals Mick' who is happy to immerse himself in hatred and anti-Semitism on a public platform, regrettably.

The point is my electorate and the people who reside there could not be further away from the events of 14 December 2025 at Bondi Beach, yet the implications threatened the freedoms of many licensed firearm holders. I immediately reassured my constituents that the Crisafulli government would take a calm and considered approach in its response to the unfolding events and would not be drawn into a kneejerk reaction in relation to gun laws.

On 10 February 2026, I issued a public statement in the following terms—

If you are a farmer or recreational shooter holding a legitimate firearms licence in Queensland the new gun laws will not limit the number or class of licenced firearms you hold.

What the laws will do is crackdown on stealing, trafficking and unlicensed ownership of weapons with an emphasis on firearms used for purposes of terrorist acts. Only Australian citizens will be able to apply for a licence and there will be a fit and proper person test.

The Crisafulli government has done just what it said it would do in response to the horrific Bondi shootings. Calmly and methodically amend our gun laws to protect our citizens without penalising our law abiding farmers and shooters.

Since 10 February, this post has been viewed by about 430,000 people, attracted 6,800 likes, 881 comments and 374 shares. The support for the Crisafulli response to the Bondi massacre has been overwhelmingly positive. Some of the comments include: 'Finally some common sense'; 'A way more sensible approach. I hope other States follow this approach'; 'These kind of changes I can agree with, both sensible and practical, without unduly penalising lawful licence holders.'

Today the Queensland parliament is debating the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill, and Queenslanders will have the certainty and the safety they deserve. Had the Labor government remained at the helm of our great state, Queenslanders would have faced the same kneejerk response as proposed by the Albanese government with a buyback, reduced number of firearms and greater restrictions without addressing the underlying issues of hate and anti-Semitism.

Those in the opposition ranks might be likened to a set of traffic lights: there are those who claim to be red and stop everything coming their way, and there are those who appear to be green but in fact are also red. In reality, most of the time those opposite are flashing yellow, not sure if they are stop or go, floundering around in great demonstrations of hyperbole or straight-out chaos and confusion.

So, what will our laws mean for our farmers and recreational shooters who hold legitimate firearm licences? The Crisafulli government is committed to delivering a nation-leading response for firearms offences that pose a high risk to community safety due to either their inherent serious nature or their direct association with other offences. By way of example, penalties have been increased for offences such as unlawful trafficking in weapons, unlawful supply, shortening and modifying firearms, altering identification marks, misuse of firearms and so on.

Further, the bill will limit the provision of a weapons licence to Australian citizens who reside in Queensland, with exceptions for noncitizens who require weapons for genuine reasons relating to sport, competition shooting or occupational requirements. Licences presently held by non-Australian citizens will be unaffected. There is a provision that persons wishing to apply for the issue or renewal of a licence or to amend a weapons licence will be subject to a fit and proper person test.

One further strengthening of the laws relates to storage containers. The new laws will require all weapons to be stored in a lockable steel container. These will replace timber containers that are susceptible to damage and theft. There will be a 12-month period of grace in which to install steel cabinets.

In finishing, I am confident that not only has the Crisafulli government approached this highly emotive issue in a calm and methodical manner but it has found the right balance between public safety and the right of Australians to live in peace free from fear and the rights of licensed firearm holders. Importantly, the legislation addresses the root cause of the problem: hate speech and anti-Semitism. To be clear: those farmers and recreational shooters who hold legitimate firearm licences will be able to maintain the number and classes of weapons they hold whilst those who choose to break the law will face harsh penalties, which will be strictly enforced, as we promised. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. SJ MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (Minister for Customer Services and Open Data and Minister for Small and Family Business) (4.20 pm): I rise to speak to the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026. Some bills carry a great deal of historical significance, and I am confident in stating that this is, indeed, one such bill. Martin Niemöller's famous ode reads as follows—

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

That ode is as poignant today as it was when it was written all those years ago. As I have said in this House before, symbols matter. Symbols are powerful. Some symbols are even more powerful than others. In my 14 years in this chamber, one of the greatest privileges I ever had was to entertain a gentleman who sadly passed away in 2022. That gentleman's name was George Stein. He was the embodiment of all that is good in mankind. In fact, I dedicate this brief contribution to his memory. He was Jewish. He stared down a dark time in history. He was a Holocaust survivor, a survivor of the Shoah. The symbol that George Stein had a vexed relationship with all of his life was six numbers tattooed onto his wrist—a symbol that he refused to remove. He wanted to make sure that sign of the Holocaust was never forgotten.

No-one has a fount of all wisdom when it comes to matters, particularly on a topic such as this. I was very privileged in 2020 to visit Israel. When I saw that horrific footage of 7 October 2023, it immediately brought back a haunting memory for me. I saw imagery of a children's playground in a little town not far from the Gaza border called Sderot. At Sderot, we were given training to get to a bomb shelter in eight seconds. That was the way they lived.

I also saw some other amazing things in Israel. I was absolutely moved when I went to the Tel Aviv hospital and met a doctor who had performed surgery on a teenage girl. That teenage girl's father was a suicide bomber who actually killed his own wife, yet he lovingly tended to her wounds.

I acknowledge the bravery even closer to these shores of Ahmed Al Ahmed, who was, indeed, the hero of Bondi. No nationality has a mortgage on decency; it comes from purity of heart, which is why I am so proud to be supporting this bill in the House this afternoon. As others in this chamber have

done, I acknowledge those 15 people who were tragically murdered by the lunacy of terrorism unchecked on 14 December in Bondi. That date will be indelibly inscribed in all of our collective memories.

I also acknowledge a dear friend of mine: Jason Steinberg from the Jewish Board of Deputies. I have reached out to Jason for many years. I take a lot of solace from his compassion, his dignity and his sheer humanity. I thank Jason for what he has been able to do on behalf of the Jewish community.

I will only speak for a short time because I want to give my dear friend the member for Toowoomba North an opportunity to also say a few words on this particular bill. It is important. As I have said, we have to get through a lot of work in this chamber and we do it for the betterment of Queensland. Occasionally there are bills that are of complete historical significance, and I will look back on the passing of this legislation knowing in my heart of hearts how important it is. I will say this: I have heard some fantastic contributions to the debate in this chamber. I do want to highlight the one that was made yesterday by the member for Oodgeroo. I thought her contribution to this particular topic was simply outstanding.

I know that this bill covers a large degree of material, including symbols. It also picks up on important gun law reform. As has been said by the member for Gympie, we made sure to handle it in a methodical and calm way. I am proud of the significant law reform that has been done in relation to weapons in this particular bill as well.

I simply say: I hope that when we adjourn tonight most people in this chamber reflect on their own personal conduct and contribution to the wider society. Before I end my contribution I will repeat: symbols; what we say and do; what we support with little emojis, ticks and likes; and what we repost can have dire consequences. At the end of the day, we really are civic leaders in our respective patches. It is something that I have always taken seriously, with earnest responsibility, in my 14 years in this chamber. I hope that when we adjourn tonight some other members in this chamber reflect on what they have been doing with their contributions to make sure we remain the greatest example of multiculturalism in the Western world.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.26 pm): The terrible events of 7 October in Bondi shook Australians. It was such a breach of the standards that we seek to build in this country. I know this is before the courts, so I will respect the House and limit my descriptions and allegations of events. However, our hearts go out to all 15 who died, targeted simply because they were at a Jewish event.

I want to recognise Chabad, the organisation that seeks to have such a public-facing event in so many places around the world, including Australia, for the festival of Hanukkah. I have attended their events before and celebrated by bringing home gifts to my kids of a dreidel, colouring books and menorahs. This year I went to the Jewish hall in Surfers Paradise not only to celebrate but also as a mark of respect and to be a witness to the ancient lighting of the giant menorah. My heart goes out to the Jewish community—now more than ever—who have to think twice about safety and security. I spoke to one attendee whose son had been abused at school because of his surname. My grandparents—especially the O’Kanes—taught me that all people deserve respect. They especially taught me to be supportive and respectful of Jewish Australians.

I thought this could be a unifying event for this parliament, not one where the government seeks political advantage to divide. I condemn any desecration or wilful damage of any place of worship. As an Irish Australian I know that all of our places of worship in Ireland were either destroyed or wilfully damaged, so this is particularly important to me. It disappoints me that this bill pretends to introduce further protections for places of worship by inserting a new subsection (13) as it is already in 11(1)(c) of the Criminal Code. Both have the same seven-year penalty; however, the new subsection (13) calls upon the prosecution to prove paragraph (a). Although it may not be difficult to do, 11(1)(c) does not require it. So the existing law will exist twice in our Criminal Code, but it will also have a small hurdle towards prosecution. The question is: why introduce it then? The Premier is doing what he always does when introducing laws—that is, seeking advantage not for the people of Queensland but for himself.

We recognise these laws are not just about synagogues. Overwhelmingly they will be for other places of worship. It is important that all places of worship are protected. This is an example of how hurried the bill was and how little consultation was undertaken. It had more to do with politics than with making faith communities genuinely safer. This is why the bill has had such a short time available for examination and has been criticised so much by faith communities. This was a great opportunity for unity—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Member, I am sorry to interrupt but I ask that you resume your seat. Under the provisions of the order agreed to by the House, I now call the minister to reply to the second reading debate.

Hon. DG PURDIE (Ninderry—LNP) (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (4.30 pm), in reply: I would like to thank all members who made a contribution to the debate on the Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026. The bill is a necessary powerful response to the tragic Bondi Beach terrorist attack and the 15 innocent lives lost which has changed the national security landscape for our country.

The Crisafulli government is delivering strong, decisive action to combat anti-Semitism and hate and keep guns out of the hands of criminals and terrorists as we continue to make Queensland safer. Each of these challenges is addressed by the two main components of the bill: amendments to the Criminal Code, including strengthening responses to anti-Semitism; and the introduction of new offences and amendments to the Weapons Act that tackle illegal firearms and enhance the firearm prohibition order framework.

The committee, led by the member for Nicklin, received more than 400 submissions from Queenslanders offering a variety of viewpoints from individuals, community groups and organisations. One submission in particular struck me. It starts—

I lost my political career because I would not stand up and say I was pro-Palestine. I lost my political career due to antisemitism ...

Oct 7th happened and I instantly saw in my community of West End antisemitism rise to the surface. Not just in public but within my political party and local branch ...

At this time I was in the running to be pre-selected for the State election. I was seen as the winner before even getting to preselection based on my union backing, political mentor, support team and the work I had done for years leading to this in my community.

...

It was clear that that we were witnessing the start of open and accepted Jew hatred. Within our community we recognised similarities between now and the 1930s ...

Due to my post my political mentor told me either you are pro-palestine or I am ending my support of you and taking the Unions with me. My Jewish husband was sitting next to me and I calmly replied, "I am not pro-palestine and I am absolutely not pro-war but there is no way I could sleep at night knowing I had compromised on my values to win an election". She pulled all support that same day (we were already in pre-selection) and the runner up to me won and went on to win the seat in the state election.

I have witnessed and been subjected to antisemitism.

She goes on to say—

I commend the Government on their stance and reiterate the message that the Jewish community saw Bondi coming. We warned everyone and have been living in fear since Oct 7th. That feeling does not belong in Australia.

We need these laws. Its unfortunate but true. Radical hate for Jews and Israel will continue in violence and we must have stronger gun laws to combat this and criminalise speech that calls for the death and destruction of a people.

This submission alone is simply astonishing. While the submission is anonymous, it is evident that we are talking about the seat of South Brisbane. What does this say about the Labor membership, the party unit, her former mentor in South Brisbane and the Labor member for South Brisbane? In her contribution earlier, the member for South Brisbane failed to disclose her powerful backers and the reason she came to sit in this chamber. Did the member for South Brisbane only win preselection because she bowed to the disgraced former member for South Brisbane?

Dr O'SHEA: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Pause the clock. Member for South Brisbane, you have a point of order?

Dr O'SHEA: I have. I take personal offence at these remarks and I ask the minister to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, the member has taken personal offence and I ask that you withdraw.

Mr PURDIE: I withdraw. Is this the reason that the member for Cairns is still sitting in the Labor caucus, the same reason that that member got elected and the same reason that the opposition leader is refusing to act?

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

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! I am taking some advice. Minister, my concern is relevance. You are referring to an anonymous submission to the inquiry. Then you have said it is obviously about the member for South Brisbane. Can you substantiate that?

Mr PURDIE: It talks about the member's community of West End. I have withdrawn what I said and I will move on. The submission to the committee does pose the legitimate question: is it a broader prerequisite to be endorsed as a state MP in Queensland by the Australian Labor Party that you must hold anti-Semitic views?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. Member, I ask that you withdraw that. That is unparliamentary.

Mr PURDIE: I withdraw.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My point of order relates to what the minister is referring to which was a submission that was provided to the committee. It is part of the committee report in relation to that. He is addressing matters with respect to the content of that as part of the compiled report in relation to the bill that is before the House. He is referencing that as part of his reply speech.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, Leader of the House. He did not say that.

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister might be trying to be tricky and slippery and slick with his words—

Dr ROWAN: Point of order—

Mr de BRENNI: I am entitled to put my point of order, so just sit down!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Direct your comments through the chair.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! The Manager of Opposition Business is still making his point of order.

Mr de BRENNI: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. His remarks that seek to assert—

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Deputy Speaker gave leave to the Manager of Opposition Business to make a point of order. That does not give the Manager of Opposition Business the opportunity to use unparliamentary language and I ask that he withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: I just came in as that was said and I also deem that to be unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr de BRENNI: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: You have a point of order?

Mr de BRENNI: My point of order is that the minister's remarks are deeply offensive. They are directly referring to members of the opposition. There is no other interpretation of that and I ask that he withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: The point of order, as I heard it—I was watching the screen prior to coming in here. You cannot take personal offence as a collective. Minister, I am going to ask you to talk to the bill as we have it. Continue your contribution and I will be listening closely.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is a matter of privilege. In relation to the remarks addressed by the Manager of Opposition Business directly across to me, instructing me to sit down, is disorderly. I take personal offence and I ask them to be withdrawn.

Mr de BRENNI: I withdraw.

Mr PURDIE: Turning to one of the matters consistently raised about the bill by those opposite, they claim the framework would allow the Attorney-General excessive scope to prohibit phrases. Let me be clear: the framework replicates that which Labor enacted to prohibit symbols when it was in power. It seems that the framework which Labor had no issue with when it was in government has now given it cause for concern. Unlike those opposite, we listen to Queenslanders. That is why, as I foreshadowed in my second reading speech, I intend to move amendments during consideration in detail which will remove the regulation-making power from the bill.

We are making this amendment to better protect Jewish Queenslanders. We are doing this because we know that those opposite simply do not share our concern when it comes to the safety of the Jewish community across this state. We only had to hear the words of the member for Mansfield

last night to understand that Labor does not understand the crisis being faced by Jewish Queenslanders. Rather than considering how a failure of leadership in Canberra allowed historically high levels of anti-Semitism to flourish across Australia, the member for Mansfield would have us believe that Scott Morrison is to blame. We only need to consider the vile anti-Semitic posts exposed this week in parliament by the member for Cairns to see Labor's true position when it comes to supporting our Jewish community. In response to those posts the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies was compelled to publicly comment on the actions of the member for Cairns. They said—

The Jewish community is deeply concerned to learn about social media posts made by Queensland Member of Parliament Michael Healy, which employ age-old anti-Semitic tropes and Holocaust inversion.

Comparing the Israel Defense Forces to murder squads and suggesting—

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

Mr SPEAKER: Was it a personal reflection?

Mr HEALY: I take personal offence and I would like him to withdraw.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister is reading directly from a statement that was put out by the Jewish Board of Deputies yesterday. There is no reflection on the member sitting there, and I put to you that the member is taking this a bit too far.

Mr SPEAKER: The member still has a right to take personal offence. If he has taken personal offence, Minister, I will ask you to withdraw.

Mr PURDIE: I withdraw. Jewish Queenslanders simply do not feel safe. They do not feel protected. We are taking decisive action to enshrine the phrases in legislation because Labor simply cannot be trusted not to repeal the regulations and remove these prohibitions when they return to government. This justifies the amendments I am moving today to enshrine these prohibitions in legislation.

Those opposite can claim that the government is backing down, but the reality is something very different. We are taking strong and decisive action to protect our Queensland Jewish community. Meanwhile, what we have seen from the Leader of the Opposition is a failure of leadership. He has failed to take strong and decisive action against the member for Cairns. While the member remains a member of Labor's leadership team the question remains: is it a requirement to be a Labor member of parliament in Queensland that you have to have anti-Semitic views?

I will now address specific issues raised by members during the debate. First and foremost, I want to clarify the real record of those opposite when it comes to cracking down on criminals with guns. In his speech in this chamber on Tuesday night the shadow minister for police stated—

The Labor opposition will always back action that protects Queensland's multicultural communities and keeps guns out of the wrong hands.

The shadow attorney-general echoed that sentiment and said—

Labor will always back progress that keeps firearms out of the wrong hands.

I will not allow the history books to be rewritten. As I highlighted in my second reading speech, in 2019 the LNP opposition tabled a private member's bill moving to address a rise in four very serious matters: the proliferation of stolen guns in our communities; drive-by shootings; blueprints for 3D printed guns; and the need for a firearm prohibition order—FPO—scheme. It is critically important that Queenslanders know this history. The former Labor government, including the now shadow police minister and shadow treasurer, failed to support these LNP reforms that would have helped to keep Queensland safer. On this side of the chamber we know that you cannot be tough on crime if you are soft on criminals with guns. Given their track record, it is a shame those opposite have no credibility.

In 2014 the Crisafulli LNP opposition tried to help government from opposition a second time by legislating tougher penalties for criminals with guns. As the shadow police minister I moved amendments to the 2024 Community Safety Bill addressing drive-by shootings, increased penalties for stolen firearms and the creation of a fit and proper FPO scheme. Once again those opposite did not support these endeavours. *Hansard* reflects a reality that is fundamentally opposed to what the member for Waterford stated in her speech on the second reading just a few nights ago. The lack of action and incompetence goes further, particularly with respect to Labor's botched firearm prohibition order scheme.

I will take this opportunity to correct the record on another matter raised by those opposite. On Tuesday evening, when speaking about a nationally consistent approach to guns, the member for Waterford said—

... we will not have a national approach to gun control because of the actions of this government.

...

This is a real missed opportunity for the government because it has not acted to ensure we have strong national gun reform.

It was in May 2015 that the Palaszczuk Labor government signed up to the National Organised Crime Response Plan. Item 2B of that national plan explicitly called on states to implement FPO schemes, including mechanisms to share information on high-risk individuals and to prohibit a person subject to an FPO in another jurisdiction from acquiring a firearms licence. Other states played their part. The Queensland Labor government did nothing. As stated previously, Labor had not enacted this initiative when we tabled our private member's bill. It was only in 2024, a full nine years later, that they finally introduced an FPO scheme. In typical Labor fashion they completely butchered it, depriving our police of a critical tool to help stop high-risk individuals from obtaining firearms. How can they sit here and say it is essential to follow the controversial national approach this time around, yet when it came to policy proposals that were no-brainers under their watch they dragged their feet for a decade? As we know, under Labor's watered-down scheme the police have not been able to issue one single FPO. That will soon change, because the Crisafulli government trusts the police and we are fixing Labor's botched laws.

Numerous speakers have also indicated that amendments in this bill in relation to guns do not go far enough. The reality is that this bill implements a wide range of measures that are designed to increase community safety. Following the passage of this bill, Queensland will have nation-leading penalties for firearms misuse. To state that we have not gone far enough is vague and factually incorrect. Those measures range from increasing the maximum penalty for stealing firearms to increasing the storage requirements for weapons.

The bill introduces new offences targeting gun crime and imposes the harshest penalties in Australia for weapons offences that, due to their inherent serious nature or their direct association with other offences, pose a high risk to community safety. These offences include: the unlawful possession, supply and manufacture of weapons, with all penalties increasing depending upon the category of firearm; shortening of weapons, increasing from four to 14 years imprisonment; modifying the construction of weapons, increasing from four to 15 years imprisonment; altering identification marks on weapons, increasing from four to 14 years imprisonment; and the unlawful trafficking of weapons, which now attracts a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

The bill introduces a new offence to address the reckless discharge of a weapon towards buildings or vehicles, recognising the unacceptable risk this behaviour poses to community safety, which carries a severe penalty of 16 years imprisonment with an aggravated penalty of up to 20 years for incidents linked to organised crime, hate crimes or places of worship.

