

WEDNESDAY, 22 JULY 2026

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

Mr Speaker (Hon. Pat Weir, Condamine)

Committee Members

Mr JJ McDonald—Chair

Ms W Bourne MP

Ms JM Bush MP

Mr TA James MP

Mr D Kempton MP

Mr SR King MP

Members in Attendance

Mr MC Berkman MP

Hon. MC de Brenni MP

Hon. CR Dick MP

Hon. GI Grace MP

Dr CAC Rowan MP

In Attendance

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

Mr Nathan Ruhle, Chief of Staff

Office of the Deputy Premier

Ms Helen Craze, Policy Adviser

Mr Darcy Creighton, Policy Adviser

Mrs Danika Jackson, Senior Policy Adviser

Mr Jock Power, Senior Policy Adviser

Mr Aydan Rusev, Policy Adviser

Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning

Ms Megan Barry, Deputy Director-General, Office of Industrial Relations

Mr Shaun Ferris, Acting Director-General, State Development

Ms Peta Harwood, Deputy Director-General, Planning

Ms Leah Kelly, Deputy Director-General, Infrastructure

Mr Michael McKee, Deputy Director-General, Corporate

Ms Judith Rowell, Acting Deputy Director-General, State Development

Economic Development

Mr Julian Simmonds, Chief Executive Officer

Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority

Mr Simon Crooks, Chief Executive Officer

WorkCover Queensland

Mr Michael Pennisi, Chief Executive Officer

The committee met at 1.00 pm.

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

I am Pat Weir, member for Condamine and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Under the provisions of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 I will preside over today's hearing. The members of the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee are: Mr Jim McDonald, member for Lockyer, who is the chair; Ms Jonty Bush, member for Cooper and deputy chair; Ms Wendy Bourne, member for Ipswich West; Mr Terry James, member for Mulgrave; Mr David Kempton, member for Cook; and Mr Shane King, member for Kurwongbah. We are also joined by the members for McConnel, Springwood and Moggill. The committee is joined by other members who have been granted leave to attend and ask questions at the hearing today.

I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion or by order of the committee. Please note that the first three rows of the gallery are reserved for department and ministerial staff supporting the minister. Members and others who are attending to observe are welcome to sit in the remaining rows or in the gallery upstairs.

The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat. Staff who are assisting our witnesses here today are permitted to use personal electronic devices in the chamber. I ask all present to ensure phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode or turned off if not in use. I also remind everyone that food and drink is not permitted in this chamber.

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

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

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Deputy Premier, the acting director-general, officials and departmental officers and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Deputy Premier or acting director-general. Please remember to press your microphones on before you start speaking and off when you are finished.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of state development, infrastructure, planning and industrial relations open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Deputy Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of up to five minutes for the industrial relations portfolio area.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Good afternoon, committee members and the thousands of Queenslanders watching estimates online, no doubt. To all our hardworking independent staff within the Office of Industrial Relations, capably led by Deputy-Director General, Megan Barry, thank you for joining us today.

It is no secret the Crisafulli government is committed to restoring productivity on Queensland worksites and ensuring Queensland workers are safe in their workplace, have adequate protections and fair conditions of employment, and are well paid. We are ensuring a balanced and fair approach for Queensland government procurement projects that will restore productivity and the rule of law to Queensland construction worksites, putting the safety of workers and our OIR public servants as our focus. This focus ensures we can improve productivity, eliminate a culture of fear and intimidation in the construction industry and end the CFMEU's stranglehold by repealing CFMEU-enabling legislation embedded by the former Labor government. Unlike the former Labor government, this government will not be influenced by the militant CFMEU to the detriment of workers, businesses and public servants.

Unlike the former government, we are committed to reform the sector, strangled by red tape and overridden by violence, intimidation, bullying, misogyny and criminal behaviour. The Crisafulli government supports government procurement practices that prioritise local businesses. That is why the government recently introduced the Queensland Procurement Policy 2026, which puts local small and family business at the front and centre of a \$35 billion annual government spend. This policy gives a fairer and clearer framework that backs Queenslanders, strengthens local supply chains and delivers better value for taxpayers.

We re-established the Queensland Productivity Commission, with the first order of business conducting an inquiry into the opportunities to improve the productivity of Queensland's construction industry. The government has permanently removed—this is the best part of it, Mr Speaker—the former government's Best Practice Industry Conditions, BPICs, or better known as the CFMEU tax. It was repealed because they were likely to increase the cost of projects by up to 25 to 30 per cent and impose a net economic cost of up to \$20.6 billion on the Queensland community.

Queenslanders can blame the former Labor government for the significant decline in productivity in the order of nine per cent in the Queensland construction sector, resulting in 77,000 fewer new homes built and entrenched higher rents. The Office of Industrial Relations is leading the implementation of 10 of the QPC recommendations. Notably, two recommendations have already been delivered. OIR has successfully reviewed and released a revised compliance monitoring and enforcement policy—recommendation 48—and removed duplication in notification requirements through the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2025, which is recommendation 49.

The Crisafulli government is also progressing QPC recommendations to introduce an updated Building and Construction Code of Practice or development of a new code including enforcement of the code to set out the Crisafulli government's expectations about productivity performance on Queensland government projects. Just over a year ago on 13 July 2025 we established the landmark commission of inquiry into the CFMEU, which has recently been extended until December 2027 given the substantial volume of evidence it has received to date. Unlike the former Labor government and the former ministers responsible for industrial relations who continually legislated for the CFMEU, this government backs Queenslanders by focusing on workers' safety, not militancy, not intimidation, not misogyny, not bullying, not harassment and not violence by the CFMEU that has funded the Labor Party election campaigns time and time again.

The Crisafulli government has taken steps to remove Labor's CFMEU-enabling policy which eroded the rule of law on construction sites. Immediately upon entering office, the Crisafulli government backed productivity and workers' safety by reinstating its right of entry requirement laws by at least giving 24 hours notice. We amended Labor's laws to simplify the power of a workplace health and safety representative to direct the cessation of work. We repealed information-sharing laws which would have

enabled the CFMEU to continue their disgraceful behaviour on worksites. We sacked CFMEU officials from the Work Health and Safety Board. We hung up the former Labor government's direct bat phone to the CFMEU.

I want to conclude my opening remarks by saying that there has been much said recently during the commission of inquiry and views expressed in this parliament by me and others in estimates hearings and publicly about the allegations in relation to Helen Burgess, her protection and enabling of the CFMEU and the longstanding connection with the member for McConnell which has never been denied. While many of those allegations are still subject to the commission of inquiry—

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, point of order: there is actually no truth in what the minister just said. I take offence and ask that be withdrawn.

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

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. It is going to be a long day. I am just getting started. I can happily advise the committee that Helen Burgess's employment at OIR was terminated last week. It should have happened under the 10 years of the Labor Party government. It did not. She has been terminated, much to the relief of many staff in the Office of Industrial Relations. In relation to the matter that I just withdrew, I note that the member for McConnell was the QCU director when Helen Burgess was an admin officer at the QCU.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Deputy Premier. We will now begin questions. I will go to the opposition and the member for McConnell.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, point of order: with respect to questioning by the member for McConnell and shadow minister for industrial relations, I would like the member to reassure this committee that there are no real or perceived conflicts of interest, bearing in mind the member for McConnell has been mentioned, and is being legally represented, in the CFMEU commission of inquiry.

Mr SPEAKER: I will take a bit of advice there. Deputy Premier, the member has sought leave to appear on the committee and ask questions, which she is entitled to do. If you hear anything untoward or feel that there is, let us know. At the moment, member for McConnell, you may ask your first question, please.

Ms GRACE: My first question is to the acting deputy director. Mr Ferris, what advice was provided to the minister regarding appointments to and the removal of registered union representatives from the WorkCover and workplace health and safety boards?

Mr SPEAKER: I call the acting director-general.

Mr Ferris: Shaun Ferris, acting director-general—

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: I have asked the acting director-general to respond. I do not need to be hearing any other chatter from either side.

Ms GRACE: Okay.

Mr SPEAKER: Acting Director-General?

Mr Ferris: In relation to the matters you have raised and the question of the appointment of the boards or the removal of persons from the boards, I can advise that the process in relation to appointments to the boards was followed in line with the requirements of the act and also in relation to the significant appointment process. The appointments and the members who were appointed to those boards are a matter for government and cabinet consideration and are appointed by the Governor in Council.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, section 6(4) of the Work Health and Safety Act provides—

The Minister must ensure the number of members representing employers equals the number of members representing workers. Can you advise who is representing workers and who is representing employers on the current board?

Mr Ferris: I can advise of the representatives on the Work Health and Safety Board; is that the board you are referring to?

Ms GRACE: Yes.

Mr Ferris: Thank you for that clarification. Mr Michael Hart is the chair; Ms Kim McCosker, employer representative; Ms Lindsay Carroll, Australian Retail Council, employer representative; Mr Andrew Chapman, Queensland Major Contractors Association, employer representative; Mr Jack McGuire, Red Union Support Hub, worker representative; Ms Tracie Deegan, Australian Country Choice, worker representative; and Ms Abby Sommer, Sommer Partners, worker representative.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, can you advise what criteria are used to determine a worker representative on the Work Health and Safety Queensland board, and does this meet the requirements of this provision of the act?

Mr Ferris: Just bear with me while I take some advice. Thank you for your patience. I can confirm the board's constitution. Under the act there is a chairperson and six members, with 50 per cent employer representatives and 50 per cent worker representatives. The Work Health and Safety Act does not provide a definition of 'worker' or 'employee representative', but we must have regard to the person's practical experience and competence in the management of work health and safety.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, can I just seek clarification about becoming a worker representative. If you are working for an employer without representing the workers, does that meet the criteria under the legislation?

Mr Ferris: As I have outlined and stated, the Work Health and Safety Act does not provide a definition of worker or employer representative. Board member nominations are considered based on work health and safety experience, suitability to represent workers or employers across a range of industry sectors, and diversity considerations.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, have any issues been raised by the chairs or members of the Work Health and Safety Queensland and WorkCover boards or other stakeholders regarding injured workers and their families no longer having registered union representation on the boards?

Mr Ferris: I am unaware of any concerns that have been raised in relation to the members of the boards that you have referred to. I have not been briefed in any way about concerns in relation to that matter.

Ms GRACE: Can I just clarify that no stakeholders, registered unions, registered employers or anyone has raised any issues with the department in relation to the removal of what has been past convention?

Mr Ferris: In the very short period that I have been the acting director-general of the department I have not been briefed by the department or representatives in relation to concerns that have been raised in relation to the membership of the boards.

Mr SPEAKER: Have you concluded your response?

Mr Ferris: I can add to that. I have just taken some advice. The advice that has been provided is that we have not received any concerns in relation to members of the board about removal or the board's membership.

Ms GRACE: Given the removal of registered union representatives from these boards, can the department outline any alternative arrangements being worked on to ensure that injured workers' and their families' interests are heard?

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, point of order: I again raise a real or perceived conflict of interest. Can the member assure this committee that the political party to which she belongs has not received any donations from registered unions for political campaigns not registered in ECQ donation disclosures? It would be a real and perceived conflict of interest if she is asking on behalf of those registered unions that have donated to the Labor Party.

Mr SPEAKER: I think if we go down that path we are on a pretty long, slippery slope. Member for McConnel, do you have another question?

Ms GRACE: I have asked my question. Do you want me to repeat it, Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: Acting Director-General, do you want to hear the question again?

Mr Ferris: Through the chair, if you would not mind repeating the question.

Ms GRACE: Given the removal of registered union representatives from these boards, can the department outline any alternative arrangements being worked on to ensure injured workers and their family's interests are heard?

Mr Ferris: I thank the member for the question. The Office of Industrial Relations has a very broad remit in terms of ensuring Queensland workers return home safely from work, and that remains a fundamental priority of both the Office of Industrial Relations and more broadly the department. The Workers' Compensation Regulator is responsible for regulating workers compensation scheme insurers to ensure they comply with legislative requirements, deliver fair outcomes for injured workers and employers, and contribute to a sustainable and effective scheme. The regulator exercises these functions independently under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003, applying a risk-based approach that combines monitoring, education, compliance and enforcement activities.

The regulator oversees all insurers operating within the Queensland scheme, including WorkCover Queensland and licensed self-insurers. This oversight includes: monitoring claims management practices, rehabilitation and return-to-work outcomes; compliance with statutory obligations; complaints trends; insurer decision-making; and emerging scheme risks. The regulator also administers the independent review framework for insurer decisions and investigates complaints and systematic issues identified through audits, reviews and stakeholder intelligence. Where concerns are identified, the regulator has a range of regulatory tools available, including audits, improvement action plans, compliance warning letters, compliance notices and licence related interventions for self-insurers. These mechanisms are designed to address noncompliance, drive continuous improvement and maintain confidence across the schemes.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, when did the department first become aware of the allegations of breaching federal employment law made against Work Health and Safety Board member and worker rep, Mr Jack McGuire, and his associates in proceedings before the Federal Court?

Mr Ferris: I thank the member for the question. You are referring to the fair work matter?

Ms GRACE: Yes.

Mr Ferris: Thank you for that clarification. As you are aware, on 6 July the *Australian* newspaper reported that a Federal Court filing alleged Work Health and Safety Board member Mr Jack McGuire had contravened two sections of the Fair Work Act. The secretariat sought advice from the ESU on 8 July 2026 on the method of disclosure that such a potential or perceived code of conduct issue would be made in order to provide support to the board chair to manage the issue. The chair was provided with this advice and subsequently advised that, following the disclosure by Mr McGuire, they were satisfied that no further action was required in relation to that matter.