The bill addresses a concerning emerging trend involving the manufacture of 3D printed firearms by prohibiting the possession or distribution of blueprint material that is to be used in the manufacture of a firearm on a 3D printer or electronic milling machine. Importantly, the bill is balanced to ensure no law-abiding gun owner has their rights inappropriately curtailed due to the conduct of criminals. As highlighted in the short title, this bill targets terrorists and criminals—those seeking to disrupt the safety and social cohesion of our state.

The bill strengthens licensing and suitability requirements to allow an unauthorised person to consider a broad range of relevant information in determining if a person is a fit and proper person for a weapons licence. This includes details of a relevant offence, which is defined in the bill as an offence under a law of Queensland or another jurisdiction that: involves the carriage, discharge, possession, storage or use of a weapon; involves the use or threatened use of violence; or involves the possession or distribution of blueprint material for the manufacture of a firearm on a 3D printer or an electronic milling machine.

This definition ensures that any offence involving weapons, violence or the unauthorised creation of firearms is taken into account when assessing an individual's suitability for a weapons licence. Importantly, the bill allows for the consideration of such offences even in cases where a court has

ordered that no conviction be recorded or where the rehabilitation period for the conviction has expired. The inclusion of relevant offences in the assessment process ensures a measured evaluation of an applicant's suitability, with a focus on mitigating risks and prioritising public safety. This approach reflects the government's commitment to ensuring that weapons licences are only issued to individuals who meet the highest standards of responsibility and trustworthiness.

Numerous speakers have called for greater national consistency with gun control. This government recognises the importance of the National Firearms Agreement and acknowledges that there are key principles that must be followed to ensure that community safety and responsible firearm ownership is maintained. Each state and territory retains the ability to tailor its firearm regulations to address unique circumstances and community needs and safety. This ensures that firearm regulations in each state and territory remain effective, appropriate and responsive.

This government is committed to ensuring all Queenslanders can live free from hate and violence. To achieve this, the bill strengthens existing bans on hate symbols and introduces a new offence for publicly using certain prohibited expressions. The Crisafulli government listened to what Queenslanders had to say. It has always been our clear intention to prohibit only two phrases. We have never wavered from that intention. In fact, we have repeatedly stated that we do not propose to prohibit any other phrases. Despite this, many of those opposite repeatedly referred to the regulation-making power to prescribe prohibited expressions. As I foreshadowed in my second reading speech, I intend to move amendments during consideration in detail which will remove the regulation-making power. Should a future government wish to add or remove any expressions, they will need to do this via an amendment to the Criminal Code and subject to the full scrutiny of the parliament.

Many of those opposite have taken issue with the expressions that are proposed to be prescribed. The amendments I foreshadowed in my second reading speech will prescribe the expressions 'from the river to the sea' and 'globalise the intifada' in the Criminal Code. The government has not taken the decision to prohibit these expressions lightly. As stated in the explanatory notes to the amendments, these expressions have been identified by the government as representative of an ideology of extreme prejudice against Jewish people, and their inclusion as prohibited expressions is necessary to prevent their use to incite discrimination, hostility or violence against Jewish Queenslanders.

Several members have referred to the offence threshold for the prohibited expressions offence, and I reiterate again what I stated in my second reading speech. Under the new offence, the public use of the prohibited expression must, in the context, reasonably be expected to cause a member of the public to feel menaced, harassed or offended. This means the conduct must be capable of causing a significant emotional or psychological response such as causing someone to feel threatened, repeatedly targeted, significant anger, significant resentment, outrage, disgust or hatred. It would not be enough to simply cause slight offence or insult only. This is the view of the High Court.

The offence threshold is the first safeguard. As with the existing prohibited symbols offence, this offence is further balanced by a defence of reasonable excuse, recognising there may be legitimate purposes for using expressions, such as for genuine educational purposes or public interest reporting. As the member for Maiwar noted himself, there may well be occasions where reciting these expressions would not cause a member of the public to feel menaced, harassed or offended. That is the intended operation of the safeguards that are built into the offence. Let me be crystal clear. This is not about stifling free speech; it is about protecting our Queensland Jewish communities from the harm caused by hateful and extremist ideologies.

I note some concerns were raised during the debate in relation to capturing symbols used to identify terrorist organisations or state sponsors of terrorism listed by the Commonwealth government as prescribed organisations. We know a prescribed organisation may use a number of symbols for identification purposes—some of which may be obscure—and a person may inadvertently display such a symbol with no knowledge as to its significance. We have specifically accounted for this in the bill. To avoid capturing this kind of unintentional conduct, the bill adds an additional safeguard. This is consistent with the Commonwealth offence which already applies in Queensland and criminalises this broad range of symbols. Also, the conduct must reasonably cause a member of the public to feel menaced, harassed or offended to be an offence.

I take this opportunity to thank the personnel who have worked in the development of this bill. In particular, I mention Cheryl Scanlon, Brian Connors, Andrea Joseph, Andrew Wilson, John Henderson, Michael Webb, Anna Papoutsakis, Ashleigh Veivers, Erin Gillam, Shayne Kromberg and Sandra Van Eyk. I also thank officers from the Department of Justice including: Deputy Director-General for Justice

Policy and Reform, Tessa Piper; Assistant Director-General Leanne Robertson; Director Kathryn Allan; Principal Legal Officer Jamie Impson; and Senior Policy Officer Emma Francis. I commend the bill to the House.

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

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

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Mr SPEAKER: Under the provisions of the order agreed to by the House and the time limit for this stage of the bill having expired, I will now put all remaining questions necessary to complete consideration of the bill—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: That is grossly disrespectful. I will start again. Under the provisions of the order agreed to by the House and the time limit for this stage of the bill having expired, I will now put all remaining questions necessary to complete consideration of the bill including clauses en bloc and any amendments to be moved by the minister in charge of the bill without further amendment or debate. I call the minister to table the explanatory notes to his amendments and the statement of compatibility with human rights.

 **Mr PURDIE** (5:02 pm): I table the explanatory notes and statement of compatibility with human rights to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Criminals and Terrorists Bill 2026, explanatory notes to Hon. Daniel Purdie's amendments [\[287\]](#).

Tabled paper: Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Criminals and Terrorists Bill 2026, statement of compatibility with human rights contained within Hon. Daniel Purdie's amendments [\[288\]](#).

Division: Question put—That the minister's amendments Nos 1 to 8, as circulated, be agreed to.

AYES, 54:

LNP, 52—Baillie, Barounis, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Chiesa, Crandon, Crisafulli, Dalton, Dillon, Doolan, Dooley, Field, Frecklington, Gerber, Head, Hutton, Hunt, B. James, T. James, Janetzki, G. Kelly, Kempton, Kirkland, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lee, Lister, Mander, Marr, McDonald, Mickelberg, Minnikin, Molhoek, Morton, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Poole, Powell, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Stoker, Watts, Vorster, Young.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

NOES, 33:

ALP, 30—Asif, Bailey, Bourne, Boyd, Butcher, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Grace, Healy, J. Kelly, Linard, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Nightingale, Pease, Power, Pugh, Russo, Ryan, Scanlon, Smith, Whiting.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

Ind, 2—Bolton, Sullivan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Amendments agreed to.

Amendments, as circulated—

1 Clause 4 (Amendment of s 52C (Prohibited symbols))

Page 9, lines 9 to 14—

omit.

2 Clause 4 (Amendment of s 52C (Prohibited symbols))

Page 10, lines 2 to 10—

omit.

3 Clause 4 (Amendment of s 52C (Prohibited symbols))

Page 10, lines 21 to 32—

omit.

4 Clause 4 (Amendment of s 52C (Prohibited symbols))

Page 11, line 5, 'or (1A)(a)'—

omit.

5 Clause 7 (Insertion of new s 52DA)

Page 14, line 11, 'either'—
omit, insert—
 any

6 Clause 7 (Insertion of new s 52DA)

Page 14, line 20, 'and'—
omit.

7 Clause 7 (Insertion of new s 52DA)

Page 14, after line 26—
insert—

- (iii) the person engaged in the conduct that is alleged to constitute the offence in opposition to the ideology represented by the prohibited expression; and

8 Clause 7 (Insertion of new s 52DA)

Page 15, line 21—
omit, insert—

prohibited expression means either of the following expressions—

- (a) 'from the river to the sea';
 (b) 'globalise the intifada'.

Division: Question put—That clauses 1 to 119 and schedule 1, as amended, stand part of the bill.

Mr SPEAKER: Ring the bells for one minute.

AYES, 54:

LNP, 52—Baillie, Barounis, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Chiesa, Crandon, Crisafulli, Dalton, Dillon, Doolan, Dooley, Field, Frecklington, Gerber, Head, Hutton, Hunt, B. James, T. James, Janetzki, G. Kelly, Kempton, Kirkland, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lee, Lister, Mander, Marr, McDonald, Mickelberg, Minnikin, Molhoek, Morton, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Poole, Powell, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Stoker, Watts, Vorster, Young.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

NOES, 33:

ALP, 30—Asif, Bailey, Bourne, Boyd, Butcher, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Grace, Healy, J. Kelly, Linard, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Nightingale, Pease, Power, Pugh, Russo, Ryan, Scanlon, Smith, Whiting.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

Ind, 2—Bolton, Sullivan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 1 to 119 and schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

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

Mr SPEAKER: Ring the bells for one minute.

AYES, 54:

LNP, 52—Baillie, Barounis, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Chiesa, Crandon, Crisafulli, Dalton, Dillon, Doolan, Dooley, Field, Frecklington, Gerber, Head, Hutton, Hunt, B. James, T. James, Janetzki, G. Kelly, Kempton, Kirkland, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lee, Lister, Mander, Marr, McDonald, Mickelberg, Minnikin, Molhoek, Morton, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Poole, Powell, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Stoker, Watts, Vorster, Young.

KAP, 2—Katter, Knuth.

NOES, 33:

ALP, 30—Asif, Bailey, Bourne, Boyd, Butcher, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Grace, Healy, J. Kelly, Linard, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Nightingale, Pease, Power, Pugh, Russo, Ryan, Scanlon, Smith, Whiting.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

Ind, 2—Bolton, Sullivan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

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

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (EMPOWERING COUNCILS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 20 November 2025 (see p. 3775).

Second Reading



Hon. A LEAHY (Warrego—LNP) (Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers) (5.14 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill proposes amendments to the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Local Government Act 2009, the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 and associated regulations to deliver the Crisafulli government's legislative reform agenda to empower councils and deliver for their communities. Our reform agenda is being delivered in a genuine partnership with the Local Government Association of Queensland and the local government sector in line with the Equal Partners in Government agreement. Since introducing the bill in November 2025, the government has progressed complementary amendments to the local government regulations. These were made on 12 December 2025 to further empower councils and mayors and cut red tape. Councils are already benefiting from these changes, including having the autonomy to decide how to dispose of non-current assets, including land, without state intervention.

I thank the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee for its examination of the bill and the stakeholders who took the time to make submissions to the committee, as well as those witnesses who appeared at the public hearings. The committee considered a range of evidence and I note that 68 submissions were received and public briefings and hearings were held. I am happy to inform the House that submitters expressed strong support for the provisions in the bill. The LGAQ, at the committee's public hearing, thanked the government for listening to councils and noted that the bill addressed many issues that councils have been raising. The LGAQ stated—

... this bill represents an important step forward to modernise the legislative framework and address some critical priorities for Queensland councils.

Individual councils and councillors also expressed their support for the bill during the committee process. The Mackay Regional Council expressed its strong support of the intent and provisions of the bill, which it believed will enhance local government capability, reduce unnecessary regulatory burden and empower councils and mayors to better serve their communities. Similarly, the Whitsunday Regional Council highlighted that the bill contains measures that will materially improve local government capability and accountability. The Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council acknowledged that the bill is a significant step forward in realising the commitments under the Equal Partners in Government agreement and the Indigenous Council Leaders Accord. The Queensland councillor conduct watchdog, the Office of the Independent Assessor, and the body responsible for local government elections, the Electoral Commission of Queensland, also broadly support the intent of empowering councils and reducing unnecessary regulatory burden.

The committee tabled its report on 30 January 2026 and made one recommendation—that the bill be passed. I will address the detail of the committee's comments in its report and I will outline key elements of the bill. I foreshadow that I will move amendments during consideration in detail of the bill to address issues raised by the stakeholders and considered by the committee during its inquiry. Amendments will also make essential technical changes to the local government employee superannuation arrangements to provide consistency with the Commonwealth's payday super amendments coming into force in July this year. In addition, I will be moving amendments to the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000. These amendments are to facilitate greater sharing of information held by the Early Childhood Regulatory Authority with Blue Card Services.

The bill's provisions will achieve a range of important objectives for the Crisafulli government. These are empowering councils; empowering mayors; improving the conflict-of-interest register and register of interests framework; reducing unnecessary red tape and regulation; providing certainty about councillor remuneration, leave of absence, vacancies and eligibility; promoting good governance and

decision-making; enhancing safeguards for election participants; and making minor administrative and technical improvements. I will now turn to the detail of each of these objectives. The bill empowers councils by reinstating the role of councillors in the appointment of senior executive employees. Currently in councils other than the Brisbane City Council, appointments are made solely by the chief executive officer. The bill provides for local governments to use a panel for the appointment of senior executive employees comprising the CEO, the mayor and either the deputy mayor or relevant committee chairperson. The CEO will remain responsible for the management, direction and discipline of all local government employees, including senior executive employees.

I note submitters' support for the proposed amendments, including from the Flinders Shire Council and the Whitsunday Regional Council. The opposition has contended that the amendments are unnecessary and that mayors and councillors may already be involved in appointment processes for senior executive employees. The key word here is 'may'. Currently, the involvement of the mayor in these important appointments is entirely at the discretion of the CEO. The government considers, given the importance of the positions of senior executive employees in the functioning of councils, it is appropriate to prescribe that the mayor, the committee chairperson or deputy mayor be involved in the appointments to those positions. This reflects the unique position of the mayor, who is directly elected to the position to serve the whole council area, and there is a community expectation that the mayor would automatically be involved in the strategic directions of the council, including the appointment of key senior officers of the council.

The committee acknowledged the concerns raised by some submitters about the practical operation of the proposed panels and possible integrity issues. The committee referred in its report to the safeguards already in place to ensure councillors perform their roles in an honest, impartial and transparent manner. For example, councillors must comply with local government principles including ensuring transparent and effective processes in decision-making in the public interest. Their behaviour must be ethical and legal. Several elements of the Councillor Conduct Framework will also continue to require councillors to fulfil their appointment panel responsibilities with honesty and integrity. My department will work closely with the sector to implement the proposed framework, including in the development of training and guidance materials. Brisbane City Council already appoints its senior executive employees. The bill re-empowers councillors at the Brisbane City Council to appoint senior contract employees, including at general manager level. The CEO will appoint all other employees.

The bill amends the requirement around council's access to state owned quarry material, providing flexibility for councils according to their circumstances. State owned quarry material is the only source of material for many councils, particularly in western and northern Queensland, making it crucial for effective and efficient council operations. It is proposed that a reasonable entry notice be given to the owner and occupier of the relevant land within a reasonable period before entry, rather than at least seven days before entry as currently required. I am pleased to inform the House that submitters, including the LGAQ, were very supportive of the proposal to clarify reasonable entry notices and the timing under legislation. Some submitters raised the importance of developing template notices and best practice materials to support the implementation of the proposed amendments. To address these issues, the department will be updating existing guidance on the use of the relevant provision in the legislation to reflect the amendments in the bill.

The bill provides a framework to enable Queensland's 14 local governments—as well as the Aurukun Shire Council and the Mornington Shire Council—to rate in future if circumstances are favourable. These local governments have been prevented from rating because most of the land in each of their areas has historically been held by the local government in trust and is therefore not rateable. While the amendments in the bill do not change the current policy position that these councils must not rate, they create the flexibility for the future, if it is considered practical for any of these affected councils to commence rating. This is achieved through a regulation-making power. I am pleased to note the support from stakeholders for the proposal to clarify rating powers, with the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council submitting that these reforms speak directly to the commitments made under the Equal Partners in Government agreement.

I now turn to the amendments about mayoral responsibilities. The bill amends the Local Government Act 2009 to provide that the mayor's responsibilities include being the official spokesperson of the local government. This does not prevent other councillors from communicating with the community about local government matters, other than as the official spokesperson. Submitters to the committee inquiry, including the LGAQ, Local Government Managers Australia, individual councils and mayors supported the proposed amendments. In response to issues of concern raised by stakeholders, I am happy to confirm that mayors will still have the discretion to delegate the role of

council spokesperson to other councillors via their existing delegation power. This should allow for the tailoring of spokesperson arrangements, including media policies, to individual council circumstances. The bill also provides that mayors are responsible for leading and managing council meetings as the chairperson and any committee meetings for which they are chairperson.

I will now turn to the conflict-of-interest framework. In summary, the bill repeals the current conflict-of-interest framework which is based on the concepts of 'prescribed conflict of interest' and 'declarable conflict of interest'. It reinstates the concepts of 'material personal interest' and 'conflict of interest'. It retains current exemptions requested by stakeholders in recent years—for example, small value gifts and hospitality. The bill also updates the framework for dealing with breaches. The penalty for material personal interest breaches, where a councillor intends to gain a benefit or avoid a loss for themselves or someone else, will be 200 penalty units, or two years imprisonment. Other material personal interest breaches and all conflict-of-interest breaches will be treated as misconduct under the Councillor Conduct Framework. The proposed changes will have a focus on local government meetings. They remove the requirement for non-conflicted councillors to vote on whether to allow a conflicted councillor to participate in decision-making. Importantly, they remove the duty on a councillor to report a belief or a suspicion of another councillor's conflict.

The Crisafulli government understands that these requirements have been longstanding concerns for many councils. The amendments also remove the concept of a close personal relationship with a councillor from the conflict-of-interest arrangements. I acknowledge the range of views about the changes to the conflict-of-interest framework, as expressed to the committee. After listening carefully to the sector concerns, including individual councillors, the Crisafulli government considers that the proposed framework strikes a better balance between allowing councillors to get on with the job for which they were elected and ensuring transparency and accountability. The proposed framework is designed to ensure councillors manage conflicts of interest between their private interests and public duties, backed by significant penalties for councillors who breach the trust placed in them by their communities. They put the onus on councillors to take appropriate action and recognise that other councillors are not necessarily better placed than the councillor themselves to determine if they can act in the public interest. The amendments in the bill will remove unnecessary red tape to allow conflicts to be managed faster and will depoliticise the management of conflicts.

I note that the committee supported the proposed new framework in its report on the bill. While some submitters raised additional concerns, including about managing conflicts outside council meetings, the committee agreed that placing the onus on individual councillors strikes a more appropriate balance than the current framework. I can confirm that my department will be developing a comprehensive suite of training and guidance materials to support the new framework, in consultation with the sector.

The committee acknowledged the concerns raised about the removal of the 'close personal relationship' test from the definition of 'related party' whilst noting advice from the department that it would consider further amendments to the definition. We have listened to these concerns and I will move a minor amendment to the definition of 'related party' to include a regulation-making power. This will ensure flexibility and consistency with the definition of 'associate' for the purposes of the material personal interest provisions. The bill amends the requirements around a councillor's register of interests to ensure consistency with the conflict-of-interest reforms. The committee noted advice from the department that the revised arrangements appropriately balance integrity and accountability considerations with administrative simplicity, reflecting the Crisafulli government's policy.

The bill includes a range of amendments to remove unnecessary red tape and regulation. To streamline the procurement processes during disaster events, the bill provides the minister with the power to issue a general approval to a council, or multiple councils, to make major policy decisions to progress recovery works during the caretaker period for local government elections. I am pleased to note stakeholder support for the proposals, with the LGAQ stating that they will greatly reduce administrative burden and ensure urgent works can be progressed without waiting for unnecessarily bureaucratic procedural approvals.

An important measure in the bill removes the conduct breach category from the councillor conduct framework. Feedback from the sector was that it is open to misuse on political and personal grounds, has led to unwarranted reputational harm, has significant cost implications and is a disproportionate way of dealing with lower-level behavioural issues. Generally, conduct breaches include conduct that contravenes a behavioural standard or a local government policy, procedure or resolution. Conduct breaches, if proven, do not attract substantial penalties—usually a reprimand or an order for an apology or to undertake training. It is arguable that this approach does not act as a deterrent

to future poor behaviour. While the number of conduct breach allegations is relatively low, with a large number dismissed at the assessment stage, the time and resources that local governments expend investigating the allegations and reporting on the allegations can be significant. Ultimately this comes at a cost to ratepayers. The chairperson of local government meetings will still have the power to mediate the poor behaviour of councillors in meetings. The councillor conduct framework will also continue to address councillors' suspected misconduct and corrupt conduct.

The bill amends the definition of misconduct to capture the more serious types of councillor conduct. These amendments provide that the following conduct is misconduct: bullying, sexual harassment and failing to comply with an order of the chairperson of the meeting to leave and stay away from the place at which the meeting is being held. Support for the proposal, including from the LGMA and councils, highlighted that removing conduct breaches would streamline the system by focusing the formal complaints process on serious misconduct. Support for the proposal also noted that prompt internal handling of matters that fall below the misconduct threshold can build cohesion and demonstrate commitment to acceptable behaviours. I am pleased to note the committee's comment that it supported the removal of conduct breaches from the councillor conduct framework.

While some submitters raised concerns about how to deal with inappropriate behaviour that falls outside the bill's definitions for unsuitable meeting conduct, misconduct or corrupt conduct, the committee outlined that there are other available avenues to deal with more minor infractions such as public council meetings. Further, the committee noted the department's intention to develop training and guidance materials in relation to the proposed removal of conduct breaches from the councillor conduct framework and encouraged the department to work closely with the sector on this. The bill further streamlines the conduct framework by removing duplication of reporting requirements.

Turning to the training improvements, the bill streamlines training requirements currently applying to all election candidates and all councillors. The bill empowers incumbent councillors by only requiring new election candidates to complete mandatory candidate training. Sitting councillors who are nominating for re-election, and who would have completed the candidate training previously, would not be required to complete the training again. On being elected, all councillors are currently required to complete training about their responsibilities under the legislation. The bill empowers returning councillors by only requiring new councillors to complete mandatory training on the prescribed topics in the period after the election.

It is important to note that the training will still be available and the proposed changes do not prevent councillors from completing it or seeking advice from the department or the Electoral Commission of Queensland about their obligations. I am pleased to inform the House that the committee supported the proposed changes to mandatory training requirements for councillors and encouraged the department to work closely with the sector in the development of any new training materials, including reviewing material in accordance with sector feedback.

I will move minor amendments in consideration in detail to provide for transitional arrangements for the candidate training amendments. The bill also makes a range of amendments in relation to electoral processes, including the process for reviewing wards, divisions and councillors before quadrennial elections. I am pleased to note stakeholder support for these proposed changes. The bill also streamlines the process for postal ballot applications to allow councils to apply directly to the Electoral Commissioner for a recommendation, rather than requiring an application for a direction to first be made to the minister. The government will move minor amendments to the bill to provide for transitional arrangements for the postal ballot amendments.

In further red-tape reduction reforms the bill removes the power to make regulations in relation to the functions of council advisers. It also abolishes the requirement for councils to provide the minister with a copy of a public benefit assessment report when a council conducts a public benefit assessment for a new significant business activity. The bill provides clarity on a range of matters concerning councillor remuneration, leaves of absence, vacancy of office and eligibility. The bill provides certainty to councillors on when they are entitled to begin and end receiving remuneration. It also clarifies that a councillor, other than a Brisbane City Council councillor, is entitled to their remuneration when absent from council, including during leaves of absence.

Turning to the amendments about vacancy and eligibility, the bill provides that a councillor who is elected or appointed to fill a mayoral vacancy is taken to vacate the office of a councillor when they commence in the mayoral role. It is not intended that a councillor hold both offices. The committee highlighted stakeholder support for the amendment, noting that this closes a legislative gap and ensures vacancies are promptly filled. The bill makes amendments which automatically remove a councillor from

office upon nomination as a candidate for election as a member of the Legislative Assembly. The committee canvassed a range of stakeholder views on this amendment, including the LGAQ. The committee noted the benefits identified by stakeholders, including transparency, accountability, stability and clarity for local communities and the principle that councillors should remain fully committed to serving their communities during their term. Having considered the submissions, the committee supported the proposal. While noting that some submitters raised concerns, the committee considered that the changes proposed in the bill offer communities certainty.

To promote good governance and decision-making in local government, the bill prevents the disclosure of unauthorised information and documents to councillors. The amendments implement an Ethics Committee recommendation by providing that the power for councillors to request information from the CEO does not apply to information or a document that comprises proceedings in the Assembly, as defined in section 9 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. The bill also includes important amendments affecting the Brisbane City Council's Establishment and Coordination Committee. The bill amends section 171 of the City of Brisbane Act 2010 to provide that the power to request assistance or information applies to a councillor in relation to defined 'committee information' only if the councillor is a member of Civic Cabinet. If the councillor is not a member of Civic Cabinet section 171 applies only to the extent the 'committee information' relates to a matter that has been finally resolved. The bill amends section 172 of the act in the same way, with respect to the inspection of records containing committee information. Brisbane City Council supported the proposal; however, its submission to the parliamentary committee identified concerns with the proposed definition of 'committee information'. The committee report notes advice from the department that these issues were under consideration. I am happy to confirm that I will move amendments to the bill to address the concerns raised by Brisbane City Council.

The bill addresses safety and privacy issues for participants in council elections, to allay concerns about public disclosure of full residential addresses in compliance with the Local Government Electoral Act 2011. The bill removes the requirement for a person who authorises an advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice to include a full street address. Instead, a candidate or participant will be given the option of including other contact information—for example, a PO box. Similar amendments are made in relation to how-to-vote cards. In response to technical issues raised by the ECQ, the government will move amendments during consideration in detail to provide transitional arrangements for these amendments.

I conclude by reiterating the important drivers for these reforms: to create an environment where the local government sector is empowered, through fit-for-purpose legislation, to ensure local government is held to high levels of integrity and accountability; and to enable councillors to serve their community without unnecessary regulatory burden. If the bill is passed, my department will move to the implementation phase of these reforms, noting that while most of the amendments commence on assent a number will commence at proclamation. These are the removal of conduct breaches and the new conflicts-of-interest and register-of-interests framework, and we have provided for a staged commencement of some of the reforms to enable supporting information, training and guidance material to be prepared in collaboration with the sector. A new code of conduct for councils and model meeting procedures will reflect the removal of the conduct breaches from the councillor conduct framework. Complementary regulation amendments will also be proposed to progress to Governor in Council, with the proclamation to commence for remaining provisions.

Once again, I thank the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee for its examination of the bill and all stakeholders who contributed to the development of the bill, in particular the Brisbane City Council, the Local Government Association of Queensland, Local Government Managers Australia, the Office of the Independent Assessor, the Electoral Commission of Queensland and the Local Government Remuneration Commission. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (5.40 pm): When you have a talented minister like this, it is little wonder the debate has been guillotined. How many amendments is the minister moving and why on earth are they not already circulated? That was a selective and sheltered contribution from the member. The minister talks about committee support and committee agreement, but I remind her that they have the numbers on the committee. If she flicks to the back of the report she will see a statement of reservation. There was not committee support and there was not committee agreement, let alone stakeholder agreement, for a lot of the provisions within this bill.

I am often asked what I love most about working with our local governments. When you get our 77 councils in a room, you appreciate what an eclectic bunch they are—full of different ideas, ambitions, views on the world and perspectives. They do not want much from a state government: reliable funding

streams, workable frameworks and the confidence that they can do their jobs to deliver for their beloved communities. Last year this Premier went to the LGAQ annual conference and outlined a suite of legislative reforms, made promises, gave assurances and made plenty of remarks of a hollow and slippery nature. Many councillors have been around the block more than once and they know that, with a politician as clever as the Premier, it always pays to take notice of what he does not say rather than what he does. The room was abuzz when they noticed what he did not say.

The Minister for Local Government commenced consultation on this bill in May 2025, and history has shown that many key reforms proposed by the bill have been unsupported by the sector in whole or in part. What is more, this government attempted to hoodwink the sector with its proposed restrictive and undemocratic resign-to-run clauses. It became clear that the LGAQ policy executive would not and could not accept this. The Premier and minister then intentionally omitted that from public announcements, including media statements, on this legislation, only to sneak them in through the back door. This is a government that will not stand up for their convictions but will use subterfuge to ram home their ideological agenda.

So unsure of what they actually stand for, their very first piece of legislation in this place for the local government sector is to wind back the Premier's own policy. On any other day and under any other circumstances, I would be pretty unforgiving of that. Times can change and with evolution there needs to be flexibility—an ability to bend and be responsive to problems and the need to address them. However, let us not fool ourselves: that is not what is happening here. The Premier and the minister have snuck provisions into this bill requiring a councillor to resign their position if they nominate for state parliament. Their resign-to-run provisions were rejected by the sector during consultation, and the Premier and the minister knew that. They proceeded to deceive the sector and sneak them through in this bill despite knowing full well that the local government sector vehemently opposes them. These bad actors went so far in their attempts to blindside the LGAQ around the need for councillors to resign to run that the LGAQ needed to run a ballot of their members to be assured of a policy position because they did not have a current one. Why? Because this matter was not a policy priority for the sector!

This proposal has been ruled out of the question by the policy executive. Through consultation, the minister knew that. When the LGAQ finally called out this deception, they did not hold back. The discredited minister continued to lobby. Despite calls, ultimatums and all-or-nothing threats, the LGAQ maintained its position and then it got done over. This government brags about an equal partnership in local government and yet the additional submission from the peak body was quick to detail the multiple clauses that the Premier and the minister had violated in their dishonesty.

The LGAQ submitted that 'resign to run' is a retrograde step. They issued a call for us not to support this. Why? Because it is contradictory to the words and the sentiment of the Equal Partners in Government agreement. Specifically, it does not align with the following clauses: 3.1, 'Local government should be empowered to serve their community, including through fit for purpose legislation, whilst being held to high levels of integrity and accountability'; 3.4, 'Local Government will be subject to minimum intervention from the Queensland Government in respect of its legitimate interests and jurisdictional responsibilities (including but not limited to revenue raising, local laws and land use planning)'; and further under 3.4, and this is the best of them all, 'The Queensland Government interest will only be exercised where legitimate State interests exist.' That really bells the cat.

This minister and the Premier have come close to hoarse with their bragging that the local government sector has never had it so good and that now they have an equal partner in government. They do not have an equal partner; they have an unfaithful partner. The LNP is a partner that knows full well that this is a nonsense proposal. This LNP government is coercively abusing them to sandbag itself. This kind of behaviour goes beyond the gaslighting that is common bad practice from the government; it is escalated to utter disrespect and abuse.

Let us wind the clock back to 2012. Reading through historic *Hansard* is not a pastime of mine, but I did so in my preparatory research. I was taken back to the future as what I read contained the same old formulaic method, altered rhetoric and slogans of the now Premier when he introduced his first bill as local government minister. There was one glaringly obvious difference, which was the glorious backflip on the resign-to-run provisions. On 13 November 2012 the now Premier declared—

The removal of the legislative requirement for councillors to automatically vacate office when nominating for state parliament will result in the removal—

Government members interjected.

Ms BOYD: These are the Premier's words—

of the need to conduct costly by-elections where that councillor is not successful in being elected to state parliament.

Two ears, one mouth! He continued—

The cost of conducting a by-election is a significant burden for councils which can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. He is not wrong. The current-day price tag on a by-election is around half a million dollars, as seen recently in Mackay and Townsville, and upwards of \$20,000, which is really significant, for a very small council like Balonne.

When you skip back to that 2012 debate when the LNP changed the legislation so that a councillor could run for parliament and maintain their position in council, one of the staunchest voices of support for the current-day model was the former member for Warrego. He said, '... they wanted to reduce the odds of losing the next election.' In other words, they rorted the system. What on earth changed in the minds of the Premier and those advising former members, such as the current member for Warrego? What is the LNP's motivation for this change?

This provision, since 2012, has seen members come into this House like the current federal member for Hinkler, the member for Lockyer and the member for Gympie. Twenty-one councillors have contested elections in the almost 41 years since the then Premier made these changes. Eleven were successful; 10 were unsuccessful. Imagine having 10 additional by-election expenses shouldered by ratepayers and councils in a local community.

The Premier is on the parliamentary record, calling this now policy a 'significant burden'. The member the current minister was working for at the time called it a 'system's rort'. The Premier has called this now policy 'ridiculous'. How on earth did we end up here with subterfuge for the sector, trashing the Equal Partners in Government agreement? The balloting of the LGAQ on this matter came back vehemently opposed to the change. There has been no sensible reason provided demonstrating that change is needed: no documented instances of harm, misconduct or governance failure; not a single integrity investigation, court decision or CCC finding that recommended automatic resignation or nomination; not a single person able to articulate why the Premier or minister has taken this action in such a deceptive, scurrilous method, misleading the sector and putting the legislation through in peak disaster season. How fitting! This is a proof point of how the government only cares about politics and not about governing Queensland. It demonstrates that they are only in it for themselves, not the local government sector. The politics of self-survival is held above all else under the Crisafulli government.

I want to turn my focus to the ineptitude in the timing of this bill. In May 2025, consultation commenced. In October 2025, the deceptive announcement was made, but the bill's introduction lingered, leaving the committee's examination of this bill until peak disaster season. It is little wonder that the committee did not complete any travel across our vast state. There was minimal time spent in public hearings. Key stakeholders like the Crime and Corruption Commission did not appear before the committee. Sixty-eight submissions were received by the committee. Only two hours and 40 minutes were allotted to hear from the stakeholders and 90 minutes afforded to the department.

This is a comprehensive bill that contains 318 amendments, omissions and/or insertions. It was clear that more time was genuinely needed to properly examine the bill. Not only was that not afforded through the committee process, but what we see when we get here to this House is a total gag and guillotine in relation to this bill. We only have a matter of hours before this debate will finish and the minister is still yet to table any amendments, despite listing off a varied raft of them that extend beyond the local government portfolio.

Mr Whiting interjected.

Ms BOYD: I take the interjection. This record indicates what consideration this holds for the government. It became clear through the process that many stakeholders were at a loss as to why there was even a need for many of these reforms. Indeed, reflecting respectfully, the department was also failing in this category, resulting to the default of government policy in many rationales for change—not because change was required, not because the sector had asked for it, but because the LNP government knew better. I want to acknowledge the committee staff and the many members of this parliament who supported the interrogation of this bill.

I also want to acknowledge that it has been a bumpy decade for the local government sector. The sector's operating framework for integrity, conflicts and conduct for a large part was drafted by an external, independent body. It was imperfect. I want to be really clear on that. It is important to acknowledge this. Our Labor team acknowledges this.

As a result of those unique frameworks, past parliaments worked in a bipartisan way to make improvements, to genuinely listen and understand and to make recommendations that were suited and supported. I cannot help but feel sorrow that for so many of us—many MPs, former councillors, former local government ministers who love and respect the role that local government plays and the good people who give so much of themselves to it; I feel sorry knowing what we know—this is the best the LNP can afford the sector. This bill claims to empower councils, but in practice it weakens integrity, transparency and accountability across the local government sector.

This bill, through committee, has been torn to shreds by the CCC, the OIA and the LGAQ on so many essential provisions. This committee report offered up no recommendations or improvements for change. I sat through every second of its deliberations and there were plenty of opportunities for improvement on the drafting. Even if the government did not shift on the policy elements of this bill, the drafting was identified as unworkable and, in some cases, dangerous.

We have come from a place, from a lightning rod for change, to a bipartisan group toiling to listen and to act cooperatively to build a fairer, stronger, more robust system in this place to this 'fresh start' which seemingly sees it all torn up and a match thrown on it. All of the corruption-fighting experts are telling us that this framework is fraught with corruption risks. How can this minister, Premier and government turn a blind eye to those voices?

The OIA went as far as to write and rewrite clauses that have legal standing. The CCC stated the bill would wind back some of the significant integrity and transparency measures. This would sound alarm bells for most. This bill will increase corruption and integrity risks and wind back governance protections, and I fear for the local government leaders who will be its collateral damage.

Our local government sector deserves better. They work in complex operating environments across our state, each LGA with diverse challenges, unique compositions and immense opportunity. Our state is home to some of the nation's largest councils and some of the nation's most unique. This is the reason that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work in so many policy settings.

One of the common claims that came forward in response to concerns around the readiness to implement many components of this bill is that there would be training and guidance materials developed and rolled out, and today the minister spoke about the materials as if they were in a future text, as if the work had not started, had not been completed, as if it was a mystery as to what would happen here in this place. Given we are here debating this bill right now, it is timely to hear from the government what material is developed and what the plan is to implement its rollout. I know the sector absolutely wants to know. Table that here in the House. At least be up-front about that.

It is wild that right now we have many amendments that the minister just foreshadowed—did not put a numeral on them at all. We are not exactly sure how many, and we are not sure exactly what the nature of them is, but we have this truncated debate where this will get passed tonight and we are still none the wiser what this government is actually proposing. So much for openness and transparency! It is essential that the sector has the confidence and the knowledge to be able to navigate new and different frameworks, and it would only be responsible for the government to detail that and to come good on finally being transparent with this bill.

Government members interjected.

Ms BOYD: I hear lots of interjections from those opposite. If only they were afforded the opportunity to speak on this bill, but once again the backbench has been gagged.

When it comes to conduct breaches, the goose really got cooked with intertwining statutory frameworks. Further, the misconduct provisions in relation to 'honest and impartial' rather than 'honest or impartial' cause confusion, needing both elements rather than either.

The abolition of the conduct breaches leaves serious behavioural issues and breaches of council policy without any clear enforcement pathway. Their response of, 'Oh, well, the community will have their say at the ballot box,' does not actually pass the pub test. Integrity and trust in public life matters. There is a standard that we all want to uphold and protect when we enter public life. There needs to be a workable framework to support that. In no other job would it be okay to be intoxicated while representing your employer at an event, misuse your employer's resources or be threatening or aggressive to people in the workplace and get off scot-free. Frameworks are there to maintain acceptable standards, confidence and community trust. This bill erodes that.

Corruption risks are reduced when everyone looks out for one another. Mayor Samantha O'Toole from Balonne Shire Council provided evidence in her public hearing of instances in the council chamber where councillors supported each other with conflict-of-interest reminders, given their positive duty in

this space. It is a framework that works well when constructively used. It prevents oversights from becoming problems for councillors. Mud sticks, and in public life perception is just as damaging, and sometimes more damaging, than reality. It is a risk in our operating environment. The winding back of a corruption safety net is not a good thing. It was established because of integrity failings and real corruption risks. How will the Crisafulli government monitor this? It all remains to be seen.

Decisions are not made around a council table. They are not limited to formal meetings. I know very few councillors who head into a formal council meeting undecided on how to vote on a matter. How is it then okay to prohibit councillors with conflicts of interest from speaking up inside the chamber but okay for them to lobby colleagues until the cows come home in workshops or informal discussions without any kind of warning? The LGMA talked about the real dangers in this retrograde step.

The civic cabinet restrictions made through this bill on the Brisbane City Council limit democracy and information sharing and silence voices in decision-making. They wind back transparency and accountability. One wonders whether it is simply another LNP clause in this legislation that is focused on politics, not people.

The content experts are saying in relation to multiple elements of this bill that the provisions will not work, that this takes us backwards and that this reduces, not enhances. I am deeply disappointed that so many strong expert positions on matters were rejected outright without reason. We learned through the committee that this minister had extensive expert feedback on improvements to protections and they have been seemingly rejected. One is left to wonder if this is a start-as-you-mean-to-go-on situation. This is only the start of legislative reform in local government, and it distinctly feels like a death rattle.

We had such considered and detailed contributions through the committee process, but it is regrettable that so few people were afforded the ability to come before the committee in a public setting. I thank those people who took the time to make submissions. Their effort and the detail were beneficial, and that detail will remain on the public record of how collaborative and earnest bipartisanship had the potential to deliver something better and more secure for the sector.

The timing afforded to this debate demonstrates the LNP government's disdain and disregard of the local government sector. We are still waiting for the amendments. I have talked for 23 minutes and the minister still has not tabled them. We will not have time to afford them proper consideration. This is terrible governance. No-one in the local government sector will benefit from this kind of terrible governance. This minister should do better, and the sector deserves that.

It is essential that we work in good faith with the local government sector to promote, enhance and improve governance and practice. This is an awful standard to set. She should be ashamed. We build trust and confidence and uphold integrity. That is our job. This bill is a missed opportunity in so many respects. It is a crying shame. It speaks to the disregard this minister and this government have for the sector. To them I say: do better.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (6.05 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. I do so both as chair of the Local Government, Small Business and Customer Service Committee, which considered the bill, and as an MP who has been elected to serve the people of Southern Downs, which is a large country electorate that very much relies on the work of our local councils.

I am completely floored by the sanctimonious, censorious, carping contribution we just heard. The first thing that springs to mind is the pot is calling the kettle black. That side of the House has given us insights about this backbench all week—we have heard about some rebellion here—but we just passed the last bill with everybody onside. The Labor Party, with its iron grip, though, would seem unable to command a majority of all of its members. There we go.