Ms GRACE: Thank you, Mr Ferris. I want to sift through some of that response you just gave. As reported, complainant Mr Daniel Brown, after resigning in September 2025—I think it is in that article—claimed the company was alerted to potential serious contraventions of the Fair Work Act regarding sham contracting. Can you advise if this was disclosed by Mr McGuire during the department's appointment process?

Mr Ferris: I thank the member for the question. I will go back to my previous answer, if that is okay, and just restate that the chair has confirmed that they are satisfied with the disclosure by Mr McGuire and no further action is required in relation to the matter.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, can you clarify: when did Mr McGuire provide a general declaration to the board in relation to the Federal Court proceedings, and how was the chair determining that all was okay?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order: under standing orders, there are two separate questions in there. I submit to you, Mr Speaker, that they should be two separate questions as opposed to two questions contained within one question.

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, I am happy for them to be separate. They are related. The first one is: can you update us on when a general declaration to the board was made by Mr McGuire in relation to the Federal Court proceedings?

Mr Ferris: I thank the member for the question. I would have to get back to you with the date of any advice or disclosure that was made by Mr McGuire, but I will come back to the answer that has already been provided just to be very clear. The secretariat sought advice from the ESU on 8 July, after the 6 July newspaper article, and the chair was—

Ms GRACE: Sorry, you are just going a bit fast. I am trying to get the dates. You said that you sought advice—

Mr SPEAKER: Can you repeat that date, please?

Mr Ferris: Of course. The secretariat of the board sought advice from the ESU on 8 July on the method of disclosure that such a potential or perceived code of conduct issue would be made in order to provide the chair of the board satisfaction to manage the issue. The chair was provided this advice and subsequently advised that, following the disclosure by Mr McGuire, they were satisfied that no further action was required. We will come back to you—if that is fine by you, Deputy Premier—by the end of this session with the date in relation to when that was made.

Ms GRACE: Just to clarify: you only took action after the article appeared. That is what you are saying at this point in time, unless you come back to us with something else.

Mr Ferris: That was the date that the secretariat sought advice from our Ethical Standards Unit. We will come back to you with the date in relation to any other disclosure.

Ms GRACE: Has the minister sought advice from the department about whether Mr McGuire should be stood down from his position on the board during these Federal Court proceedings?

Mr BLEIJIE: No, he's doing a good job.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the acting director-general.

Mr Ferris: No advice has been sought, but I do note that it is a live court matter at this point in time.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the member for McConnel.

Ms GRACE: Acting Director-General, is the department only taking the advice of the chair about the suitability of Mr McGuire to remain on the Work Health and Safety Board?

Mr Ferris: I thank the member for the question. Again, I will come back to what has been said. The chair sought advice from our Ethical Standards Unit in relation to the management of the issue and has been satisfied that no further action is required. The chair of the board is responsible for the ongoing management of any perceived or actual conflicts of interest. That is not for the department to manage the conflicts of interest of the board.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, can you advise how much funding has been budgeted for the labour hire licensing unit?

Mr Ferris: I thank the member for the question. If you bear with us, member, we will see if we have that information readily available and on hand. We will come back to you with that. Just for clarification, you are seeking some confirmation around the budget allocation for the labour hire licensing unit?

Ms GRACE: Yes. Is the misuse of sham contracting by labour hire licensees, particularly the exploitation of migrant workers on student visas, a priority area of the regulator?

Mr Ferris: If I may, I might refer this to my Deputy Director-General of the Office of Industrial Relations, Ms Megan Barry, to provide an answer.

Ms Barry: Indeed, our Labour Hire Licensing Compliance Unit administers Queensland's labour hire licensing scheme which includes client service delivery, licensing compliance monitoring and investigations, and advisory and enforcement functions. We do this including through partnering with local, state and national regulators. Like all of our regulatory responsibilities, we have a watching brief on developments within industry and continue to track with interest any developments when it comes to migrant workers.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to government members for some questions now.

Mr McDONALD: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Staff within the Office of Industrial Relations do a great job answering the call to keep Queensland workers safe, including in my electorate of Lockyer. Can the Deputy Premier inform the committee how the Crisafulli government is supporting the OIR in this issue, and is he aware of instances where direct lines of communication have meant there was one set of rules for the CFMEU and another set of rules for every other Queenslanders?

Mr BLEIJIE: It is a great question, member for Lockyer. Many of the OIR officials are behind me here or watching back at their offices, and I want to thank them for the amazing work they have done. They are an independent office—they are now; we have gone on a bit of a culture change in the last year and half since the former Labor government was in power. I thank the member for Lockyer for the question. I thought this was going to be an estimates similar to parliament where the Labor opposition do not ask me questions. However, I am happy to take all the Dorothy Dixers. If I am not going to get questions from my opponents, that is fine. Hopefully I will. We will see. We have a few hours to go. It is a long time to talk about the CFMEU, but I am more than happy to do it.

The member asks about supporting the Office of Industrial Relations. I think we have shown how we support the Office of Industrial Relations. You have to understand: these are the officers, particularly workplace health and safety officers, who are on the front line and they are out there every day. Under the former Labor government of 10 years they were coping abuse, misogyny, intimidation and fear. They were locked in rooms with CFMEU officials. It seemed that no-one was doing anything about it. We raised allegations about the bat phone. We have hung up the bat phone, which was the direct link from the CFMEU to Helen Burgess. I advised the committee that Helen Burgess was terminated from the Office of Industrial Relations last week. We have seen evidence in the royal commission, and I will quote Mr Paul Smith, WHSQ Regional Director, North Queensland. He said—

... I always thought she fervently believed in their ideology or she was getting some financial benefit from it. ... She would just not tolerate any disagreement with what the union wanted. Whatever the union said was right, no matter what my inspectors did or said.

That was from 13 May 2026. Principal inspector David Cappelletti also said—

... it became personal, that you were singled out if you didn't find favourably when we went to job sites that involved the CFMEU. You were singled out if you didn't do what Helen Burgess said to do, and it came down the line from her. ... So if we didn't come to a favourable outcome for the unions on sites, then it would and down through Helen Burgess and the operations managers personally.

That was from 15 April 2026. Peter McKay, then DDG of OIR—and the member for McConnell knows him well—said—

My concern would be that Ms Burgess would pass that—
cabinet—

information to the CFMEU if she had access to that.

...

We simply couldn't trust Ms Burgess to be in charge of inspectors, firstly because of this concern we had about the relationship with the CFMEU, but secondly the behaviour she had exhibited towards inspectors as their manager was not what we would expect of a manager.