I heard corruption being mentioned. There is talk about corruption and then there is action. The last speaker was the local government minister for 200 days during the Troy Thompson matter. Let's have a look at that.

Ms BOYD: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Not only was I never the local government minister; I find the comments personally offensive and ask they be withdrawn.

Mr LISTER: I withdraw.

Ms Boyd: Get your facts straight.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Marr): Member for Pine Rivers!

Mr LISTER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I take personal offence at that interjection and ask that the member withdraw.

Ms BOYD: I withdraw.

Mr LISTER: My electorate of Southern Downs is covered by three local government authorities: the Southern Downs, Goondiwindi and Toowoomba regional councils. To us, they are not some distant administrative layer domiciled in Brisbane. They are the council grader fixing a road after a storm and the payer of the bounty when you have shot a wild dog on your property that would otherwise kill your lambs. The honourable primary industries minister and many others in this chamber know what I am talking about. It is the councillor who gets the call about a draft planning scheme complaint, the need to repair a flood damaged culvert or a neighbour who has just opened an unauthorised dog kennel next door.

In places like the Southern Downs, Goondiwindi and the Granite Belt, councils are very much part of the day-to-day life of the community. For that reason, legislation affecting local government needs to strike the right balance. We need proper integrity protections—of course we do. These must also ensure the framework within which councils operate is practical, workable and respectful of the fact that local councils are elected bodies.

Over time, however, the legislative framework governing local government in Queensland has become increasingly complex. There have been layers added that have made it harder for councils to simply get on with the job that they were elected to do. I would not be the only person in my electorate of Southern Downs who fervently holds the view that it was Labor's stewardship of local government over many years which has diminished the role of councillors and that it was done so with the deliberate aim of nobbling a councillor so they may not be in a position to challenge the way local government has been mishandled.

The local governments in my neck of the woods have not forgotten the forced amalgamations imposed upon them by the Labor Party. My communities have not forgotten this. Soft soap and weasel words in this chamber criticising this bill wash away very quickly when compared with the history.

This bill seeks to restore a measure of balance and common sense to that framework. One of the most significant elements of the bill relates to the appointment of council chief executive officers and other senior staff. Councils are responsible for running substantial organisations. Some of them employ hundreds of people and manage budgets worth hundreds of millions of dollars. It is appropriate, therefore, that elected councillors have a meaningful role in selecting senior staff who will lead the organisation.

The reforms in this bill restore the role of councillors in appointment panels. In my view that simply recognises the democratic mandate of the elected council. I found it fascinating that the Local Government Association and the Local Government Managers entertained concerns about sharing that power with elected councillors. I was very entertained by the contribution of one of the people who came before us—Rob Hayward, the CEO of the Maranoa Regional Council. I put it to him that surely the idea that these appointments occur in a vacuum now and that there is no political interference whatsoever—no influence whatsoever—is a fallacy. In the typical Western Queensland style—and I am sure the Minister for Local Government would agree with me that the further west you go the more straight talking people get—he readily agreed with me. He said, 'I have been in local government for a very long time and that is exactly what happens.' The point is that we need to have a framework which acknowledges the natural tendencies and indeed the political rights of those who are elected as councillors to have input into these appointments.

Another important element of this bill is the clarification of the leadership of the mayor. In Queensland's system of local government the mayor is elected directly by the community. That office carries with it an expectation of leadership. The bill clarifies that the mayor is the official spokesperson for the council and ordinarily presides over meetings of the council. These provisions are not revolutionary. In many ways they restore arrangements that most people would assume were already the case. Clarity in legislation matters. It ensures councils operate with a clear understanding of responsibilities and authority which ultimately helps them function more effectively. It was very revealing to hear from the Mayor of Ipswich City, Councillor Teresa Harding. She gave some very vivid testimony about the attempts to undermine her leadership of the council—most extraordinary things like trying to stop her from chairing meetings and stop her from being able to speak on behalf of the council. These are things which Queenslanders would see as unnatural, I think. This deals with that particular problem—a problem left to us by the Labor Party.

The bill also revisits the conflict-of-interest framework applying to councillors. Members of the House will recall that a number of changes were made to that framework some years ago. Those changes were ostensibly made with the intention of strengthening integrity, but the feedback from the sector has been that the rules became unnecessarily complex and, in some cases, confusing. I think this again is a vindication of my assumption that Labor was content to diminish the role of councillors—keep them tied up, keep them fighting with one another, keep them defending themselves.

This bill restores the earlier framework dealing with material personal interests and conflicts of interest. That framework is well understood and provides clear guidance to councillors about when they must declare an interest and step aside from a decision. Importantly, it also recognises the reality of life in country communities. It is not easy for everybody to distance themselves entirely from other interests, because in a small community councillors invariably are also the secretary of this, the chair of that and on the board of that because they are the sort of people who step up in leadership roles in their communities. In smaller towns it is almost impossible for councillors not to have some connection—whether through community organisations, business relationships or family networks—with matters that come before the council. The legislation needs to recognise that reality while still protecting integrity of council in decision-making.

Another theme running through the bill is the reduction of unnecessary red tape. These are provisions removing duplicative reporting requirements, simplifying administrative processes and clarifying a number of technical matters that have caused confusion in the past. These may not be the headline-grabbing aspects of the bill but they are nevertheless very important. Anyone who has worked in or around local government will know that small administrative burdens can accumulate very quickly. They slow council's responsiveness to community demands and they take up staff time and resources that could be better spent delivering services to the community.

The bill also contains provisions dealing with matters such as councillor remuneration arrangements, leave of absence, vacancies and eligibility requirements. These are the sorts of issues that may not attract much public attention until something goes wrong. Having clear rules in legislation ensures consistency across the state and avoids unnecessary disputes about procedure.

The bill includes amendments relevant to Indigenous local governments, clarifying rating powers and establishing a framework that will allow those councils to implement a rating structure if they choose to do so. Financial sustainability is a challenge for many councils, particularly those in remote areas. These amendments provide greater flexibility for Indigenous councils to strengthen their financial base while respecting the unique circumstances in which they operate.

There are also some practical changes affecting Brisbane City Council, including acknowledging its budget adoption timetable to align more closely with other councils in Queensland. Again, this is a practical measure that promotes consistency and administrative efficiency.

When we talk about empowering councils what we are really talking about is trusting local democracy. The people of Queensland elect councillors and mayors to make decisions about their communities. They expect those representatives to be truthful, to exercise judgement, to listen to their concerns and to act in good faith to advance the interests of their communities. I believe that the best restraining force upon misbehaviour and deceit by councillors is the prospect of electoral defeat at the hands of an informed electorate. Our job as legislators is to provide the framework to support councils. This bill serves that end. I commend the bill to the House.

(Time expired)

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (6.15 pm): The Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 has been promoted by the Crisafulli government as a measure to 'empower councils'. In substance, however, it represents a retreat from the integrity safeguards that have underpinned Queensland local government since the reforms that followed the Crime and Corruption Commission's Operation Belcarra inquiry.

At a time of intense development pressure, fragile public trust and escalating land values, the bill weakens conflict-of-interest rules, narrows transparency requirements and concentrates authority in ways that increase systemic risk. Local government in Queensland exercises substantial influence over planning approvals, rezoning infrastructure agreements, procurement and major public works. In a housing-constrained market, a single development approval can shift millions of dollars in value. For communities, these same decisions shape neighbourhood character, environmental protection, flood resilience, infrastructure capacity and long-term livability. Integrity in council decision-making is therefore not procedural formality; it is absolutely foundational to equitable and sustainable development.

Operation Belcarra exposed vulnerabilities in how councillors managed conflicts and how relationships with property developers could erode confidence in local democracies. The reforms that followed embedded peer review of conflicts, strengthened reporting obligations, enhanced registers of interests and reinforced independent oversight which the community thought was important. These measures were designed not only to prevent misconduct but also to protect councillors and ensure decisions were demonstrably fair.

This bill begins to dismantle those guardrails. It abolishes peer determination of conflicts, removing the requirement for non-conflicted councillors to assess whether a colleague should participate in deliberations. It narrows the definition of reportable interests, shortens disclosure timeframes and removes 'close personal relationships' as a trigger for declaration. It permits conflicted councillors to influence matters outside of formal meetings. It tightens, rather than broadens, interest registers. Each change may be characterised as administrative streamlining. Collectively they dilute transparency and weaken oversight in precisely those areas most vulnerable to undue influence.

Mr Dillon interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Marr): Member for Gregory, you have had a pretty good go back there.

Mr HEALY: The broader political context intensifies concern. The government has signalled support for permitting development sector donations at the state level. Political donations are lawful, but they carry inevitable perceptions of access and alignment. State governments shape planning frameworks, infrastructure funding and legislative settings that directly affect local decision-making. Councils depend on state approvals and financial support. If councillor-level safeguards are simultaneously reduced, the structural risk becomes clear: influence established through state-level relationships may flow directly or indirectly into local planning environments where conflict controls have been relaxed.

This is not speculative. Complaints about local government conduct in Queensland have frequently centred on development, rezoning and procurement areas involving significant financial stakes. Robust governance frameworks manage these pressures through transparency and collective scrutiny. Weakened frameworks expand the opportunity for vulnerabilities. When communities suspect that approvals may reflect financial relationships or political access rather than planning merit, confidence in local democracy deteriorates. Once eroded trust is difficult to rebuild, as some already know.

Queensland deliberately strengthened its local government integrity framework after serious weaknesses were exposed. This legislation reopens many of those vulnerabilities. At a moment when development decisions carry profound economic, environmental and social consequences, the state should be fortifying safeguards, not relaxing them. If empowerment is the objective, it should be achieved by enhancing transparency, probity and collective oversight, definitely not by reducing them.

 **Mr BAILLIE** (Townsville—LNP) (6.20 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, and I speak in support of this bill. I thank the minister for introducing the bill and the committee chair for his leadership during the committee process as well as all of the committee members, the secretariat and everyone who supported the process, including stakeholders who provided evidence.

The Crisafulli government is delivering major reforms for the local government sector with fit-for-purpose legislation. The overarching policy objectives of this bill are to: empower councils and mayors; improve councillor conflicts-of-interest and register-of-interests frameworks; reduce unnecessary red tape and regulation; provide certainty to councillors about matters relating to remuneration, leave of absence, vacation of office and eligibility; promote good governance and decision-making; enhance safeguards for local government election candidates and participants; and make various minor, administrative and technical amendments.

After Labor treated councils like second-class citizens during their decade of decline and introduced sweeping changes without consultation, the Crisafulli government takes a different approach. This reform is off the back of listening to councils and working with them to deliver meaningful change. As the member for Townsville, I also have the privilege of representing Palm Island. Palm Island was one of the councils that submitted their thoughts on the bill. I will read some excerpts from their submission. They state—

The Bill reflects a welcome return to trust in local government, and a recognition that councils—particularly those in remote and Indigenous communities—are best placed to lead local solutions.

They go on to acknowledge that the reforms are ‘beneficial not only to Palm Island, but to the broader local government sector’. They highlight governance and leadership clarity, simplified conflict-of-interest and conduct frameworks, red-tape reduction, and councillor entitlements and electoral reforms. They further state—

These reforms align with Palm Island’s draft Corporate Plan 2026-2031, which calls for strengthened governance, streamlined compliance, and empowered local leadership as foundations for long-term community wellbeing.

...

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council welcomes this Bill as more than a legislative reform—we see it as a signal of trust, a platform for equity, and a step toward a future where First Nations councils are empowered to lead with clarity, confidence and cultural authority.

...

Palm Island stands ready to lead, to collaborate, and to model what is possible when Indigenous local governments are empowered not just to deliver services, but to shape futures.

We thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important reform, and we look forward to working together to bring its promise to life—for our people, for our sector, and for the generations to come.

It is quite a powerful endorsement of what this bill will do to empower councils and mayors to deliver for Queensland by slashing red tape and reforming council frameworks. I look forward to continuing to work with the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council as well as Townsville City Council as we continue to deliver for our communities. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs NIGHTINGALE** (Inala—ALP) (6.24 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 in my capacity as deputy chair of the committee that examined this legislation. ‘Examined’ is used loosely here, as we have only just been furnished with the amendments to this bill. The smirking minister over there may think it is amusing to play politics with the local government sector. Instead, she should be treating them with respect.

At the outset I place on record my respect for Queensland’s 77 councils and the mayors and councillors who serve in them. Our councils are made up of people who live in the communities they serve. They are the local leaders who deal with flooded roads, waste contracts, community complaints and development pressures every single week. When legislation affecting them comes to this House it deserves careful consideration and genuine consultation, not last-minute amendments. Because of its close proximity to communities, the industry framework that surrounds local government matters deeply. It protects not only the public but also councillors themselves. It provides clarity and confidence and ensures that decisions are made—and, importantly, are seen to be made—in the public interest.

This bill is presented by the Crisafulli-Bleijie government as empowering councils. Through the committee’s inquiry process. However, we heard substantial concerns that aspects of this legislation do not empower councils but instead remove or weaken safeguards that were deliberately put in place following integrity issues. Many of those safeguards arose from recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission following Operation Belcarra. Those reforms were designed to clarify conflict-of-interest obligations, strengthen disclosure requirements and ensure transparency in decision-making. They responded to real integrity failures following investigations into conduct that undermined public trust. Public confidence has been shaken, and the response from this parliament at the time was to strengthen the framework—not to dilute it. In contrast, the committee heard evidence that this bill winds back several of those reforms.

One area of concern relates to conflict-of-interest provisions. The bill increases reliance on councillors self-assessing and managing their own conflicts and narrows the operation of certain restrictions to formal meeting settings. Several submitters raised concern that narrowing this scope of restrictions may create uncertainty about what conduct is captured and when obligations apply. Influence, as we know, does not only occur when a formal vote is being taken. It can occur in briefings, in informal discussions and in preparatory stages of decision-making.

The Office of the Independent Assessor expressed concern about the removal of the ‘close personal relationships’ provision, warning that such a change could increase the likelihood of decisions being made contrary to the public interest. It goes to the heart of how conflicts are identified and managed. The Crime and Corruption Commission also cautioned that some of these reforms may amplify corruption risks in the local government sector. When the state’s peak integrity body raises such concerns this House should weigh them carefully.

One significant change is the return of 'resign to run'. Councillors who nominate for state parliament will again be required to immediately vacate their office. The committee heard evidence that this may create avoidable vacancies and unnecessary by-elections. Under the current arrangements, councillors can take leave to contest and, if unsuccessful, return to continue serving their communities. That approach recognised both democratic opportunity and continuity of representation. It is worth noting that the requirement to resign was removed in 2012 by the current Premier when he was minister for local government, who then described this requirement as 'ridiculous', yet here we are in 2026 with another Crisafulli-Bleijie backflip with a reverse of the Premier's own reform.

Ms BATES: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The use of the term 'Crisafulli-Bleijie' government is incorrect and I ask that you request the member to cease and desist.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Marr): Member for Inala, I take the point that the member has put forward and I do agree with that point of order. I ask you to refrain from using that term.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: Let me correct it for the record. It was a backflip of the Premier and his Deputy Premier, with a reverse of the Premier's own reform. Queenslanders would be right to ask why the backflip. I can tell you that the local government sector did not call for it, nor did they want it. In fact the Local Government Association of Queensland expressed opposition, describing the change as a step backwards. I thank the LGAQ for their contribution and for their leadership of this sector. It is a shame that the sector cannot get such leadership from the minister. When the peak representative body for councils indicates that a reform will not assist the sector, that should give this House pause.

The bill also contains provisions affecting governance arrangements within Brisbane City Council, particularly in relation to access to civic cabinet documents by non-member councillors prior to decisions being finalised. Ward councillors are frequently the primary point of contact for residents. They are asked to explain decisions and justify outcomes. Restricting access to relevant information before decisions are made may make that role more difficult and may reduce the capacity for informed scrutiny within council structures. Transparency is not an administrative inconvenience; it is a safeguard.

Consultation processes were also raised during the inquiry. The limited formal consultation period occurred over the Christmas period, during Queensland's peak disaster season and at a time when many remote communities were experiencing significant isolation. Many councils were managing flood recovery, severe weather responses and community disruption at the same time as they were expected to consider detailed legislative amendments.

Sitting suspended from 6.31 pm to 7.30 pm.

 **Mrs NIGHTINGALE:** Deputy Speaker Lister, forgive me for the interruption to my speech now, but I have just had moments to look at these new amendments. It is no wonder the government have snuck them through in the final hour because they are disgraceful. This government were elected on promises of transparency, yet right before our eyes they are going to great lengths to protect their mates. Forget about the Coaldrake report; these new amendments will bury things in secrecy for 10 years. That is ridiculous. They are not letting the sunshine in; they are pulling a big black curtain across it and locking information up for 10 years. This is disgraceful.

Councillors will no longer have access to information that they rightfully need to make decisions and inform them about what they want to do and what their council should do. Those important documents will now be locked up for 10 years. Furthermore, if a councillor of a particular ward wants to find out what is happening with the Story Bridge—as many of us do here in Brisbane—they will not be able to do that unless they are a councillor in the ward that the bridge is located in. What about the bus network which traverses many council wards? Does that mean that all councillors will not get any information about the bus network? I really do not think the minister has thought this through. Fancy locking up information for 10 years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you were chair of the committee that looked at this bill and I am sure you would have liked an opportunity to look at these amendments. None of us were afforded an opportunity to look at them. This is a significant issue that speaks to integrity, transparency and accountability. This is being hidden under the guise of last-minute amendments. They were withheld from the LGAQ and the 77 councils which may also have an interest in this. The government starts with Brisbane City Council, but who knows what is next? Is this transparent? Absolutely not. This government is all about protecting its mates. It is all about not letting the sunshine in but living in a cloud of secrecy and darkness.

They are absolutely refusing the rights of councillors who work hard in Brisbane City Council every single day. They will now have their hands tied and be blindfolded from important information they have a right to access. People in Brisbane deserve to know the decisions of their council. They are spending a great deal of taxpayer money but it is not going to improving things like the Story Bridge. They are continuing to make mistakes but they are now protected from any scrutiny as it will be hidden from the eyes of everybody for 10 years.

I know that Queenslanders will be able to see through this shonkiness. They will see how shady this is. They will see through the dodgy dealings of this Crisafulli LNP government which features Deputy Premier Jarrod Bleijie. Queenslanders know about the dodgy, shonky dealings within this government and this is another clear example of that. We will not be fooled by these last-minute amendments.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (7.34 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise to make a contribution to the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Local government is the level of government that is closest to people's everyday lives. It is where decisions are made about the roads we drive on, the parks where children play, libraries, community halls, waste services, local planning and practical coordination that matters during disasters. When councils are empowered to act decisively and are held to clear and fair standards, our communities benefit. When councils are smothered in red tape, unclear rules and frameworks that discourage capable people from serving, our communities pay the price. That is why these reforms are about stronger and clearer local government, with less bureaucracy, more accountability and better service delivery.

First, this bill empowers councils. A council cannot deliver for its community if it cannot appropriately shape its own senior leadership team. That is why these reforms re-empower councillors to appoint senior executive employees through appointment panels comprising the mayor, the CEO and the deputy mayor or the relevant committee chair. That is a balanced model. It preserves professional input, ensures accountability for leadership and restores democratic oversight. In Brisbane City Council, this will re-empower councillors to appoint senior contract employees, including at the general manager level, recognising the scale and complexity of Australia's largest local government.

The legislation also amends the rating powers for Indigenous local governments. This is about fairness. The member for Townsville made a very good contribution about this when it comes to his community on Palm Island. These reforms provide clarity now and establish a framework to enable Indigenous councils to rate in the future when they choose to do so. Good governance relies on clear revenue tools, and these councils deserve the same clarity and stability that others enjoy.

Second, the bill empowers mayors while respecting the role of every councillor. Communities expect to know who speaks for their council. These reforms reiterate that the mayor is the official spokesperson of the council. That clarity matters for emergencies, major announcements and public confidence. Just as importantly, we make it clear that there is a single person who makes the announcements for the council so that gets rid of the confusion. If you think about it, most residents expect their local mayor to be the mouthpiece when it comes to these issues, or they can actually delegate.

Third, it restores a clearer, more workable conflict-of-interest framework. The current split system of prescribed and declarable conflicts of interest has not delivered the clarity it promised. It has created confusion, inconsistency and often processes over purpose. These reforms repeal that framework and return to the material personal interest and conflict-of-interest model that operated from 2013 to early 2018. It is a framework that councillors understand; it is one that focuses on genuine conflicts and one that supports transparent decision-making without paralysing councils.

There are so many good things about this bill and I know it is what the local councillors want. They are very keen for this on the Gold Coast because it builds the transparency they want and gets rid of undue red tape. It is exactly what councils need to grow on the Gold Coast and also restore confidence.

I know there are a lot of other members in this chamber who really want to speak on this bill, so I will leave my comments at that. This bill is good. This legislation is good for the community. It is creating transparency in council and this is what the community deserves.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (7.39 pm): My goodness me, what an amazingly shambolic day this has been. I have to say that as an elected representative in this House—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): We will have some order thank you, members to my right.

Ms PEASE: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was elected in 2015 to represent the people of the bayside. It was a really proud moment. My constituents watch parliament regularly to see what is going on, so honourable members can imagine how disappointed and ashamed they are to hear, watch and witness the behaviour of the LNP in this chamber not just today but ongoing. I am ashamed. I am ashamed to come in here and have to stand up and talk—

Mr STEVENS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Can we have relevance to the bill at hand, please?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am inclined to give the member a little bit of leniency here. I trust you will be coming to the substance of the bill. I give you the call, member for Lytton.

Ms PEASE: Thank you very much for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. I know that the member for Mermaid Beach or Mermaid Waters—wherever he is from—always loves to get up and give me a hard time, so bring it on I say. It would be disappointing if he did not.

Mr Whiting: Especially after dinner.

Ms PEASE: That is right. I was about to start on the bill, particularly about today. Here I am; I am on a committee. I am on the committee that you chair, Mr Deputy Speaker. Amendments were introduced into the House with no time for our committee to scrutinise them, with no time for the LGAQ to scrutinise them, with no time for the councils across Queensland to scrutinise them, and now we are required to vote on them.

Mr Head: Was it 17 minutes?

Mr Stevens: Eighteen minutes.

Mr Head: Eighteen minutes. What was that for again? It changed our voting system, didn't it?

Ms PEASE: I am actually quite happy to take all of those ridiculous interjections from over there because it is not just this one bill. I think it is every bill that has been introduced into this chamber since that mob over there was elected that has been made an urgent bill. 'This one is urgent. This one is urgent,' and then at the last minute we are flung amendments. What an embarrassment to their lot. If I were those backbenchers I would be saying, 'What the hell is our leadership doing?'

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lytton, if you wish to enliven interjections, gesticulating like that is one way to ensure they happen. I can only provide you so much protection.

Ms PEASE: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am more than happy to take the interjections because it might give the backbenchers the opportunity to voice their concerns and their disappointment with their leadership team, which is probably what they are doing because they are going to get guillotined.

Ms CAMM: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance to the long title of the bill. Could we draw the member's attention to that?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lytton, you have had a good go. I can see you are illustrating something to come back to the bill. I encourage you to do that.

Ms PEASE: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. Yes, I am talking to the long title of the bill because I am talking about the very limited amount of time we were given to look at the amendments. I am sorry, but does that not fit into the long title of the bill? Is that another thing that this LNP government has changed—what actually fits under the long title of the bill? Perhaps it has; I do not know. It could have happened—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think you are straying into commentary on decisions of the chair or potential decisions of the chair. I ask you to move on and speak to the bill.

Ms PEASE: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will because I want to make our local councils across Queensland aware of what these amendments actually mean. These amendments to the bill mean that council documentation will not be available to be accessed for 10 years. My council—I am part of Brisbane City Council—has a budget of millions of dollars. In actual fact, the Brisbane City Council budget was \$4.1 billion last financial year. I am sure that the councillors, particularly my own

councillor, Councillor Givney for the Wynnum Manly ward, would like to have access to documentation and to find out about the proposed neighbourhood plan changes and what it means for the constituents in their wards. Now under this bill and these amendments that were just handed down tonight, unless the individual councillor is part of that civic cabinet they will not be allowed to find that out. It will now be inaccessible for 10 years.

What are we trying to hide here? What is actually the purpose of these amendments? It beggars belief, quite frankly. These amendments dramatically, as I have said, restrict councillors' access to key decision-making documents within the Brisbane City Council committees. What are we trying to hide that we do not want our councillors to see, regardless of their political colour? Why are non-committee members, including the Brisbane Labor councillors, being locked out of important documents, even where the decisions affect the entire city? I cannot comprehend why. What is the purpose of that?

These amendments and their secrecy go in the opposite direction of the transparency reform that was the start of the Coaldrake review. That review called for greater transparency, stronger accountability and improved access to rebuild public trust. How is doing this building public trust? To me it is portraying the government as trying to hide things that are going on within the councils. I am sorry, but I am very confused. I guess I am confused because as a committee and as the opposition we did not actually have a chance to scrutinise those amendments. We did not have the opportunity to get behind them and talk about that. The other thing is that I have here a speaking list that is two pages.

Mr Kempton: Good for you.

Ms PEASE: I will take that interjection because do you know what? You are going to be guillotined. You are not going to get to talk about it. That is what this is about.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lytton, please direct your comments through the chair.

Ms PEASE: I took the interjection, thank you very much. All of these government members at the bottom of the list are probably going to miss out on talking about this 'very important piece of legislation'.

Mr Ryan: Table it.

Ms PEASE: I am going to table this speaking list. I would like to table it because they are all going to miss out, as are the opposition members and crossbenchers.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, speaking list titled 'Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill' [289].

This is all down to the fact that this is 'really important legislation' that 'has to go through tonight'. There is all of this secrecy, hypocrisy and lack of transparency. 'It is so urgent.' If it is so important—

A government member interjected.

Ms PEASE: I do not know what I am talking about because I was not given any time to review the documents. That is why. I have had no opportunity.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: One of the things Mr Speaker emphasised during the week at the meeting of the Deputy Speakers is that we are to stomp on cross-chamber quarrelling. I can see his point because it lets things get out of hand. Could we all just take a chill pill? I encourage members not to engage in cross-chamber chatter or respond to interjections that are provocative. I will handle the House.

Ms PEASE: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. I would like to take the interjection from the member for Warrego indicating that I do not know what I am talking about and reinforce that the reason I do not know what is going on in the bill is that I was not given the opportunity to review the amendments. That is why. Like all of us, I have been going through them because at the last moment I was given the opportunity to speak to this bill and obviously I am upsetting those opposite. What is really frightening is that we should be more upset and they should be more worried about what the community is going to think of them. What will the community and what will the councillors say about this bill being rushed through like this? What will local councillors—

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr HEAD: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at the interjection from the member for Pine Rivers directed at me and I ask her to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not hear it. Is it common ground here that you made an interjection, member for Pine Rivers? Would you withdraw?

Ms BOYD: I withdraw.

Ms PEASE: This bill departs from key recommendations of the CCC Operation Belcarra, and those reforms strengthened the integrity laws to manage conflicts of interest and reduce corruption risks. I, like most Queenslanders, abhor corruption. That is why it is really important that we ensure that councils are strong and full of integrity and give them every opportunity that we can to ensure that they have easy, clear guidelines to follow and that they are transparent and cannot be led down the path of corruption.

A government member: Ugh!

Ms PEASE: Excuse me, but I am going to continue and ignore the member for Nicklin because, as usual, he very rarely has anything important to say.

Government members interjected.

Ms PEASE: The bill changes the conflict-of-interest and register-of-interests settings—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, the House is quite disorderly. This is not a circus. If you have something to say, take it outside please.

Ms PEASE: The bill mandates councillor involvement in senior executive appointment processes. Some councils already do this but others do not—for good reasons, including conflicts of interest in small communities, a lack of expertise in complex recruitment, time burdens and the desire to preserve an objective, merit-based separation between elected members and administration. Queensland councils are diverse. A uniform governance model does not fit every council nor every size, every capacity and context. During our inquiry stakeholders raised concerns about removing the conduct breaches that create a gap between minor matters and serious misconduct or corrupt conduct, leaving serious behavioural issues without a clear enforcement pathway.

I want to finish how I started and reinforce the opposition's disappointment in the lack of time that we were given to participate in consideration of the amendments—something that impacts each and every Queenslander and each and every council. Again, I apologise to my constituents for the unruly behaviour.

 **Mrs KIRKLAND** (Rockhampton—LNP) (7.51 pm): Well, that was a really very thorough argument coming from the member for Lytton. Thank you for your contribution—hoo!. I rise to speak to the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Ms PEASE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence from the member and ask her to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Member for Rockhampton, the member has taken personal offence. Will you withdraw?

Mrs KIRKLAND: I withdraw.

Ms PEASE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Can I ask that the member withdraw in a fulsome and proper manner, not with those intonations in her voice?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I heard the member make the withdrawal. It appeared to me to be unqualified to the standard that we accept here. There is no point of order.

Ms Pease: Oh, that's standard. Okay; all right. I'll keep that in mind.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I beg your pardon, member for Lytton?

Ms Pease: I'll keep that in mind. Thank you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You would not be reflecting on the chair, would you?

Ms Pease: No. I said I'd keep it in mind.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Rockhampton, you have the call.

Mrs KIRKLAND: This bill is about empowering councils again. It is about consistency. It is about removing disruption from the activities of local government. I want to thank the local government minister for her work in bringing this bill to the House, the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, or the empowering councils bill. Already I have heard from the opposition assumptions that all councillors are corrupt. I want to speak to this bill tonight.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mrs KIRKLAND: Yes, there was one, but not all councillors. This bill speaks to over 20 reforms that present the first phase of the Crisafulli government's significant reforms to re-empower Queensland local governments by reducing red tape and giving councils the resources and legislative framework they need to deliver for their communities. If there is one thing that has stood in the way of our local governments' functionality it would be the introduction of the restrictive legislative changes that were brought in by the previous Labor government and the self-serving strongarm manipulation of local government processes that both hamstrung and, in multiple cases, resulted in the deliberate character assassination of elected members of local government.

For eight years councillors and mayors from across our state were prevented from getting on with the job of serving their communities due to the previous government's legislative gross overreaches. In 2020 I was elected to local government and experienced firsthand the challenges of navigating the legislation that was handed down by the previous government. Less than half of the two local government legislative amendments associated with the Belcarra reforms were based on the Belcarra CCC recommendations. The majority of the changes were introduced by the previous Labor government and were implemented without adequate consultation. The previous Labor government treated Queensland local governments with disdain, ignoring the calls to wind back legislation. The constraints and the confusion that its legislation put into local governments resulted in Labor's decade of chaos being transferred into the chambers of local governments.

Tonight I want to speak to the issue of conflicts of interest. This is something that throws councils into chaos because we never know whether we are allowed to be in the room or out of the room. If you are related to somebody that is fair enough; you need to step out of the room. The challenges that we experienced though came when it was explained to us what counts as a prescribed conflict of interest. The guidance that was given was that if you would invite a person connected to the matter under discussion to your wedding then that relationship constitutes a prescribed conflict. How ridiculous! A lot of us live in small communities where we would invite half the community and that community is inevitably going to be related somehow to the matters put to local governments for discussions. We are members of local clubs. We are members of local organisations that put before the council issues that are ready for debate. To assume that we are not going to invite those people to our wedding and to then say that that is a prescribed conflict of interest is purely ludicrous. It is worth noting that over the last 10 years we have seen fewer people nominating to represent their communities as a local councillor, which possibly could be related to those ridiculous laws.

I have attended multiple LGAQ conferences and the hottest topic was this unworkable prescribed conflict of interest and the perceived conflict of interest. Every day of the week councillors were talking about how unworkable it was. This bill returns to the more effective and workable conflict-of-interest framework in place from 2013 to 2018. The Labor government is not for local government. Remember how it was treating local government back when all of the Belcarra conversations were started. It then sacked mayors and councillors by press release before the relevant legislation was even in place—a decision that would later be overturned after two years of soul-destroying vilification and character assassination. Those councillors and their families were completely changed—ruined, wrecked—as a result of that decision to just go ahead and sack them without having any valid evidence or proof. Labor still meddled though during the industrial dispute process to the point that the CCC ruled that it had overstepped its mark. The former Labor government oversaw the Office of the Independent Assessor, the actions of which created uncertainty and concern among councillors and hindered their ability to carry out their responsibilities as elected representatives. The legislative framework that it introduced does not adequately distinguish between political conduct and genuine legal wrongdoing.

I want to speak to an incident that happened when I was in local government when a mayor was harassed and harangued so much. The previous Labor government's harassment and agenda driven by vendetta, facilitated via its overreaching legislative changes, embarked on what was a relentless pursuit of a vexatious claim against our former mayor of Rockhampton. This egregious display of government manipulation led to an unexpected resignation that gained national—indeed, international—media attention.

It is worth noting that the former mayor pursued justice and was officially exonerated four years later, having already suffered character assassination of this gross injustice. The former mayor's resignation threw those opposite into a mad scramble as they recognised the flaws in their rigid, non-democratic legislation—legislation that allowed runner-up candidates to be appointed to vacancies that were caused by mayoral and councillor resignations in contradiction and conflict with the state-Commonwealth by-election laws. Mind you, the realisation did not come overnight. They were made

well aware of the flaws and the need for change through the LGAQ and appeals from local government elected members right across the state. In fact, at an LGAQ conference previous minister Stirling Hinchliffe even alluded to imminent changes that were specific to that very part of the legislation, though it was not brought forward. They neglected councils for a decade, introducing many changes. Today's bill brings restoration.

The bill clarifies councillors' entitlement to remuneration from the date their term starts or the date they are started until the date their term ends. Importantly, the bill provides for the automatic removal from office of councillors who stand for election to the Queensland Legislative Assembly. This brings Queensland local government into line with the state and Commonwealth governments. We have seen recently in Queensland the resignation of the previous member for Hinchinbrook so he could run for office and there are a number of us—councillors and mayors alike—here in this room today because we did the right thing by our communities. When we were going to run for state parliament we resigned from our councillor position. That is the right thing to do and that has been embedded within this legislation. It is a good thing

Mr Bennett: We thank you.

Mrs KIRKLAND: Thank you; I take that interjection. I am very pleased to commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (8.01 pm): It is my great pleasure to speak to this bill brought into the House by the Minister for Local Government because, as the bill title says, it is empowering councils. As a nine-year veteran of local government, I am so pleased that this minister is making up for the 10 years that local government were the whipping boys for Labor governments—calling them corrupt, even sacking the Logan City Council and the bad reports in the Gold Coast City council. They just could not help but belt local government. This bill empowers them again. I congratulate Minister Ann Leahy on her wonderful work in this area. Local governments throughout Queensland look upon her as the fairy godmother of local government. She has done a wonderful job. She is well liked. Honestly, they have someone very much in their corner.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Use correct titles, please, member for Mermaid Beach.

Mr STEVENS: In my nine years of local government in the famous Albert shire and then on to Gold Coast City—

Mr Mander: Who was mayor of the Albert shire?

Mr STEVENS: First and last mayor of the Albert shire. Then I moved on to the Gold Coast. In fact, in common with Don Bradman and Walter Lindrum, they had to change the rules to get rid of me.

I do have some experience in terms of local government. It saddened me greatly to see what the Labor government inflicted on councillors in terms of carrying out their duties. I refer particularly to conflicts of interest. Even if you were, say, a member of the Nerang Bulls in Nerang in the electorate of Gaven—they do not like her much but it is in the electorate of Gaven—and you went to lobby for them, you had to declare your interests in terms of doing those things. They were the sorts of ridiculous imposts that the Labor government put on councillors. They were absolutely ridiculous demands that affected their ability to do their jobs as councillors effectively because of the hamstringing nature of declarations of interests. They were even judged by other councillors—it was Caesar judging Caesar—as to whether they had a conflict of interest. That is absolutely ridiculous. It created division among councillors. Obviously enmity prevailed in some sectors, and some people were taken out of the debate for very unfair reasons because of those matters.

I note the hypocrisy of the shadow local government minister in relation to councillors standing down if they want to run for the Legislative Assembly. What a load of rubbish. In fact, Labor icon Terry Mackenroth—he was one of the guys who sacked me way back in the day at Albert shire—was the one who introduced that legislation when he was the local government minister. They are saying that the icon of local government, Terry Mackenroth, got it all wrong. The difference in terms of when the Premier changed this law is that we now have local government elections in the same year we have a state election. What we do not want to see is councillors running in March and then stumping up for an election on the last weekend in October. This is a sensible, logical amendment that the minister has brought forward. For members opposite to say that it is an unfair impost in terms of by-elections—hopefully, if a person runs for council in March he or she is not using it as a sneaky method to run for state parliament in October. If you are deciding to represent your community—as the member for

Theodore correctly said, local government is the government closest to the people—then you should make sure you stay through for that term or, if you are that committed, resign and then run for state parliament.

There are other matters the minister has addressed. One is in terms of training for new candidates. That is a sensible change to the Local Government Act. Obviously, even if you have been through the process already, it is all a learning curve. In fact, I am still learning here in the state parliament after nearly 20 years. Having to go back and listen to the Clerk tell me again how I should be a good member of parliament is just a lot of rubbish. That is a great move forward.

Also, councillors and the mayor are given more powers, particularly in relation to the appointment of senior executives and the CEO. I had a CEO thrust upon me who was totally unbearable. The fact of the matter is that it led to a very difficult time in council. If the councillors of the day had the opportunity, they would have picked something better. This is a great move forward by the minister. I congratulate her on giving councillors the ability to control their own destiny. That is what local government needs. They are representing their local community and they should not be hamstrung or reported to the Independent Assessor, who had a plethora of staff. When I was on the Economics and Governance Committee she kept coming back and saying, 'Oh, I need more staff. I need more complaints officers.' Some of the trivial complaints that she upheld—particularly in the Gold Coast area that I am aware of—were absolutely ridiculous. For the minister to address that issue and give councillors a reasonable amount of say in the direction they wish to go is a great move forward.

Again, I congratulate the minister on empowering local councils. I hope there are more changes to empower councils over the years ahead with her as minister—the fairy godmother. I certainly support this bill.

 **Ms MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (8.09 pm): The good old days of the old Albert shire council! Give me strength! I rise to contribute to the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—this oh so urgent legislation that we must pass tonight. The Queensland opposition supports in principle the objective of this bill, recognising the vital role of Queensland's 77 councils and empowering them to achieve the most effective operating environment so they can best serve their communities and all Queenslanders. However, the opposition holds concerns that, whilst this bill claims to empower councils and streamline regulation, certain elements will, in practice, weaken integrity, transparency and accountability across local government.

Local government is the level closest to the people. Councils manage billions of dollars in public assets, make decisions that shape our communities and directly affect the lives of Queenslanders. With that proximity comes enormous responsibility and with that responsibility must come robust safeguards. However, throughout the committee process concerns were consistently raised that the proposed bill winds back many of these safeguards and of particular concern are the considerable changes which have reduced or removed independent oversight mechanisms, weakened conflict of interest management and reduced disclosure standards. These changes will have far-reaching implications that impact on Queenslanders' perception of local government integrity and threaten the protection of public confidence in governance. We heard this explicitly from the Crime and Corruption Commission in their submission—

The CCC considers that the Bill, if enacted, will wind back some of the significant integrity and transparency measures which were enshrined in local government laws in Queensland. The CCC considers this approach to be inconsistent with its Belcarra report recommendations and the public interest in ensuring good governance and mitigating corruption risks in local government.

Operation Belcarra was not a trivial matter. Following the 2016 local government elections the CCC investigated 111 allegations, ultimately focusing on 55 allegations involving Gold Coast, Moreton Bay, Logan and Ipswich councils. They undertook 115 interviews, interrogated 40 witnesses at public hearings and made 31 recommendations. As we know, following the Belcarra report further investigations ensued which led to corruption and misconduct offences being brought forward against elected representatives and council officers.

Conflict-of-interest laws exist for a reason. They ensure that when councillors make decisions they do so in the public interest, not for personal gain, not for political convenience and not under undisclosed influence. As a member representing an area that has seen corruption take hold of its local council in recent memory, it is very concerning to see this LNP government ignoring the advice of experts and of stakeholders, elevating the corruption risks and creating more transparency gaps. This bill winds back important safeguards recommended by the Crime and Corruption Commission to prevent corruption and restore public trust. It narrows definitions, it weakens reporting obligations and it reduces avenues for independent review. In effect, it asks councillors to mark their own homework. If

we have learnt anything from past integrity failures it is that transparency and independent oversight are not bureaucratic burdens, they are the price of public confidence. When definitions become looser and oversight weaker, disputes do not disappear; they multiply. They move from transparent processes into courtrooms, into media cycles and into community mistrust. Councils will bear the reputational damage, councillors will bear the personal risk and communities will bear the consequences.