That was from 16 April 2026. Then we come to Kym Bancroft, former DDG, OIR—and the member for McConnell knows her well as well; she was her DDG. The member for McConnell offered the following in relation to Ms Burgess, and this is testimony from Kym Bancroft. She said—

"This poor woman should be left alone. She's been through so much."

That was from 10 June 2026. Helen Burgess, I would say to you, Mr Speaker and committee members, was protected by the member for McConnell, with whom she served at the Queensland Council of Unions.

Ms GRACE: Point of order: I take offence to that allegation and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister has taken personal office.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. I go no further. The member for McConnell also said previously as part of the estimates process—

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

She is right, Mr Speaker: I did. For 10 years I raised the issues because those issues were raised with me by independent workplace health and safety officers. If only they had a minister at the time who would act on it. I have. In a year and a half I have acted. Helen Burgess has been terminated.

Ms GRACE: Point of order, Mr Speaker: I take offence to what the minister has said about not acting. I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr McDONALD: Point of order, Mr Speaker: the member was not named.

Ms GRACE: He said 'member for McConnell'.

Mr BLEIJIE: I said 'previous ministers' and there were a few—a couple.

Ms GRACE: No, you said 'the member for McConnell'.

Mr BLEIJIE: That was before. The last point I made was that there were lots of ministers.

Mr SPEAKER: It would be simpler if you would just withdraw it and we will move on.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw, Mr Speaker, and I suspect there is going to be a lot of this today, unfortunately, because I have a lot to say about the member for McConnell. So, too, did her previous workplace health and safety inspectors. Let me read a list. These are in the Commission of Inquiry into the CFMEU—

Mr de BRENNI: Point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek your guidance in relation to the withdrawal and whether it meets the standard for an unqualified withdrawal.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. You know the rules around withdrawals.

Mr BLEIJIE: As I said, Mr Speaker, there are going to be lots more today.

Ms GRACE: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I do not know whether that is an unqualified withdrawal. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Just withdraw and then you can continue.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. Here is a list of witnesses who appeared at the Commission of Inquiry into the CFMEU offering criticism of Helen Burgess, who was at Workplace Health and Safety at the time and rose through the ranks when the member for McConnell was the minister. There was Stacey Schinnerl, State Secretary, AWU; Noel Hayes, former principal inspector; Deborah Dargan, Operations Manager, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland; Paul Watts, former WHSQ principal inspector; David Cappelletti, Principal Inspector, WHSQ; Peter McKay, former deputy director-general, OIR; Sarina Wise, Executive Director, Compliance and Field Services, WHSQ; Vince Sanfilippo, General Manager, Queensland and PNG, CPB Contractors; Graeme Silvester, EGM, Health, Safety Environment and Quality, CIMIC Group; Paul Smith, Regional Director, North Queensland, WHSQ; Shannon Farrington, former operations manager, WHSQ Cairns; John Dalamaras, Operations Manager, WHSQ Cairns; Karim De Ridder, WHSQ Cairns; Kym Bancroft, former DDG, OIR; Graham Easterby, former licensing manager, QBCC; and Andrea Fox, Executive Director, Policy and Workplace Services, OIR.

They are the workplace health and safety inspectors and others in the stakeholder group who have given criticism of Helen Burgess in WHSQ. That is why the Crisafulli government has acted and terminated Ms Burgess's employment. I said she should have been terminated years ago, when these allegations were raised, but no-one had the courage to do that. This government is doing what the former Labor government failed to do and that is this in a nutshell: protecting the independent workplace health and safety officers. I speak of every staffer who sits behind me here who has prepared for these estimates, some of whom have given testimony in tears to the CFMEU commission of inquiry when talking about being locked in a room with CFMEU officials. It is this government that is protecting my staff at OIR and it is a shame that they did not have the protection for 10 years when others filled this position of industrial relations minister.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I go to the member for Cook, I remind members to keep their questions concise. We do not need any statements amongst the questions.

Mr KEMPTON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier advise how the Crisafulli government is delivering a fresh start for Far North Queensland workers and businesses, including through some of the key changes that have been implemented to end the regulatory capture of the Office of Industrial Relations during a decade of decline under Labor?

Mr de BRENNI: Point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: I think I know the point of order.

Mr de BRENNI: Yes, the point of order is on an imputation.

Mr SPEAKER: I ruled yesterday that 'decade of decline' was unnecessary. We do not need it. The job of the committee is to ask questions. It is up to the minister. He answers the questions. It is up to him to do that, not you. Ask the question again without—

Mr KEMPTON: Mr Speaker, I will ask the question again of the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier advise how the Crisafulli government is delivering a fresh start for Far North Queensland workers and businesses, including through some of the key changes that have been implemented to end the regulatory capture of the Office of Industrial Relations?

Mr de BRENNI: Point of order, Mr Speaker: I think the imputation remains in the question despite your intervention.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: You have a point of order, member for Moggill?

Dr ROWAN: I do have a point of order, Mr Speaker. There is no imputation in there.

Ms Grace interjected.

Dr ROWAN: The member for Cook has rephrased the question as per your direction, but there is no imputation contained within the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, and I do not think there is a point of order. Deputy Premier, you have the call.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you very much, and I take the interjections from the member for McConnell, who is asking the Manager of Opposition Business to take a point of order to substantiate it. Has the member for McConnell not been listening to the CFMEU royal commission? Seriously, has the member for McConnell not been listening to the testimony given against you in the commission of inquiry and against the former Labor government? Seriously, and we are now debating whether we need to verify the details that have been laid bare in a CFMEU commission of inquiry. It is unbelievable that so short into this estimates process today the member for McConnell will not read a room and realise she got it wrong for 10 years and she ought just get on board with the CFMEU royal commission, because the testimony—

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

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

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw. This government and this minister—me—take a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, fear and intimidation in Queensland workplaces. Whether you are in the construction industry, whether you are a workplace health and safety inspector or a union rep, we take a zero-tolerance approach to this sort of behaviour that we have seen borne out in the commission of inquiry. We have ended the CFMEU's stronghold of the regulator through legislative change. We have been exposing the allegations of CFMEU and ministerial wrongdoing through the landmark commission of inquiry into the CFMEU. Upon coming into office, I immediately hung up the bat phone, which was the CFMEU's direct line into the Office of Industrial Relations.

I point out as well that the members interjecting on me—two members particularly—have been named in the commission of inquiry, so it does not surprise me that they are wanting to interject to try to have me not answer these questions. We also sacked militant CFMEU official Kurt Pauls, who was hand-picked by the member for McConnell. The member for McConnell asked questions about board appointments before. This is a guy who had charges laid against him that were found to be held up in a court of law and she appointed him to the Work Health and Safety Board. That was her appointment: Kurt Pauls, who was hand-picked by the member, and he had allegations being aired of abuse towards OIR staff—not the sort of person I would put on the Work Health and Safety Board.