The bill also removes the prohibition on councillors with conflicts influencing decisions outside formal meetings. This will enable lobbying of staff or fellow councillors behind closed doors. The Office of the Independent Assessor noted—

We see an integrity risk in the removal of the current influence provision for conduct outside statutory meetings.

It also increases challenges for council officers who may be briefing elected representatives knowing they have a direct conflict, something that was raised, of course, by the Local Government Managers Australia. Empowerment is not the absence of rules. Empowerment is clarity, empowerment is certainty and empowerment is knowing that decisions are made under a system that protects both elected representatives and the public they serve.

The other interesting provision in this bill is that it will remove a councillor's existing right to return from compulsory leave and resume their role if unsuccessful in a state election instead of vacating the office entirely.

A government member: Hear, hear!

Ms MULLEN: What a complete about-face from the LNP. I cannot believe they can actually keep a straight face about this and yell, 'Hear, hear!' In 2012 the then local government minister, now Premier of Queensland, could not wait to remove the provision in the Local Government Act that required councillors to resign before contesting a state election. At the time he said it was a ridiculous situation, a matter of equity. It is clear that it is not ridiculous anymore in 2026.

Let us go back in history. I want to correct the record in relation to what was said by the member for Mermaid Beach. It was actually Nita Cunningham who introduced those laws back in 2001 when the then Beattie government put those laws through requiring councillors to resign when running for state elections. I want to quote someone who I never thought I would ever want to quote in this House. I want to quote the words of the then member for Callide, Jeff Seeney, who at the time was completely outraged by this proposition. He said in this very chamber—

This legislation sets a new benchmark. It sets a pattern for avoiding fair contests. It seeks to limit the contest.

He goes on to say—

In addition, the government is not prepared to go out into the Queensland electorate and face a fair contest come election time. It is trying to nobble the field. It is trying to take out anybody who has half a chance, anybody who it thinks might have a bit of an advantage or anybody with a good chance of contesting a seat against their somewhat dubious and doubtful candidates.

How times have changed, yet perhaps the sentiment remains the same. I also found it quite curious that when the government announced these significant reforms that were being brought forward through this bill, it seems they forgot to mention this particular provision in the legislation. Indeed, a number of delegates to the LGAQ annual conference in October last year told me they could not recall the Premier announcing this measure in his keynote address to the local government sector. In fact, it also curiously seems to have fallen off the media release announcing these reforms. There was not one reference. Surely it was not because the government knew that the majority of Queensland councils are opposed to this or the fact that it goes directly against the LGAQ's policy position, or that it is not in keeping with the government's much-vaunted Equal Partners in Government agreement. No, I am sure that is not the reason the government stayed so quiet—in fact, silent—on this provision in the bill. The only thing that has changed is the Premier's political self-interest. This hypocrisy underscores a deeper concern that this bill is not a principled reform of local government but a politically convenient recalibration of the rules.

Consistency matters in governance. Integrity frameworks must not be reshaped according to who benefits at a particular moment in time. If we truly want to empower councils we should be strengthening the very mechanisms that protect them from corruption, from undue influence and from accusations of impropriety. We should be enhancing training, improving transparency tools and ensuring independent oversight bodies are adequately resourced. It risks sending a message to the community that lessons from the past have been forgotten, that safeguards painstakingly built after integrity crises can be dismantled with the stroke of a pen.

Finally, I turn to these last-minute amendments that the minister foreshadowed. There is so much foreshadowing going on in parliament at the moment by this hapless government. What is clear from a cursory read is that these amendments could really have been named the 'Schinner special'. It is clear from reading them that these tabled amendments dramatically restrict council's access to key decision-making documents within Brisbane City Council committees and it ensures that non-committee councillors, including Brisbane Labor councillors—surprise, surprise—are being locked out from important documents, even when the decisions affect the entire city. Councillors are elected to represent residents across Brisbane, yet these provisions will prevent them from fully understanding the basis of major decisions. What is very clear is that these amendments create a 10-year exemption under right to information laws for committee information.

An opposition member: Wild!

Ms MULLEN: It is absolutely wild, I will take that interjection. Locking out not only the councillors but also the public as well. What is clear is that the Lord Mayor of Brisbane has obviously bullied this hopeless, weak minister into doing his bidding for him, helping him to hide and cover up significant briefing material and documents from the Labor opposition and the people of Brisbane.

Mr Dick: What's to hide?

Ms MULLEN: I take that interjection: what is it that they want to hide? Local government is too important to be treated lightly. The decisions made in council chambers affect roads, water, planning, community services and the economic future of our regions. Queenslanders deserve confidence that these decisions are made under a framework that is strong, independent and, importantly, transparent. Empowering councils should mean strengthening confidence, not weakening safeguards.

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (8.19 pm): I rise to speak to the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. Before I go to the bill itself, I want to pay tribute to the 77 councils that operate throughout Queensland, the elected councillors and mayors who run them and the hardworking staff who make sure the wheels turn. Together, they go to such efforts to provide the services that contribute directly to the quality of life of everyday Queenslanders, often under extremely challenging circumstances in this great state of ours, which is so geographically dispersed. As a minister it was a privilege to work closely with so many of the current and previous mayors. They are people who are close to their communities. I also acknowledge the absolutely outstanding work of the LGAQ.

I give a particular shout-out to the local councillors of my patch, the ward of Morningside, since I was elected in 2009: councillors Shayne Sutton, Kara Cook and Lucy Collier, the current councillor. I have watched closely the things they do and the volume and nature of the issues raised with them. Big and small issues have such capacity to make people immediately happy, sad, angry, frustrated or joyful. I am in awe of what they do and have done to try to get solutions, whatever a person's needs. What a responsibility.

Of course, people just like them live all over Queensland, and that makes it all the more galling that the LNP government has ridden roughshod over their opinions given the way they have progressed this bill, as they always do with every bill—all the ministers, with all they do and with all stakeholders on all the issues. It is simply the way they operate. They just work to themselves. It looks like they could not have tried any harder to make sure that local governments were asked to provide feedback on such an important bill at exactly the time they would be least likely to do it—that is, through the disaster season. That was a great way to make sure no-one could give too much feedback on a pesky bill that was going through parliament.

What is it about these people and disaster season? The minister who is taking this bill through the parliament is also the Minister for Disaster Recovery. While she was not on holiday, she surely would have known that local governments, the very bodies at whom this bill is aimed, would be a bit busy. The minister with responsibility for community recovery, the member for Whitsunday, took off on her African holiday in the middle of disaster season. She did not even care. What is it about these people and disaster season?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Member for Bulimba, I do not see that that is relevant to the bill before us. I encourage you to stick to the long title of the bill.

Ms FARMER: I digress. Speaking of consultation—not. Not only do we have only two hours to debate such a consequential bill; at the eleventh hour we receive amendments that no-one had even heard of before. These people are shockers. They do this with nearly every single piece of legislation. Clearly, they have form. They have done it up to this point and they are going to do it for the rest of this term.

I believe that the shadow minister for local government has amply covered the Labor opposition's position on the bill, as have my colleagues who have already spoken. The matters that I want to speak to relate specifically to the Brisbane City Council. Huge kudos goes to the Labor team in the Brisbane City Council led by Councillor Jared Cassidy, with councillors Lucy Collier, Steve Griffiths, Charles Strunk and Emily Kim supporting him. It is a mighty team. The machine of the Brisbane City Council is being actively and politically used against them every single day, ranging from withholding major documents that would allow them to contribute to decision-making to what happened this week when they blurred the video of any of the Labor councillors who were speaking in council and then unblurred it for the LNP councillors. It is petty. It is singular, every single day but despite that—

An opposition member: They learned from that bloke over there.

Ms FARMER: They would want to blur some of those. Despite that, the Labor team achieves outcomes for the ratepayers of Brisbane every single day. With this bill we see that Adrian Schinnerer wants even more. Just like the LNP at state level, the LNP at the Brisbane City Council level want decision-making to be done in secret. This bill reinforces that for them, courtesy of their state colleagues. As if this bill was not already bad enough, it will: restrict non-civic cabinet councillors from accessing decision-making documents before decisions are made; require ward councillors to explain decisions to residents probably without having seen the underlying evidence; limit scrutiny, reduce transparency and weaken democratic accountability; and concentrate information with smaller executive groups, reducing confidence in council decision-making. That was in the bill before we even saw the amendments.

It is as if the rates that are paid by constituents in non-LNP wards are not of the same value as the rates that are paid by constituents in LNP wards. It is as if their money cannot buy the same council services and the same council transparency and attention that the rates of constituents in LNP wards do. It is as if the concerns of the constituents of non-LNP wards do not matter as much as the concerns of the constituents in LNP wards.

The LNP council in Brisbane wants even more control, which is why we are now seeing these amendments that dramatically restrict councillors' access to key decision-making documents within Brisbane City Council. Only members of the Establishment and Coordination Committee will be able to access many documents while decisions are being considered. We are talking about a 10-year exemption under RTI laws for committee information, which locks out not only the non-LNP councillors but also the public.

We are talking about major decisions that affect our city—the Olympic city. No-one will have access to those decisions. We are talking about the Story Bridge. Bits of the Story Bridge were falling down on top of people and under these laws no-one in council would ever have to explain why. We are talking about rate rises in times of cost-of-living pressures, when every single dollar matters. This council will not have to explain to anybody why they have raised rates. We are talking about public infrastructure such as the Metro, the buses, the CityCats and the Olympic infrastructure. There is so much happening around Olympic infrastructure. There are so many dodgy decisions that we never hear anything about under this state government. Now the Brisbane City Council is going to buy into that lack of transparency.

What about waste recovery facilities? What about landfill? What about our neighbourhood plans? What about areas like mine where density is such an issue? Decisions about public transport, planning and how people live must be transparent because they influence the quality of life of every single Brisbane resident every single day. How will we ever know how the council has made decisions? How will they ever be accountable? That is what they have done with this bill. They have talked this government and this weak minister into making these decisions which will mean they can do everything they want and no-one will ever know about it. It is corrupt, it is crook and it is about time these people were called to account.

That is why these amendments have come through at the last minute. They have come through at the last minute so that nobody can scrutinise them. The public of Brisbane will not hear about what has been happening. People in my local area, in the Morningside ward, will not hear about how council can so easily dupe them on every single decision made about their quality of life. It absolutely stinks.

The people opposite need to know that we are watching them every single step of the way on every single thing they do. We are going to make sure that Queenslanders—and in this case we are going to make sure that the residents of our areas—know how crooked this government is and how crooked they are allowing the decisions of the Brisbane City Council to be. It is not right and Queenslanders deserve better.

 **Mr JAMES** (Mulgrave—LNP) (8.28 pm): I must agree with the member for Lytton when she said she did not know what she was talking about. Unless you are an ex-councillor who lived through the Belcarra era—

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

Mr JAMES: She said how good it was!

Ms PEASE: I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence and asks you to withdraw, member for Mulgrave.

Mr JAMES: I withdraw. The member for Lytton said how good the Belcarra legislation was. I can say it was an absolute nightmare. It pitted councillors against councillors, councillors against staff and vice versa, almost destroying local government, so I solely agree with the words of the member for Rockhampton as well.

This bill marks a fundamental step forward in restoring true local government by strengthening our councils, reducing red tape and empowering mayors, allowing Queensland communities to flourish under fit-for-purpose legislation. The necessity for reforming council frameworks is clear. Over the past decade, local government in Queensland has faced significant uncertainty and operational roadblocks. This was the legacy of the previous Labor policies—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mulgrave, I am afraid I have to ask you to resume your seat. Under the provisions of the order agreed to by the House, I call the minister to reply to the second reading debate.

 **Hon. A LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers) (8.30pm), in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. In my opening remarks, I emphasised the bill will create an environment where the local government sector is empowered and councillors are trusted to get on with serving their communities without unnecessary red tape, regulatory burden and state intervention. After all, just like members of this House, councillors are directly elected by their communities and should be held accountable by the people who live in those communities.

The bill is just the beginning of the Crisafulli government's wideranging reform agenda for the sector which is being delivered in partnership with the LGAQ as part of our Equal Partners in Government agreement. I would like to take a moment to address some of the points raised during this debate. In particular, I would like to give the member for Pine Rivers a shout-out. It is hard to come into this place and admit one's faults, but she summoned up the courage, swallowed her pride and stood up and acknowledged that it had been 'a bumpy decade for the sector'. I cannot disagree with her on that. She was part of the Labor Party's decade of decline that relegated local government to second-class citizens, and it is good that she has taken responsibility for her part in this. What I find strange is that she has thrown the Leader of the Opposition under the bus. As Minister for Local Government, he was definitely one of the potholes that she refers to. I am sure she remembers exactly—

Ms BOYD: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the comments not only inaccurate but also personally offensive and I ask for the minister to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: You have taken personal offence?

Ms BOYD: I do, indeed, Mr Speaker.

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

Ms LEAHY: I withdraw. I am sure she remembers exactly the issues that contributed to the decade of decline, but, for the benefit of the House, I will take a trip down that bumpy decade for the local government sector. Let's start in 2008—

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Pine Rivers, I will not caution you again.

Ms LEAHY: Let's start in 2008 when they disrespected local government across the state and forcibly amalgamated Queensland's councils against community consultation. They sacked mayors and councillors by press release before the relevant legislation was actually in place. I am glad the member talked about the Office of the Independent Assessor because I know the member for Gregory could probably talk about the Office of the Independent Assessor as well.

Mr Dillon interjected.

Ms LEAHY: I will take that interjection. The machinery which they created has spread confusion amongst councillors and impeded them from fulfilling their role as elected officials. They were forced to amend legislation to stop runner-up candidates being appointed to vacancies caused by mayoral resignations, and that was only changed after a candidate who received 30 per cent of the vote nearly became the mayor of Rockhampton.

Mr Lister: Oh, 'Pineapple'!

Ms LEAHY: I will take that interjection. The whole debate cost the ratepayers of Rockhampton half a million dollars in by-elections. It took Labor three attempts to sack their Labor mates in Ipswich. They delayed this, even though they were repeatedly warned about corruption by the former member for Bundamba. Then they tried to rig the voting system for local government elections by proposing to introduce compulsory preferential voting. They proposed that unions could outspend the lord mayoral candidates by up to 4,000:1. They sacked the democratically elected Logan City Council on charges that were later dropped.

Ms Camm: Shameful.

Ms LEAHY: I take that interjection. And they meddled in the industrial dispute of the same with the PCCC finding they had overstepped their mark. Let's not forget, in the dying gasps of their government, they had over 200 days to act on the Troy Thompson debacle at Townsville City Council.

Government members: They did nothing.

Ms LEAHY: I take those interjections that they sat on their hands—the flexibility of one-size-fits-all governance. The opposition made comments that the bill assumes that the ununiformed governance model is appropriate for all councils. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The bill removes red tape and unnecessary regulation which the local government sector has told us is preventing them from serving their communities. What the bill does is recognise the important role and responsibility of council mayors. Section 12 of the Local Government Act 2009 already provides that a mayor has additional responsibilities to other councillors. This reflects their mandate as directly elected office holders who serve the interests of the entire local government area. The bill recognises the important role of mayors and the expectations that come from being directly elected by the whole community. For example, the bill provides that the mayor is to be the member of the appointed panel for the senior executive employees and is the official spokesperson of the council and is the chairperson of the council meetings. These are roles that the community would expect the mayor to perform.

There were comments made about training and support that will be provided to councils ahead of implementation of this legislation. As I emphasised in my remarks earlier in the debate, we have provided for a staged commencement of some of the key reforms. The revised frameworks for conflicts of interest and register of interests and removal of conduct breaches will commence on proclamation in order to ensure sufficient time for training, guidance and support for the sector. This reflects the comments from the committee throughout the report. The department will also be providing guidance in relation to appointment panels, removal of quarry materials and competitive neutrality complaints.

My department has developed comprehensive wraparound support for councils to help understand the amendments and will include webinars hosted by the director-general, one-on-one information sessions with every council, updated training resources, model procedures and templates. All these resources and supports will be available as soon as assent on the bill is reached.

The members opposite expressed concern that abolishing conduct breaches leaves serious behavioural issues and breaches of council policy without a clear enforcement pathway. It is suggested that behaviour such as threatening or aggressive conduct, misuse of council resources, representing council while intoxicated or breach of the gifts and benefits policies may no longer be adequately captured. This is not the case. The bill provides that the robust safeguards and mechanisms will remain in place to appropriately deal with this type of behaviour. If an employee is at risk of harm or their safety is threatened because of a councillor's conduct, the council CEO has a duty to act under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and can give an enforceable direction to the councillor to protect the staff member. Failure by a councillor to comply with the direction may constitute misconduct. Several

examples offered by opposition members would, if proven, be criminal offences such as fraud or breaches of other legislation. Misuse of council resources and breaches of the gifts and benefits policies may constitute corrupt conduct.

It is important to mention some of the very considered points made by stakeholders in favour of the removal of conduct breaches. They highlighted the management of conduct breaches is costly and ineffective in its current form. Existing penalties are minor or tokenistic and do not act as a deterrent for future poor behaviour and reoffending. Their removal will reduce the stress and investigation overheads while maintaining serious oversight by the OIA and the Councillor Conduct Tribunal, and the changes will ensure focus on the more serious conduct matters to reduce the council reporting to the OIA.

There was mention of the removal provisions implementing the various CCC recommendations in the Belcarra report. Recommendation 23 of the Belcarra report prescribed that where a councillor declares a conflict of interest, or where another councillor has reported a councillor's conflict of interest, the other councillors at the meeting must vote on whether a councillor has a conflict of interest and whether the councillor should leave the meeting while the matter is discussed and voted on or remain in the meeting to discuss and vote on the matter. Since the implementation of this recommendation, stakeholders have raised concerns that requiring councillors to vote on whether other councillors may participate in decisions creates tension in local governments and represents an opportunity for the conflicts-of-interest framework to be exploited or politicised.

For example, a councillor may vote dishonestly in order to prevent a councillor from appropriately participating in a decision for political gain to manipulate the outcome or for reprisal. A councillor's vote on another councillor's participation in decisions can be swayed by the fear of reprisal the next time the other councillors are required to vote on their own participation in a decision. These have been longstanding concerns of many local governments. The government's policy is that councillors should ultimately be responsible for managing their own conflicts of interest, informed by guidance material produced by the department and backed by strong penalties for those councillors who knowingly breach the trust placed in them by their communities.

Recommendation 24 of the Belcarra report was that councillors are required to report whether they know or reasonably suspect another councillor has a conflict of interest in a matter before the council. Since the implementation of this recommendation, stakeholders have reported that this arrangement is vulnerable to misuse. A councillor who wishes to disrupt a council proceeding or force a councillor to vote on whether or not to exclude another councillor from a meeting can repeatedly raise trivial concerns about another councillor's potential conflict of interest under the protection of the reporting obligation. The bill removes the requirement to report suspicions of other councillors' conflicts of interest. The bill correctly shifts the onus of managing the conflicts of interest to the individual councillors rather than making it the responsibility of the entire council. This change will remove the potential abuse of process and support orderly and efficient council meetings. Let me be clear: the amendments do not prevent the often helpful practice of a councillor bringing the potential conflict of interest to the attention of a councillor.

Councillors are required to act in the public interest. The bill recognises that other councillors are not necessarily better placed to determine if a councillor can make a decision in the public interest than the councillor themselves. The new framework is backed by significant penalties and reputational damage for councillors who abuse the trust placed in them by their communities.

We heard quite a bit in relation to the resign-to-run regime. I want to point out to those members that today's political environment is very different from 2012, with state and local government elections now at fixed terms and seven months apart. It is a very different landscape from a decade ago. These changes deliver certainty to local government and minimise costly by-elections.

I want to talk about the people in this House who have done the right thing and said to their community, 'We will not stand again at the March local government election. We will put our hand up for the state election.' I want to mention the member for Gregory, Sean Dillon. I want to mention the member for Keppel, Nigel Hutton. I want to mention the member for Mulgrave as well. I want to mention the member for Rockhampton, Donna Kirkland, who said, 'I'm going to put my hand up to serve my community in the state parliament, and I am not going to recontest the local government elections.'

Ms Camm: What about Whitsunday?

Ms LEAHY: I also want to mention the member for Whitsunday. The member for Whitsunday also said, 'I am not going to stand in the March local government elections.' She also said, 'I want to represent my community in the state parliament.' I want to mention the member for Clayfield. He said, 'I want to represent my community in the state parliament.' I want to also mention the member for

Burleigh. The member for Burleigh said, 'I want to represent my community in the state parliament. I will not recontest. I will enable my community to have a choice of who takes on that position in council. I will do the right thing.' I also want to mention the member for Hervey Bay—another one who did the right thing—who said, 'I will resign my position. I will not recontest.' I also want to mention the member for Thuringowa—another one on our side of politics.