We repealed the CFMEU enabling laws with information-sharing and right-of-entry laws. We have changed the laws which gave the CFMEU immediate access to worksites. We fixed all of that up. We repealed the BPICs, otherwise known as the CFMEU tax, which Treasury have estimated would have cost the Queensland economy some \$17 billion from 2024 to 2030. Mr Speaker, you will never catch me on the President's Verandah out there waving to the CFMEU and the comrades like the member for Springwood did when he waved to them from out there—'Hi, comrades'—when they were congratulating him for BPIC. You are never going to catch me out there congratulating or thanking—or being thanked by—the CFMEU, but the member for Springwood was. Who could forget those images on the news? During the CFMEU commission of inquiry on 15 April, OIR senior official Sarina Wise said—

... obviously there's been a change of government which, you know, in my experience in the safety world does change the dynamics of things. So that's obviously helped with pushing, you know, the regulatory capture piece away from us and starting afresh.

There is the evidence, member for McConnell. You wanted it justified. There it is—

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, thank you. All comments through the chair.

Mr BLEIJIE:—the commission of inquiry. Mr Speaker, the member for McConnell wanted verification of the allegations. There it is: Sarina Wise in the commission of inquiry, which I quoted. Central to the public interest disclosure also were allegations of a toxic workplace culture and unethical

and alleged corrupt behaviour by officers within OIR, including allegations of misconduct by Burgess, whose name appeared as many as 43 times. An anonymous OIR workplace feedback survey response from 2021 said—

The construction inspectorate is run by bullies and show no trust in inspectors. Director Burgess needs a CCC investigation with a conflict of interest with the CFMEU and her bullying management style. I would not recommend the construction inspectorate to anyone for a workplace to come. It is more than toxic and will destroy your confidence.

We have changed the culture. We are changing the culture, we are getting workplace health and safety officers on board and there is a complete positive culture in OIR because they have not only a minister but also a government that protects them and understands the independent inspectorate and the workplace health and safety inspectorate. I will always put the welfare of the OIR staff ahead of the welfare of the CFMEU or, for that matter, other unions that are disappointed or saddened by the fact that they are not on boards. Our boards have worker reps and employer reps. That is what the legislation says, and that is what we have done. We are very much happy with the cultural change happening in OIR at the moment.

Mr JAMES: Deputy Premier, delivering key infrastructure upgrades like the Bruce Highway in the Far North relies on an independent regulator that supports safe and productive worksites across Queensland. Can the Deputy Premier advise the importance of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland conducting its services impartially, and is he aware of any alternative approaches where this did not happen?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member for Mulgrave for the question. It is a great question, so I can absolutely advise the honourable member of the importance of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland conducting services impartially, and that is what they should have been doing but could not because, as I said, Helen Burgess was in there and protected. There was also testimony, I might add, in the CFMEU commission of inquiry that Helen Burgess was in a personal relationship with a CFMEU delegate and then also employed the son of the CFMEU delegate into workplace health and safety or OIR. I just wonder: we all knew this was happening for 10 years. I raised it in budget estimates as opposition industrial relations minister. The Liberal National Party opposition raised it. Workplace health and safety officers raised it. Whistleblowers raised it. It begs the question: how is the only one in the world who seemed not to know what was going on the member for McConnell? It beggars belief that how did I know this as a shadow minister and she did not know as the minister?

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: You have a point of order, member for McConnell?

Ms GRACE: I take offence and ask that it be withdrawn.

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

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. Mr Speaker, I dare say the whistleblowers who were coming to me when I was the shadow minister in opposition, with the limited resources of opposition, were also going to the minister responsible at the time. There are serious questions that need to be answered by the member for McConnell about whether she knew about all of these allegations, because I cannot have been the only one to have found out about this. When I did find out about it, I raised them publicly. I raised them in the budget estimates as shadow minister and I was harassed and harangued by the member for McConnell for raising them, yet it turns out I was right. The workplace health and safety officers were right. It was happening, and we are seeing it borne out now in the commission of inquiry.

With regard to the commission of inquiry, lots of accusations have been raised about the regulatory capture and ministerial interference in the commission of inquiry at the time the Labor Party was in power for 10 years. We have seen at the commission of inquiry a letter that the CFMEU wrote to the member for McConnell which, incidentally, I have a copy of here. The CFMEU wrote to the member McConnell dictating terms—

The CFMEU requests the following of the regulator;

- Investigate, discipline and educate relevant inspectors and/or officers of WHSQ responsible for inappropriately, unprofessionally and unduly delaying the lawful entry of permit holders to site, further risking the health and safety of workers at the workplace.

That was with Andrea Fox as a witness statement. So the CFMEU was even writing to the member for McConnell dictating to her what ought to happen in workplace health and safety. Whistleblowers were also contacting, through the public and the media, the member for McConnell and no action—no apparent action—seemed to take place. In the same letter the CFMEU threatened to not

engage with a public servant, the then director of construction and compliance of field services, Daryl Brooker, after he refused to send inspectors at the CFMEU request. Brooker went on secondment—interesting, Mr Speaker—and was replaced by guess who? Helen Burgess!

Again, this is another allegation ignored by the member for McConnell when she was the industrial relations minister in the former Labor government for almost a decade. I am eager to hear from the member for McConnell, if she is summoned before the CFMEU commission of inquiry, about her role in the appointment of her mate and former QCU colleague Helen Burgess. I think Queenslanders would expect lots of answers from the member for McConnell on the role she played—or did not play—for 10 years.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go back to opposition members for the next question.

Mr KING: Mr Ferris, is the department providing any industrial advice to the minister or the relevant department about any general protections claims in relation to the commission of inquiry?

Mr Ferris: I will take some advice, if that is okay. I will refer that question to the Deputy Director-General of the Office of Industrial Relations, Ms Megan Barry.

Ms Barry: We have not been asked to provide any advice of that nature.

Mr KING: Can you clarify why no advice was sought after the Australian Lawyers Alliance raised serious conflict-of-interest issues with Mr Ferguson fulfilling his role?

Mr SPEAKER: That is directed to?

Mr KING: I will go back to Mr Ferris, if he can answer it.

Mr Ferris: My apologies. Can I clarify that question, because I think it might cut across multiple issues?

Mr SPEAKER: Can you repeat or clarify the question, please, member for Kurwongbah?

Mr KING: I might go to another question and come back to that one. In reference to question on notice No. 547—which I will table—the response says—

In relation to the appointment of Mr Ferguson AM, there is no conflict.

Can the department detail what advice was sought and provided to the minister in answering this question?

Mr SPEAKER: Do you have that question?

Mr Ferris: I do. If you do not mind, I will just take a moment to review it. Queensland government processes require a declaration of potential and actual conflicts of interest and ensure strict confidentiality requirements during an independent review. Mr Glenn Ferguson AM has agreed to be bound by these requirements and has disclosed his interests and acknowledged his obligations in relation to confidentiality, privacy and conflicts of interest. Members of the current WorkCover Queensland board of directors, including the chairperson, are also subject to WorkCover's board charter and directors duties under the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003.

Ms GRACE: Can I have Mr Pennisi to the table, please?

Mr SPEAKER: I believe this witness cannot be directly questioned. He is not on schedule 7 so he cannot be directly questioned.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, WorkCover's annual report for 2024-25 stated that budgeted premium income from Queensland government controlled entities increased from around \$488 million to \$673 million in 2025—an increase of almost \$185 million, or 38 per cent. What caused that increase when premium rates were frozen for that year?

Mr Ferris: I will call the WorkCover CEO, Mr Michael Pennisi.

Mr Pennisi: I will answer the question at a high level first and then I can go into it in more detail. Premiums are calculated on the basis of a number of things. Firstly, they are calculated on the number of claims that are made in a year—there are various formulas around that and I am happy to go into further detail; that includes common law claims—but also the wages bill. If wages increase because there are new employees brought in, or if there are increases, for example, in CA wages, premiums will go up as a percentage and, therefore, the premium will go up as well. In simple terms, it is the number of claims that are made, wages and some other minor factors.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, can you advise the WorkCover budgeted premium income amount to be paid by Queensland government controlled entities for 2026-27?

Mr Ferris: Would you mind repeating the back end of the question, please?

Ms GRACE: Yes. To clarify, what is the WorkCover budgeted premium income amount to be paid by Queensland government controlled entities for 2026-27—this year?

Mr Ferris: I will just take some advice from my deputy director-general. In 2026-27 the workers compensation regulator will receive \$66.886 million, an increase of \$1.619 million. This includes \$52.902 million from WorkCover Queensland; \$13.153 million from self-insurers; \$0.672 million from the consolidated fund; and \$159,000 from user charges and other revenue.

Ms GRACE: Is that the premium budgeted amount similar to what I quoted from the 2024-25 annual report figure? It seems to be two different figures.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order: the question was asked about 2026-27. He has just answered 2026-27. Of course they are different—that is two years ago. He has answered the question.

Mr SPEAKER: I thought the member was seeking some clarification around the answer.

Ms GRACE: I want to know I am comparing apples with apples. Is it apples with apples, or is it a different figure? Is this the one that appears in the annual report? To clarify, I am assisting Mr Ferris, the acting director-general. Is the figure for this financial year exactly the same—I know the figures will be different but as calculated.

Mr Ferris: I refer the question to the WorkCover CEO, Mr Pennisi.

Mr Pennisi: With the leave of the Deputy Premier, we will seek to get that information by the end of the session today.

Mr BLEIJIE: I think the member for McConnel, who is asking the question, is confused. We will try to sort the confusion out for her and come back to her. We will have to take a bit of time to work out what she is actually trying to ask, but we will do that and we will come back.

Mr SPEAKER: Okay.

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, can I clarify that I am not confused. There is a figure that is quoted in the annual report. I want to know what the similar figure is for 2026-27. There is no confusion. It is pretty clear.

Mr SPEAKER: I think the message has got through. Are you right with that, Acting Director-General? You understand the question and you will come back with that later on?

Mr Ferris: Yes, I understand the question. I think Mr Pennisi will revert by the end of this session with a figure for 2026-27.

Mr SPEAKER: That will be by three o'clock this afternoon and if not you can take it on notice.

Mr Ferris: We will revert with the answer. Mr Pennisi has committed to come back with 2026-27.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to the next question.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, a 38 per cent increase in one year in government premiums during the premium freeze is outlined in the 2024-25 annual report. Can you advise if this is due to a change in the way WorkCover is pricing government risk?

Mr Ferris: I will refer that question to Mr Pennisi, the CEO of WorkCover.

Mr Pennisi: Could I ask the question be repeated, please?

Ms GRACE: I am happy to do so. A 38 per cent increase in one year obviously does not account for—and if I can have some leeway, Mr Speaker—

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Speaker: the member was asked to repeat the question. Now she is changing the question.

Ms GRACE: I am not changing it.

Mr BLEIJIE: Stick to the script.

Mr SPEAKER: Repeat the question, member for McConnel.

Ms GRACE: I will repeat it. A 38 per cent increase in one year in government premiums during a premium freeze is in the 2024-25 annual report. Can you advise if this is due to a change in the way WorkCover is pricing government risk? Just to clarify, wages have not gone up that much and I do not know whether the government increased by 30 per cent.

Mr Pennisi: There has been no change in the calculation of premiums that are charged to government or non-government employers.

Ms GRACE: Mr Pennisi, has WorkCover corresponded with government department—

Mr SPEAKER: The question will have to go through the acting director-general.

Ms GRACE: Sorry. Mr Ferris, has WorkCover corresponded with government department directors-general regarding its risk pricing changes?

Mr Ferris: I will refer that to Mr Pennisi once more.

Mr Pennisi: I may have been unclear. There has been no change in the way that premiums are calculated. It is the same formula that has been in existence for many years.

Ms GRACE: My specific question, Mr Ferris, is with regard to the risk pricing changes. I understand the premium rate may be the same, but 38 per cent is a significant increase—

Mr McDONALD: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Ms GRACE: Can I finish with my question? Can I actually finish the question?

Mr SPEAKER: I will go to the point of order because you addressed your question to Mr Pennisi and not the acting director-general.

Ms GRACE: No, I think I said Mr Ferris.

Mr SPEAKER: What was your point of order?

Mr McDONALD: The point of order was about authentication. Where with regard to the budget papers does this refer to?

Mr SPEAKER: I will hear the rest of the question. I said that right at the beginning of the week. I will hear the question. If you have a point of order after that you can raise your point of order. Member for McConnel, could you repeat your question. You are directing it to the acting director-general?

Ms GRACE: To Mr Ferris, yes. Can WorkCover confirm there has been no risk pricing changes and how do we account for a \$185 million, 38 per cent, increase in premiums for the year 2025?

Mr McDONALD: Point of order: I would ask the member to authenticate that. Where is that in the budget?

Mr SPEAKER: Member for McConnel, can you authenticate that?

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order as well, Mr Speaker: the member for McConnel said an increase in premiums. There has been none. I announced we have frozen it for two years in a row. The question is misleading; it is wrong.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for McConnel, can you authenticate?

Ms GRACE: I can. It is in the annual report, page 76, which we have copies of. We are happy to table it for everyone to have a look at. It is the total amount of the premium income, if you want me to clarify that.

Mr SPEAKER: Hold on until we have a look at this.

Ms GRACE: Obviously the premiums are not \$185 million.

Mr SPEAKER: We will need copies for the acting director-general and Mr Pennisi.