A government member: Have you mentioned Ray was the mayor of the Gold Coast?

Ms LEAHY: I also want to mention the first and only mayor for the shire of Albert, and therefore the best, who also did the right thing by his community. I want to mention the member for Burdekin as well, because he did the right thing. There is one that I—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! For confusion, no, I was not.

Ms LEAHY: I would be remiss if I did not mention the member for Broadwater, who also did the right thing. On this side of the House we are the party of local government and we do the right thing by our constituencies. We are quite clear in relation to where we will represent our communities. We are very clear in relation to how we will go about that. The members on this side of the House do the right thing by their communities.

In the time I have left, I will talk in relation to some of the amendments impacting Brisbane City Council. I reiterate the Crisafulli government's policy objective is to enable sound and robust decision-making by Brisbane City Council's civic cabinet for the benefit of the people living in Brisbane. The bill amends section 171 of the City of Brisbane Act 2010 to provide that the power to request assistance or information applies to a councillor in relation to the defined committee information only if the councillor is a member of civic cabinet. I want to make that very clear: it applies only if they are a member of civic cabinet. If the councillor is not a member of civic cabinet, section 171 applies only to the extent of committee information as it relates to a matter that has been finally resolved.

I want to go back and mention the member for Southport, whom I missed. He is another councillor who resigned before standing for state parliament.

The bill amends section 172 of the act in the same way with respect to the inspection of records containing committee information. Brisbane City Council supported the proposal; however, in its submission to the parliamentary committee it identified concerns with the proposed definition of 'committee information'. The committee report notes that the department advised these issues were under consideration, and the Crisafulli government will move amendments to the bill to address the concerns raised by Brisbane City Council. The amendments facilitate deliberation and enable good decision-making through civic cabinet through open and frank discussions between members so they can have those discussions without fear and without favour.

The approach recognises the similarities between the executive decision-making powers of state and civic cabinets, including the Westminster tradition of collective responsibility for decisions. By promoting robust decision-making and good governance, the amendments align with the purpose of the City of Brisbane Act, which includes providing for a system of local government in Brisbane that is accountable, effective, efficient and sustainable. The local government principles provided for in section 4 of the act include decision-making in the public interest and good governance of, and by, local government.

I want to address some of the comments that suggested the bill was rushed during the December-January period and that this is not consistent with an open and transparent government. May I take the opportunity to once again thank the committee and the committee members for their thorough examination of the bill and to remind members opposite of the facts.

The bill was referred to the committee on 20 November 2025. The reporting date was 30 January 2026—a 10-week inquiry period which, even considering the Christmas period, does not equate to the bill being rushed through. The inquiry process comprising the consideration of 68 submissions, a written briefing, two departmental briefings and a public hearing with eight key stakeholders cannot be described as rushed through. Further, there was a robust consultation process prior to the introduction of the bill with many of the stakeholders, so key stakeholders were informed well ahead of the committee processes about the potential amendments.

I might turn to some of the objectives of the amendments: firstly to provide a regulation-making power to prescribe additional persons as 'related parties'. They also insert transitional provisions for amendments in the bill to the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 about training requirements, election material and postal ballot applications. The amendments clarify the scope of document

disclosure requirements for the Brisbane City Council and insert amendments to the Right to Information Act 2029 to provide that documents of the Brisbane City Council's Establishment and Coordination Committee are exempt information for a period of time. The amendments also make minor changes to the local government employee superannuation provisions in the Local Government Act 2009 and the Local Government Regulation 2012 to align with the Commonwealth Treasury Laws Amendment (Payday Superannuation) Act.

(Time expired)

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—



Ms LEAHY (8.51 pm): I seek leave to move amendments outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Ms LEAHY: I move amendments Nos 1 and 2 circulated in my name—

1 Clause 2 (Commencement)

Page 12, after line 6—

insert—

- (1) The following provisions commence on 1 July 2026—
 - (a) part 4, division 2A;
 - (b) part 5, division 2A.

2 Clause 2 (Commencement)

Page 12, line 7, before 'The'—

insert—

- (2)

I table a copy of the amendments to the bill, explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights.

Tabled paper: Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, amendments to be moved by Hon. Ann Leahy [290].

Tabled paper: Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes to Hon. Ann Leahy's amendments [291].

Tabled paper: Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, statement of compatibility with human rights contained within Hon. Ann Leahy's amendments [292].

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—



Ms BOYD (8.52 pm): I rise to speak to clause 8, which is a provision in the BCC Act to have a councillor resign to run for state parliament. I would also love to be able to speak to clause 62. However, I foreshadow that we will not get there given the expedited nature of this debate.

The minister pointed out the political landscape changes in her contradictory sermon that she has provided to this House this evening. Mr Speaker, I submit to you that the political landscape has indeed changed. It changed when the LGAQ surveyed its membership who have vehemently opposed this change by this minister.

Mr Dick: They don't listen.

Ms BOYD: They do not listen. They are deaf to the sector. The sector has said, 'This is not good. This is not democratic. This is not in keeping with the Equal Partners in Government agreement. This minister—

Mr SPEAKER: Order, member for Pine Rivers! You will address your comments through the chair and speak to clause 8.

Ms BOYD: My apologies. Of course, Mr Speaker. I am speaking directly to clause 8. In the minister's justification for this change in clause 8 she went through a long laundry list of LNP members who resigned to run. She admitted the fact that she—

Ms Camm: We have integrity.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, member for Whitsunday!

Ms BOYD: I take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday, who has just notified the members for Lockyer and Gympie that they, in fact, do not have integrity because that is not the pathway by which they got into this place. There was not one mention of them when they spoke.

We cannot take this minister seriously, nor this amendment seriously, because for a long time the LNP have opposed this. They are on the record as strongly opposing it. The Premier is on the record as calling this 'ridiculous'. This is politics before people. Let's call this out for what it really is. The LNP are either afraid that they are going to be challenged in their electorates by strong, well-known candidates or they are going to be—

Mr Mander: Not now.

Ms BOYD: I take the interjection from the sports minister, the member for Everton, who just said, 'Not now'—confirming that that is the very purpose for which they have introduced this. If that is not the reason that they are afraid of strong Labor or Independent or Green councillors running against them at the next election, then surely the only motivation for this can be that they are afraid that they will have preselections from within their own ranks. Why on earth wouldn't they?

Mr Lee interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Hervey Bay is warned.

Ms BOYD: That is the only justification for this. They are not listening to the sector. It is an insult that the minister is treating the sector with such disrespect.

(Time expired)

Division: Question put—That clause 8, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 50:

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

NOES, 28:

ALP, 27—Asif, Bailey, Boyd, Bush, Butcher, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Grace, J. Kelly, Linard, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Nightingale, Pease, Pugh, Russo, Ryan, Scanlon, Smith, Whiting.

Ind, 1—Sullivan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: Under the provisions of the order agreed to by the House and the time limit for this stage of the bill having expired, I will now put all remaining questions necessary to complete consideration of the bill, including clauses en bloc and any amendments to be moved by the minister in charge of the bill, without further amendment or debate. I note that the minister's amendments Nos 6, 10, 12, 14 and 15 are outside the long title of the bill and therefore require leave of the House. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Question put—That the minister's amendment Nos 3 to 15, as circulated, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Amendments, as circulated—

3 Clause 13 (Amendment of s 171 (Requests for assistance or information))

insert—

(1A) Section 171(3), 'subsection (8)'—

omit, insert—

subsection (9)

4 Clause 13 (Amendment of s 171 (Requests for assistance or information))

Page 18, after line 13—

insert—

(3) Section 171—

insert—

(4A) Also, subsections (2) and (3) apply to a councillor in relation to committee information—

(a) only if the councillor is a member of the Establishment and Coordination Committee; or

(b) if the councillor is not a member—

(i) only if the information is general committee information; and

(ii) only to the extent the general committee information relates to a matter that has been finally resolved.

(4) Section 171(5), from 'the request'—

omit, insert—

the request—

(a) relates to any ward other than the ward the councillor represents; or

(b) does not comply with the acceptable requests guidelines.

(5) Section 171(6), 'Subsection (5)'—

omit, insert—

Subsection (6)

(6) Section 171(9), 'subsection (8)(b)'—

omit, insert—

subsection (9)(b)

(7) Section 171(10)—

insert—

committee information means information in a document made about, by or for the purposes of the Establishment and Coordination Committee, including the following documents—

(a) committee submissions;

(b) committee briefing notes;

(c) committee agendas;

(d) notes of discussions in committee meetings;

(e) committee minutes;

(f) committee decisions;

(g) a document prepared for presentation to the committee;

(h) a draft of, or another document prepared for the purpose of, a document mentioned in any of paragraphs (a) to (g).

finally resolved, in relation to a matter, means—

- (a) the Establishment and Coordination Committee or council has made a final decision about the matter; or
- (b) the Establishment and Coordination Committee has decided, or is taken to have decided, the matter in a way prescribed by regulation.

general committee information means the following committee information—

- (a) the version of a committee submission considered by the Establishment and Coordination Committee in making a final decision about the matter the subject of the submission;
 - (b) committee agendas;
 - (c) committee minutes;
 - (d) committee decisions.
- (8) Section 171(4A) to (10)—
renumber as section 171(5) to (11).

5 After clause 13

Page 18, after line 13—

insert—

13A Amendment of s 172 (Inspection of particular records by councillors)

- (1) Section 172(3)—
insert—
- (ca) a record that relates to any ward other than the ward the councillor represents, unless—
 - (i) the councillor is the mayor; or
 - (ii) the councillor is the chairperson of the council and the record is relevant to the councillor performing the role of the chairperson; or
 - (iii) the councillor is a committee chairperson and the record is relevant to the councillor performing the role of the committee chairperson.
- (2) Section 172—
insert—
- (3A) Also, subsection (1) applies in relation to a record of the Establishment and Coordination Committee containing committee information within the meaning of section 171—
- (a) only if the councillor is a member of the committee; or
 - (b) if the councillor is not a member—only to the extent—
 - (i) the record is or contains general committee information within the meaning of section 171(11); and
 - (ii) the general committee information relates to a matter that has been finally resolved.
- (3) Section 172(4)—
insert—
- finally resolved**, in relation to a matter, see section 171(11).
- (4) Section 172(3A) and (4)—
renumber as section 172(4) and (5).

6 After clause 19

Page 20, after line 21—

insert—

19A Insertion of new s 244A

After section 244—

insert—

244A Civil liability of member of Establishment and Coordination Committee for disclosing information under Right to Information Act 2009

- (1) A member of the Establishment and Coordination Committee does not incur civil liability as a result of, or in connection with, disclosing committee information in good faith under a publication scheme under the *Right to Information Act 2009*, section 21.

Examples of disclosing committee information—

- publishing committee information on the council's website
- official publication of committee information by decision of the Establishment and Coordination Committee

- (2) If subsection (1) prevents liability attaching to a member, the liability attaches instead to the council.

- (3) The protection given under this section is in addition to any other protection given under this Act or another Act or law, including, for example, the Local Government Act, section 235.

- (4) In this section—

committee information see section 171(11).

7 Clause 22 (Amendment of s 171 (Requests for assistance or information))

Page 23, lines 26 to 28, page 24, lines 1 to 31 and page 25, lines 1 to 10—

omit.

8 Clause 23 (Amendment of s 172 (Inspection of particular records by councillors))

Page 25, lines 11 to 29—

omit.

9 Clause 24 (Replacement of ch 6, pt 2, div 5A (Councillors' conflicts of interest))

Page 33, line 10, 'interest.'—

omit, insert—

interest;

- (g) another person prescribed by regulation.

10 After clause 71

Page 61, after line 16—

insert—

Division 2A Amendments commencing on 1 July 2026

71A Amendment of s 220 (Amount of yearly contributions—particular employers)

- (1) Section 220(5)—

omit.

- (2) Section 220(6)—

renumber as section 220(5).

71B Omission of s 222 (Adjusting contributions if salary decreased)

Section 222—

omit.

71C Amendment of s 224 (Interest is payable on unpaid contributions)

- (1) Section 224(1)—

omit, insert—

(1) This section applies if the relevant fund for an employee of a local government or local government entity does not receive a superannuation contribution payable for the employee—

(a) at any time before the end of the seventh business day after the employee's QE day for the contribution; or

(b) any allowable longer period applying to the contribution.

(2) Section 224—

insert—

(4) In this section—

allowable longer period, for a superannuation contribution payable in a circumstance described in the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992* (Cwlth), section 18C(2), table, column 2, means the period mentioned in column 3 of that table opposite the circumstance.

QE day, for an employee, means the employee's QE day under the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992* (Cwlth), section 17A(1).

71D Insertion of new ch 9, pt 20, div 2A

Chapter 9, part 20, as inserted by this Act—

insert—

Division 2A Provision for amendments commencing on 1 July 2026

364A Application of ss 220 and 224

Sections 220 and 224, as amended by the amendment Act, apply to a superannuation contribution payable for an employee only if the employee's QE day for the contribution occurs on or after the commencement.

11 Clause 107 (Replacement of ch 5B (Councillors' conflicts of interest))

Page 80, line 7, 'interest.'—

omit, insert—

interest;

(g) another person prescribed by regulation.

12 After clause 122

Page 95, after line 29—

insert—

Division 2A Amendments commencing on 1 July 2026

122A Replacement of s 299A (Meaning of salary of a permanent employee of a local government or local government entity)

Section 299A—

omit, insert—

299A Meaning of salary of a permanent employee of a local government or local government entity)

For this part, the **salary** of a permanent employee of a local government or local government entity is the same as the employee's qualifying earnings under the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992* (Cwlth), section 10A(l) to (3).

122B Amendment of s 302 (Prescribed amount of yearly contributions—Act, s 220)

Section 302(2) and (3)—

omit, insert—

(2) In this section—

charge percentage means the charge percentage under the *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992* (Cwlth), section 17A(2), divided by 100.

13 After clause 139

Page 104, after line 16—

*insert—***139A Insertion of new pt 11, div 8**

Part 11—

*insert—***Division 8 Transitional provision for Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2025****242 Continued application of particular requirements for elections if notice of election published before commencement**

- (1) This section applies if—
- (a) a notice of an election was published under section 25(1) before the commencement; and
 - (b) immediately before the commencement, the election period for the election had not ended.
- (2) Despite the commencement of the amendment Act—
- (a) former section 26 and schedule 1, section 7 continue to apply to a person in relation to nomination as a candidate in the election; and
 - (b) former sections 45AA, 45AB and 45 continue to apply in relation to an application by a local government for a poll to be conducted by postal ballot;
 - (c) former section 177 continues to apply in relation to election material for the election; and
 - (d) former section 178 continues to apply in relation to how-to-vote cards for the election.
- (3) In this section—

amendment Act means the *Local Government (Empowering Councils) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2025*.

former, for a provision of this Act, means the provision as in force from time to time before the commencement.

14 After clause 140

Page 105, after line 6—

*insert—***Part 6A Amendment of Right to Information Act 2009****140A Act amended**This part amends the *Right to Information Act 2009*.**140B Amendment of ch 1, pt 3, hdg (Effect of publication by Cabinet on public interest immunity)**

Chapter 1, part 3, heading, 'by Cabinet'—

*omit, insert—***of particular documents****140C Amendment of s 18A (Effect of publication by Cabinet on public interest immunity)**

- (1) Section 18A, heading, after 'by Cabinet'—

*insert—***or Establishment and Coordination Committee**

- (2) Section 18A(1), after 'with Cabinet'—

insert—

or the Establishment and Coordination Committee

- (3) Section 18A(2)(a), after 'by Cabinet'—

insert—

or the committee

- (4) Section 18A(2)(b) and (c)—

omit, insert—

(b) the publication by Cabinet or the committee of any other information contained in a document mentioned in schedule 3, section 2(3) or 4A(3);

(c) a decision by Cabinet or the committee to officially publish information contained in a document mentioned in schedule 3, section 2(3) or 4A(3) on a regular basis.

- (5) Section 18A(3), definition *Cabinet information*—

omit.

140D Amendment of sch 3 (Exempt information)

Schedule 3—

insert—

4A Brisbane City Council—Establishment and Coordination Committee information

- (1) Information is exempt information for 10 years after its relevant date if—

(a) it has been brought into existence for the consideration of the Establishment and Coordination Committee; or

(b) its disclosure would reveal any consideration of the committee or would otherwise prejudice the confidentiality of committee considerations or operations.

- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to—

(a) information brought into existence before the commencement of this section; or

(b) information officially published by decision of the council; or

(c) if the council delegates a power to the committee under the *City of Brisbane Act 2010*, section 238—information relating to the delegation or the power to be exercised under the delegation.

- (3) Without limiting subsection (1), the following documents are taken to be documents comprised exclusively of exempt information—

(a) committee submissions;

(b) committee briefing notes;

(c) committee agendas;

(d) notes of discussions in committee meetings;

(e) committee minutes;

(f) committee decisions;

(g) a document prepared for presentation to the committee;

(h) a draft of, or another document prepared for the purpose of, a document mentioned in any of paragraphs (a) to (g).

- (4) However—

(a) if information in a document mentioned in subsection (3)(a), (c), (e) or (f) has been officially published by decision of the committee—

(i) subsection (3) does not apply to the document; but

(ii) the document is comprised of exempt information under subsection (1) to the extent the information in the document has not been published; and

- (b) subsection (3) applies to a document mentioned in subsection (3)(b), (d), (g) or (h) despite any publication of information in a document mentioned in subsection (3)(a), (c), (e) or (f).
- (5) A report of factual or statistical information attached to a document mentioned in subsection (3) is exempt information under subsection (1) only if—
- (a) its disclosure would have an effect mentioned in subsection (1)(b); or
- (b) it was brought into existence for the consideration of the committee.
- (6) In this section—
- consideration** includes—
- (a) discussion, deliberation or noting (with or without discussion) or decision; and
- (b) consideration for any purpose, including, for example, for information or to make a decision.
- council** means the Brisbane City Council.
- draft** includes a preliminary or working draft.
- relevant date**, for information, means—
- (a) for information considered by the committee—the date the information was most recently considered by the committee; or
- (b) for other information—the date the information was brought into existence.

140E Amendment of sch 5 (Dictionary)

Schedule 5—

insert—

Establishment and Coordination Committee means the Establishment and Coordination Committee under the *City of Brisbane Act 2010*.

15 After clause 140

Page 105, after line 6—

*insert—***Part 6B Amendment of Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000****140F Act amended**This part amends the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*.**140G Amendment of ch 8, pt 6, div 8A, hdg (Sharing information with prescribed entity)**

Chapter 8, part 6, division 8 A, heading, 'prescribed entity'—

*omit, insert—***particular entities****140H Insertion of new s 344AAE**

After section 344AAD—

*insert—***344AAE Sharing of information by regulatory authority under Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland)**

- (1) Sections 344AAC and 344A AD apply in relation to the regulatory authority as if a reference in the sections to a prescribed entity was a reference to the regulatory authority.
- (2) The Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland), section 273(1) does not apply in relation to the giving of protected information by the regulatory authority to the chief executive under section 344AAC or 344AAD, as applied by subsection (1).

*Note—*See also the *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011*, section 4.

(3) In this section—

protected information see the Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland), section 273(3).

regulatory authority means the person declared to be the regulatory authority under the *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011*, section 14.

Question put—That clauses 9 to 141 and schedule 1, as amended, stand part of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 141 and schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Question put—That the minister's amendment No. 16, as circulated, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment, as circulated—

16 Long title

Long title, 'and the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011*'—

omit, insert—

, the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011*, the *Right to Information Act 2009* and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*

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

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT



Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.03 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Sandgate Electorate



Ms ASIF (Sandgate—ALP) (9.03 pm): I rise to speak about the hundreds of people in my community who have been reaching out to me through my community survey about the issues that are impacting them. To no-one's surprise, those issues are the rising cost of living, access to housing and homelessness in our community.

Those people in my community are asking for support from their government but they have seen nothing. They saw a government that made shiny promises at the election—saying they would tackle the cost of living—but they have had no relief. They saw a government that said they would build houses, but the government have only taken credit for the homes that were commissioned under a Labor government. The government members are there to cut the ribbons, but they are not providing.