Mr BLEIJIE: You know that when you increase the workforce—

Ms GRACE: A 38 per cent increase? I don't think so.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, we are looking at this document.

Mr BLEIJIE: Frozen.

Mr SPEAKER: No cross table chatter. Acting Director-General, I am going to ask you to respond to the question.

Mr Ferris: Of course. We have had an opportunity to have a look at the document that was tabled. I refer that to the CEO of WorkCover, Mr Pennisi.

Mr SPEAKER: Mr Pennisi, if you could give us a response to that.

Mr Pennisi: Can I confirm that there has been no change to the calculation of premiums. The increase that I have now got in front of me, and I appreciate that, thank you very much, and I am going to have to speak generally because I have not got all of the detail and all of the facts and figures behind it, but the increase in dollar terms is a result of the formula playing out and so it is a multiple. For example, the premium at the headline level absolutely has stayed the same in the past year. Again, the wages bill—I am going to talk generally—for government has increased, as has claims experienced

increased—that is, the number of claims that have been incurred. The way the formula works is it uses an average of the previous three years of claims—so these are people who are injured at work—plus the fourth year of common law claims as well. There is an industry code also. The calculation has not changed. It is applied across exactly as I have just said.

Mr SPEAKER: We will have one more question before we go to government members.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, how many times has the CEO of WorkCover met with the minister in the last 12 months and did he provide any advice in relation to the increase in government controlled entities' premiums and claims management issues?

Mr McDONALD: Point of order: I believe there are two questions in that.

Mr SPEAKER: There was. What was the first question and which question are you going to ask?

Ms GRACE: How many times, Mr Ferris, did the CEO of WorkCover meet with the minister in the last 12 months? Do you want that as one question?

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, that will be fine. We will go to the acting director-general.

Mr Ferris: I will refer the question to Mr Pennisi in a moment, but would note that the minister's—and all ministers'—diaries are made public so that would be published on the appropriate website, and all meetings and those persons that the ministers are meeting with are publicly available. I will refer the question to Mr Pennisi who can talk to the particular question that you have asked.

Mr Pennisi: I am going to do this based on my best recollection if that is okay. So my best recollection is I believe that I have met with the Deputy Premier twice. Perhaps at the most three times.

Mr SPEAKER: We will now go to government members.

Mr McDONALD: The independent Public Service plays a critical role in providing advice, standards and compliance to keep Queenslanders safe. Can the Deputy Premier advise how the Crisafulli government is supporting the wellbeing of Queenslanders by fostering workplaces where fairness and productivity go hand in hand and is he aware of any alternatives in the past?

Mr BLEIJIE: That is a great question because we do believe in fairness and productivity. They do go hand in hand, because we expect workers to be well paid, to go to work and earn a fair day's living and to be safe. The reality was that, on construction sites where the CFMEU was involved, it was not just workplace health and safety officers under the spotlight and harassment of the CFMEU; it was also other workers. Particularly if you were non-union or you were a member of a different union, all were subject to harassment by the CFMEU.

Under the former government, pressure was repeatedly applied from the office of the former minister, the member for McConnel, on behalf of the CFMEU. Evidence has been submitted to the CFMEU inquiry that the former Labor government's tentacles reached deep into the Office of Industrial Relations. On 13 May 2026, Paul Smith, a regional director of WHSQ, said in the royal commission—

It was in the context—he—

Marc Dennett, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland executive director—

would frame it a little bit different, saying there's pressure coming—

Are you ready for this, member for Lockyer?—

from the Minister's Office, you know, as opposed to Helen saying, "The Minister's not happy or the Minister's Office is not happy." I took that as totally the pressure coming from the Minister's Office.

That is direct testimony from Paul Smith, a regional director of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. On 13 May, he said that the member for McConnel, as minister at the time, was not happy or the minister's office was not happy and he took it as pressure coming from the minister's office. There it is in black and white in the commission of inquiry.

Mr Smith responded to a question about whether he thought it was necessary for triaging matters to be raised with the minister's office. He said—

My view is the minister did not. It was an operational decision ... There was no need to involve the minister's office; it was clearly an operational decision.

Deborah Dargan, current operations manager at WHSQ, revealed on 11 March that, when she questioned why certain procedures were being followed, she was told by a manager—

... Well, we've got a Labor government. This is what it is. Either like it or leave.

David Cappelletti told the CFMEU inquiry on 15 April 2026—

Then we raised—

the influence of the CFMEU over Workplace Health and Safety Queensland—

... with our operations managers ... to no avail. There was usually no support there. The answer we usually got was that's what the government of the day wants, so do what it you're told.

Kym Bancroft, a former deputy director-general of OIR, gave evidence contrasting the former government and the current government. On 10 June 2026, she said—

... once there was a change in government, I understand that Jarrod Bleijie made the decision within about a week or two to change the triaging process ...

She then gave further testimony about what it was like under the Labor government, saying—

... and here we are just spinning our wheels for months and months with all this effort and energy for it just to be—just to be pushed down the road.

I dealt with it in a week or two when I became the minister.

Mr McDONALD: Following on from that, the commission of inquiry testimony revealed that contracts had allegedly been threatened to be ripped up for the Toowoomba second range crossing upgrade, with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland staff alleging pressure by the CFMEU. Given the importance of this project to residents of my electorate and across the Darling Downs, can the Deputy Premier outline to the committee how the Crisafulli government is ensuring workplace health and safety officers are empowered to act independently when they attend work sites?

Ms BUSH: Point of order, Speaker: I have let a couple of these go but the preambles on some of the questions are quite long. I seek your ruling on whether they could be simply put.

Mr SPEAKER: It was very long. Member for Lockyer and other members, I encourage you to make your questions more concise in the interests of time. We will go to the Deputy Premier for a response.

Mr BLEIJIE: I know how important the Toowoomba second range crossing is for the member for Lockyer and his constituents and for all our members who serve in that beautiful part of Queensland. I can advise the honourable member that the Wood commission of inquiry heard evidence of the CFMEU seeking to gain a foothold on the Toowoomba second range crossing project by using its alleged regulatory capture of WHSQ and ministerial threats to the project, as alleged in the commission of inquiry. From mid-July 2017 onwards, workplace health and safety inspector visits substantially increased, often daily, and they often attended together with the CFMEU. The volume of regulatory notices issued to the project also increased dramatically from mid-2017.

On 21 July 2017, the CFMEU wrote a letter to the then minister, the member for McConnell, complaining that a PCBU, Nexus, was obstructing CFMEU officials—including Kurt Pauls, who, if the member remembers, was put on the board by the member for McConnell—from entering the Toowoomba second range crossing project on 4 to 5 July 2017. On 22 February 2018, then Labor ministers Grace and Bailey issued a joint statement saying that they were seeking an urgent meeting with senior representatives of Nexus to hear what they planned to do to improve safety on the project. The member for McConnell allegedly—I would not be laughing about this, member for McConnell—

Ms GRACE: Speaker, point of order: I take offence. Please withdraw.