I get people knocking on my office door every day because they need support. They cannot afford their rent, they cannot get into a home and they cannot afford to pay their electricity bills. Amongst them are Brian and Karen, who are pensioners from the suburb of Brighton. Brian came to me in desperation because his rent recently increased by \$120 a week—that is a week, not a month. Brian and Karen are both pensioners who worked hard their entire lives to make a wage; they contributed to

our community and to Queensland's economy. Brian said he got up every day and went to work and paid his taxes, but now, at a time when he and his partner Karen receive a pension, they have been hit with this huge increase that they cannot afford. They are at a loss at what to do. They are not getting any assistance and they are not eligible for affordable housing. They did not know where to go or what to do so they came to me for help.

All I can say to Brian and Karen is that I stand with them and I will continue to fight for them every day in this place to get them some support. Too many people like Brian and Karen have come to my office telling me that they are seeking support but are receiving absolutely nothing. People are really struggling with the rising cost of insurance and housing. Where are these people supposed to go when there is no relief from this government? There are families who cannot afford to put food on their table.

Government members interjected.

Ms ASIF: I can hear people on that side saying that it is our fault. You are in government and you are responsible for looking after Queenslanders.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member, put your comments through the chair, please.

Ms ASIF: The LNP is in government now so it is the LNP government's responsibility to look after the Queenslanders who are struggling to keep a roof over their head, struggling to feed their kids and struggling to make sure they can work every day. There are people who are losing sleep at night because they do not know where their next meal will come from, how they will afford their electricity bills or where their rent money will come from. The government need to do better, not just say they are doing things to tackle the cost of living and housing. They need to actually show up with some actions.

Lacey Lane Plushies

 **Hon. LJ GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services) (9.06 pm): One inspiring young woman in the Currumbin electorate, Lacey Lane, has turned her lived experience with mental health challenges into something that is helping young people right across the world. In 2022 while attending high school Lacey began struggling. Like many young people facing anxiety, the pressures of everyday life became overwhelming and she became disengaged from school and isolated from her peers.

A year later, Lacey was diagnosed with ADHD and autism, which helped explain many of the difficulties she had been experiencing. Determined to find a better way to manage her feelings, Lacey discovered the comfort and emotional support that animals can provide. In 2023 Lacey purchased a plush dog for emotional support and began taking it everywhere with her—to school, doctor appointments and out in the community. What began as a personal coping tool quickly became something more—a mission to help others. Lacey realised that there were many other young people experiencing the same challenges and she wanted to help them find the same comfort that she did.

At just 16 years old, Lacey launched her online business—Lacey Lane Plushies—offering a range of realistic cuddly plush animals designed to bring calm, comfort and connection to young people experiencing anxiety, autism or the pressures of school life. In September last year, Lacey opened her first bricks-and-mortar store at the Pines Shopping Centre in Elanora in the Currumbin electorate. Her business now makes around 7,000 sales per month and is creating employment opportunities for other neurodiverse people in our community. Lacey's store also provides a safe meeting place for teens and young adults with autism, ADHD and other disabilities. On Sunday, 1 March she held her first instore meet-up, where 30 young people came together to share their stories and make new friends, some travelling as long as 13 hours to attend.

Today Lacey Lane Plushies are helping children and teens right across the world including in Japan, Germany and the UK—helping them to manage their mental health by providing them with comfort, calm and the confidence to face each day. Lacey Lane is an incredible example of resilience, creativity, compassion and determination. She has taken her own lived experience and turned it into something that is making a real difference. She is an entrepreneur and she is making that difference not only in the Currumbin electorate but right across the world.

I congratulate Lacey on her remarkable achievements. I am so proud to highlight Lacey in Queensland parliament tonight, her entrepreneurial skills and the small business she started for the benefit of other young Queenslanders who are suffering with autism, ADHD and mental health issues. I thank her for the positive difference she is making in the lives of so many people in our community not just in the Currumbin electorate but also right across the world.

Jordan Electorate, Infrastructure

 **Ms MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (9.09 pm): The Deputy Premier recently turned up in Logan to announce \$500 million for infrastructure to support more housing. What I can say is that the Greater Flagstone Priority Development Area in my electorate is certainly doing the heavy lifting when it comes to housing supply. The problem is our communities of Greenbank, New Beith and Flagstone are also doing the heavy lifting when it comes to dealing with significantly increasing traffic congestion. This is because the existing roads in the area are simply not coping with the increased population.

There are a range of complex infrastructure agreements between Economic Development Queensland, Logan City Council and the relevant developers in the PDA. For every lot sold in the PDA, council receives a proportion of the sale price to put towards upgrading these local roads, water and sewerage services. According to the Deputy Premier in a response to a question on notice, as at June last year council had received over \$115 million through this arrangement. Council is saying this is not enough money to upgrade existing roads, the developers want to know what that \$115 million has been spent on and EDQ just keeps approving more development without any recognition that the existing roads are simply not coping.

It was great to see the Deputy Premier turned up and patted the back of the Logan mayor, and I look forward to seeing how much of that \$500 million will be going towards our local roads, perhaps Pub Lane, Teviot Road, Goodna Road or the Springfield Greenbank Arterial. We need to see real investment in our roads. I want to acknowledge and thank the community members who are taking up the fight with us through an e-petition to council. I encourage everyone to sign it because something needs to change.

The people of Flagstone currently have one road in and one road out of this massively growing community. The former Labor government put a condition on the developers Peet that they need to construct a second access, the extension of New Beith Road, when they reach the planned sale of the 2,350th lot. This road condition was brought forward as a result of a community petition that garnered over 1,000 signatures at the time. It was made clear to Peet that further development could not occur unless a second road was built because it poses a major safety issue to have that many people living in a community with only one road in and out.

Despite this clear condition, the Crisafulli LNP government has now approved further development in Flagstone. The Deputy Premier has confirmed via a question on notice that Peet is now required to have the New Beith Road extension constructed before 30 November this year. I look forward to seeing this commitment met by the developer because the people of Flagstone have waited long enough for this road.

Rugby League

 **Mr LEE** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (9.12 pm): Our Hervey Bay Seagulls Rugby League Club is, colloquially speaking, punching above its weight and has a well-established and substantial reputation for being a bold and visionary club, a club that has and continues to nurture some national first-class talent including J'Maine Hopgood, Parramatta Eels and Queensland Maroons player and member of the Indigenous All Stars team; Tyrone Hopgood, a Vegas 9s rugby league champion; Harry Armstrong, Penrith Panthers and former under 19s Queensland Maroons player; Sam Burns, captain of the Sunshine Coast Falcons and veteran hooker; Tye Ingebritsen, Ipswich Jets Hostplus coach; and Emily Whittaker, former Wynnum Manly player who currently has a junior representative contract with the Canterbury Bulldogs until 2027. The Seagulls club was established over 50 years ago in 1973. The club's Ralph Stafford Park sporting facilities are tired and in desperate need of fit-for-purpose infrastructure to ensure that the existing and future needs of Wide Bay rugby league players are met.

This season the Seagulls will host events such as the Queensland all-girls state carnival, a female State of Origin fan day which is expected to attract several thousand attendees, a QRL fixture between the Sunshine Coast Falcons and the Ipswich Jets, as well as another women's statewide rugby league BMD cup match during the all-girls carnival. The Seagulls currently support more than 500 junior and senior members and registrations are growing year on year. This year the Seagulls will field 42 teams from under-sixes through to the open men and women.

The club has the largest number of teams in the Wide Bay and over the last three years the club's volunteers have grown from 44 to 67. There has been colossal growth in player registrations: the under-sixes to under-12s have increased from 149 to 269 and the under-13s to under-16s from 153 to 212. That is a staggering 80 per cent increase in players between under-sixes and under-12s. This is a great sign for the future of rugby league in Hervey Bay.

The growth in female numbers is colossal. In 2023 there were just 54 females, including players, coaches, volunteers and trainers. There are now 140 registered female participants in all aspects of the club. This is a testament to the visionary leadership of the Seagulls and an inclusive approach to representation in rugby league. The Seagulls are also instrumental in a very successful tripartite collaboration between the Seagulls, Bayside Christian College and the Redcliffe-based NRL Dolphins. The Seagulls need strategic and fit-for-purpose infrastructure to support their rapid growth and registrations and the capacity to host national rugby league events.

(Time expired)

Crisafulli LNP Government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (9.15 pm): Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have every right to be concerned about this government. Since November 2024 the Crisafulli LNP government has demonstrated a shocking disregard for First Nations peoples, their rights and their futures. What we are witnessing is the beginning of a new era of assimilation in this state—dressed up in the language of parity but rooted in an old and dangerous idea that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be embedded, absorbed and ultimately erased from the policy landscape. The very first act on the very first day of this government was to repeal the Path to Treaty legislation—legislation that the Premier once supported wholeheartedly, calling it a ‘fork in the road’, stating that—

Down one well-travelled path lies a discussion had for political purposes ... Down the other path is a treaty.

Yet without consultation, decency or respect for the communities that had invested hope in this carefully considered process, he tore it up. The Path to Treaty was a promise to this generation and the Premier broke it to, in his own words, take the path of discussion had for political purposes. That repeal set the tone. Since then we have seen a systemic dismantling of structures designed to ensure First Nations voices are central to decisions affecting them.

The once standalone Indigenous Procurement Policy has been integrated into the mainstream policy or ‘embedded’, as the minister proudly declared to a room full of stunned Indigenous business owners. In education, there are some reports that indicate the dedicated Indigenous policy unit has been abandoned, with identified roles no longer in place. If that is true, then Queensland has very little chance of addressing the five Closing the Gap targets related directly to education. In the arts, board membership across the statutory arts bodies is undergoing an erasing of Indigenous voices. Apart from incredibly qualified First Nations peoples not having their board appointments renewed on boards like QPAC, it has come to my attention that the only two Indigenous members of the QAGoMA board were unceremoniously and without explanation sacked last week part way through their term. What reason is there to remove people before the end of their term?

We are also hearing disturbing reports from native title applicants that the government has shifted its consent determination policy, forcing traditional owners into costly and protracted litigation rather than negotiated outcomes. That is not partnership; that is obstruction. Even the outgoing Queensland human rights commissioner Scott McDougall warned that this government’s hostile policy direction risks fuelling far-right ideology and undermining reconciliation at a time when Queensland should be preparing to present itself to the world in the lead-up to the 2032 Olympics. This is not about efficiency and it is not about parity; it is about ideology. Just this week we saw the federal government launch an inquiry into racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and I look forward to seeing the outcomes of this truth-telling endeavour at the federal level.

Nicklin Community Hero Awards

 **Mr HUNT** (Nicklin—LNP) (9.18 pm): It is a privilege to rise tonight as the member for Nicklin to recognise five outstanding recipients of our Nicklin Community Hero Awards—individuals whose service, compassion and leadership make our community stronger every day. Firstly, Carolyn Neville, a volunteer at Sunshine Coast Riding for the Disabled. Since volunteering from 2016 and serving as president from 2018, Carolyn has provided exemplary leadership of 130 volunteers, supporting more than 80 participants. Whether applying for grants, coordinating fundraisers or organising arena hire or second-hand equipment sales, she is constantly working to secure the centre’s future.

To Rob Egel—a familiar and friendly face to many. I first met Rob as Santa Claus at our PCYC blue light discos in the early 2000s. Behind the Santa beard is a man who dedicated 15 years to the Queensland Fire Department. Beginning with the Rural Fire Service at Belli Park and later serving as an auxiliary firefighter in Kenilworth, Rob has stood ready to protect lives and properties. We thank them sincerely for his steadfast service to our local community.

Celia Drake is a passionate advocate whose volunteer work around Petrie Creek in Nambour has made a tangible difference. From leading platypus surveys and mentoring volunteers to founding the Sunshine Coast Platypus & Echidna Friends group of more than 1,000 members, Celia has inspired awareness and action. She conducts monthly water testing, removes rubbish on her walks and advocates for practical improvements in her local area. Though she shies away from recognition, her contribution is extraordinary.

Donna Hart is compassion in action. As a case manager at Lily House she supports vulnerable women daily and after-hours, always going above and beyond. At home, she and her husband foster four children, including children with developmental needs, providing stability, love and hope. Donna also facilitates parental visits and is studying social work to extend her service even further.

Finally, Chelsea Jenkins—a shining light for youth in our region. Chelsea began at the Nambour PCYC boxing program at just 15 seeking fitness and connection. Ten years on she is a permanent employee and dedicated volunteer. From participating in the CHAMP girls' mentoring program to becoming its facilitator, Chelsea now leads the very program that once supported her. Communities thrive because of people like Carolyn, Rob, Celia, Donna and Chelsea. We honour them today.

Schools, Social Inclusion

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (9.21 pm): From December 2023 to October 2024 I had the great privilege of being education minister. Around midway through that tenure I was approached by a local constituent, a prominent member of the Jewish community, expressing her concerns about the growing level of anti-Semitism in Queensland schools and quoting a number of disturbing incidents that were occurring in Queensland schools to Jewish students. This was so distressing to hear and I resolved to address it. My constituent was liaising closely with the Jewish Board of Deputies. I organised for the senior departmental official who had responsibility for addressing such issues to provide a briefing and to hear firsthand about the experiences of Jewish students. We all reflected that, although at the time the department had an anti-racism policy in place which had seemed appropriate, in fact, Australia had changed and was changing, Queensland had changed and was changing, and perhaps we needed to do something different—something more.

At the same time my colleague the then minister for multicultural affairs was having similar conversations with her stakeholders who were also concerned that we did not have sufficient early intervention and prevention in place to ensure our children were growing up to be inclusive and respectful of all religions, all faith communities and all cultures. As the two ministers who could make a difference in this space, we developed a budget submission to get things started. We were successful. I thank the then treasurer for granting us that money. We were delighted. As a result, we were able to fund a project of participatory research in selected Queensland state schools on strengthening social inclusion for students and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds—basically, what did we need to do to make things better?

As we know, the LNP assumed government at the end of October 2024. It did not take much to notice that from that period up to December last year, anti-Semitism in our community was growing. So imagine our concern when the shadow minister received an answer from the education minister to her question on notice about what exactly was happening with that funding project—this was at the end of last year. About 18 months after we had the funding the minister was able to tell us that procurement had been finalised, but clearly not one single thing had happened. There was no care taken whatsoever.

In the last few weeks we have seen the despair and the begging from the Jewish community and communities right across Queensland to ensure that education is in place. That is key to ensuring that events like Bondi never happen again. We need to all work together to ensure that we put in place early intervention and prevention which will make us a more inclusive society. We need to get that up and running and keep it going.

(Time expired)

Holliday, Mr M; Weatherhog, Mr B

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (9.24 pm): Our Labrador Men's Shed crosses over every part of our community. It is such an important space in our part of the Gold Coast, and tonight I rise to pay tribute to two men we recently lost who gave so much of their time and made our shed what it is today.

Merv Holliday was a cabinetmaker who had a career in our Gold Coast construction industry working on high-rises and projects like the Arundel Plaza shops. He was talented with his hands, especially with woodwork. Merv was firm but fair—a skill that I am told by his good mate from the shed, Len Thompson, he developed over his many years dealing with the CFMEU, a character-building experience indeed. Throughout his more than decade of service to the shed, Merv was president for eight years.

Around five years ago it became clear that the men's shed had outgrown its home. There were not enough car parks and the space they were in was cramped. It was restricting the number of members who could join and be part of this vital space for men to make connections. Merv played a big role in getting our bigger and better shed on the cards. He worked relentlessly alongside secretary Len to make the case. We now have a site, thanks to the work of Councillor Joe Wilkinson, in a great location which can use the touch football field's car park next door and which is close to the Labrador Community Garden. At the last state election the LNP made a commitment of \$500,000 to deliver this new shed. I cannot wait to see it come out of the ground later this year. Although he will not be there to see our new shed, Merv's legacy of selfless service over many years is well and truly secured.

The second servant of our men's shed who passed away recently was another community champion who gave countless hours to many causes: Bill Weatherhog, who was actually my great-uncle. The Labrador Men's Shed was just one organisation over Uncle Bill's lifetime of service to benefit from his incredible work ethic. There was nothing Uncle Bill loved more than our beautiful Broadwater. That showed in his daily power walks along the Biggera Waters and Labrador foreshore and in him joining our local Southport coastguard in 1990. He served for decades at the coastguard, including several years as deputy commodore, always being available if needed for a job and in some weeks volunteering over 50 hours to keep boaties safe. He was a tireless fundraiser for the coastguard and the men's shed. He was not always in a leadership role, but he will be remembered as someone who got in and got the job done—a humble, hardworking servant who made a difference. He will be greatly missed by my Aunt Molly and our entire family.

Vale, Merv. Vale, Uncle Bill.

Mount Isa, Jobs

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (9.27 pm): Glencore closed the Mount Isa copper mine after 100 years of operation as MIM on 30 July 2025—barely seven months ago—wiping out 1,200 jobs. That is what they initially reported, but then they magically downgraded that to 500 jobs, mostly because a lot of those people did not hang around and moved of their own accord. That is 500 jobs lost from a city of 19,000 people. That is equivalent to 170,000 job losses in Brisbane. It is quite significant. According to Glencore's own annual report, at Mount Isa Mines there is 150 million tonnes of copper at over 1.6 per cent. EVA has now announced they will invest \$2 billion at a smaller reserve at 1.2 per cent copper, with all the risk of a greenfield site.

They are sitting on 150 million tonnes when across the world industrial warfare is going on over copper. They are sitting on it because they say, 'Our working capital is better deployed into our copper mines in Africa and South America for now, but we'll come back to this because the government is letting us. We'll just come back to it. Stuff 1,200 jobs. Who cares about copper production in Australia!' We should care. The rest of the world cares about copper production right now and so should we—and not just federally. The state should care.

Commodity traders in Switzerland should not be making decisions about whether we produce copper and activate those 1,200 jobs in this state. Should it be those commodities traders or the members in this House who represent the people of Queensland? I say it should be the people in this House, which means putting the onus on the government. There are things we can do to make that happen, to force them to mine. We are the custodians of those resources and can make them operate.

Secondly, to add insult to injury, they have now reported that they are seeking 100 workers from overseas. Hold on! Last year they said they were going to find jobs for as many of those 1,200 workers as they could. They found jobs for fewer than 200 of them and now they say they are going to go overseas to get 100 workers. Of those 1,200, they could not find 100 workers. Do you know why? Because they pay some of the worst wages in Australia! To add insult to injury, they will drive wages down further when they have just blown a hole in the town's economy by getting workers from overseas. They say the industry average is around 160 grand. Under Glencore in Mount Isa, it is 120 grand to 130 grand. That is what they are giving us in Queensland. We should have rules in this place to manage and mitigate that. You cannot be allowed to operate under those conditions if that is what you are going to do. We are the custodians of the resources. They should work for the people of this state.

Lastly, I want to mention ethanol. This is the 19th or 20th time that I have talked about ethanol in this House. With the Middle East crisis and the oil crisis, the answer is mandating ethanol, as is done in 63 other countries in the world. If we want to contribute to fuel security in this country, which we had better get serious about, we need an ethanol mandate.

Oxenford, Nucrush Quarry

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (9.30 pm): I rise to speak on the proposed extension to the Nucrush quarry at Oxenford. The application was refused by the council in 2021 and is now subject to an appeal. This proposal shows little regard for neighbouring residential properties. The idea of having a hard-rock quarry that is already close to family homes expanded so it is even closer to family homes is deeply concerning.

The State Planning Policy, which is integrated into the city plan, provides clear guidance through the mining and extractive resources provisions, which define a separation area as land surrounding a resource and processing site that is needed to maintain separation from people who may suffer from adverse residual impacts such as noise, dust and ground vibrations. In plain terms, it is a buffer that prevents incompatible uses like quarrying and residential neighbourhoods being situated together.

The policy also sets out a minimum separation distance. It states 200 metres for resources that do not require blasting or crushing, such as sand, gravel and clay, and 1,000 metres for hard-rock resources because blasting and crushing are required. While noting that the separation distance can be reduced in limited circumstances due to topography or existing development commitments, the discretion must be respected as a core part of the policy. However, the gap between the 1,000-metre guideline and an estimated 240 metres from the proposed new pit is not a minor variation. It is a wholesale abandonment of the separation principle. It is difficult to understand how a hard-rock blasting operation could be contemplated so close to people's homes.

The overreach does not stop there. Nucrush proposes to extend the operation to RL100. That is not a modest extension; that is a major intensification, with serious ramifications for residents in terms of amenity, visual impact and the long-term character of the area. We all recognise the need for quarry materials and that longer haulage increases costs and emissions, but creeping closer to family homes is not fair for the quarry's neighbours. Finally, allowing Nucrush to dig into the next century and create a pit deeper than a Pilbara iron ore mine in the middle of suburbia is a little too hard for local residents to swallow.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.33 pm.

ATTENDANCE

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