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

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: And direct your comments through the chair.

Mr BLEIJIE: The allegations raised in the commission of inquiry said that the member for McConnell allegedly told Nexus that they had to cooperate with the CFMEU or the government would consider terminating their contract for the project. Witness testimonies were that the member for McConnell quite explicitly linked cooperation with the CFMEU with a direct threat to terminate Nexus' contract. We saw the media reports from that: 'Absolute Dis-Grace'.

Mr SPEAKER: We do not need props. It is the same as in the House.

Mr BLEIJIE: The testimony given by those witnesses—and I will get to their actual statements a little later—was that it was an absolute disgrace. It should not have happened. People need to be able to work on construction projects in Queensland without threats from ministers that if you do not do the bidding of the union movement—in this case, the CFMEU—then your contracts will be terminated. That

is not how the Crisafulli government operates. We want free and fair procurement processes without the fear of having contracts terminated if you do not bend the knee to the CFMEU, like they had to do under the Labor Party.

Dr ROWAN: Further to the answer provided to the member for Lockyer, can the Deputy Premier please advise the committee how the Crisafulli government supports the Office of Industrial Relations to advance workplace health and safety reforms to a higher standard, and is he aware of any alternative approaches that favoured the interests of militant unions?

Mr BLEIJIE: That is a great question. As I have set out today, there has been an absolute culture change at Workplace Health and Safety because culture is driven from the top. It is this government and this minister that is driving the culture change. We have a lot of work to do, member, because it was in such a bad state. We had workplace health and safety inspectors leaving in droves because they did not have the support of the former government. Despite their pleas and their cries for help, no action was given and no action was taken against the CFMEU. I suspect in the not-too-distant future we will have former Labor ministers cry that they were bullied by the CFMEU as well. I do not think Queenslanders are going to believe that, because the government has the power to legislate against that type of activity by the CFMEU. The question is: why didn't they? Why did they legislate to benefit the CFMEU at the same time as collecting cheques from the CFMEU? This is a really important question.

The reforms we have put in place are all about making sure the independence of the Office of Industrial Relations is returned and Workplace Health and Safety is free to undertake its statutory role without any meddling by the government. There is no longer priority given to the demands of the CFMEU. When the CFMEU call about a safety issue, they call the same phone number that everyone else calls because we hung up the bat phone. I did that within a relatively quick period.

This is a complete contrast to what happened between 2015 and 2024. Pressure from the former minister's office was a feature under the previous Labor government. The most egregious interference came when the member for McConnel allegedly threatened to tear up the contracts concerning the Toowoomba second range crossing. Two witnesses, former executives of the contractors who attended a meeting with the member for McConnel and the member for Miller on 23 February 2018, confirmed this at the CFMEU inquiry. On 22 April 2026, Mr Sanchez said—

Yes, before I started the presentation she—

Grace Grace—

said, "Look"—this is in my statement—"We have come to tell you that you need to reach an agreement with CFMEU or otherwise we will cancel your contract." That was her very clear statement.

Mr Blanco went further. He said—

Well, then she—

Grace Grace—

moved to that in case that we did not work with the union, that things could be ugly for us and the contract will be taken from our hands.

Can you believe that? Can you believe that the very person who is alleged to have said that still sits as the shadow industrial relations minister today, refusing to ask me any questions in budget estimates? She has not got the courage to ask me questions about this and the CFMEU. There was not one question from the Labor opposition about the CFMEU.

The biggest issue in OIR at this juncture on this day is the CFMEU commission of inquiry, and they have not asked me a question on the CFMEU inquiry. They have gone to labour hire licensing. They have gone to the annual report of WorkCover. There are no gotchas. It is a really strange strategy from the shadow industrial relations minister, and I think she is avoiding the issue at hand. The issue at hand is the CFMEU and what she knew at the time and what she did not do about it at the time.

Mr KEMPTON: Can the Deputy Premier inform the committee of the importance of a workplace health and safety regulator undertaking its role impartially for the wellbeing of all Queenslanders, and is he aware of allegations of political interference targeting non-union EBA contractors?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member for Cook for his question. Whether it is in his electorate of Cook in Far North Queensland or any of the electorates of the members who sit on this committee, it is important because you have EB negotiations, you have EB agreements put in place, but you also have many workers in Queensland who are not associated with the CFMEU and do not want to be associated with the CFMEU—and, I suspect, a lot more fall into that category of not wanting to be associated with

the CFMEU. I would encourage them for that because of the issues that we have seen borne out in the CFMEU commission of inquiry. That is why we have extended it to December 2027. That is why we have increased the capped funding to \$95 million for the commission of inquiry. That shows how important this commission of inquiry is to Queenslanders. It shows how important this commission of inquiry is to sort out the issues in the work health and safety inspectorate. As I have said, we have come a long way. With the testimony and over 500,000 documents that the commission needs to go through, we owe it to Queenslanders to sort this out.

I have drawn a line in the sand, Mr Speaker. I have said this is the last chance for a government to get this right, so far as it relates to the CFMEU. We want, and we need, the construction industry to be full of new apprentices and new workers in the future. We need women to join the construction industry. Look at the bullying, the misogyny, the misbehaviour and the allegations of threats and violence the CFMEU members perpetrated against women in the construction industry, and then at the same time they are trying to say, 'We want more women in construction.' You are not going to get women in construction particularly if that sort of behaviour continues. That is why we have drawn a line in the sand on these issues.

The commission of inquiry heard allegations of political interference emerge and accusations of collusion between the safety regulator and QBCC. Former minister de Brenni and the QBCC regulator would target, allegedly, non-union EB contractors investigated by Workplace Health and Safety following CFMEU complaints. QBCC officer Graham Easterby alleged regulators were pressured by the QBCC board to target non-union contractors. Guess who was on the board of the QBCC? Jade Ingham. CFMEU member Jade Ingham was on the board, appointed by former minister de Brenni who incidentally is sitting in budget estimates today at the end table there. These allegations had striking similarities to complaints made to me by a non-union EBA subcontractor which I raised in parliament almost three years ago.

In August 2023, I alleged the QBCC were targeting non-union EBA subcontractors after complaints were made by the CFMEU to WHS director Helen Burgess about non-union EBA contractor SEQ Formwork. Guess what? Soon after I raised those allegations, QIRC delivered its judgement confirming to uphold the disciplinary finding against Helen Burgess and SEQ Formwork were interrogated by the QBCC as to whether they were fit and proper to hold a licence. Call that a coincidence? I don't. I raised issues of allegations of political meddling. SEG Formwork, a non-unionised site, all of a sudden gets notified within days by QBCC asking whether they were a fit and proper person to hold their building licence, as far back as August 2023. I said—

Suddenly, three years later, after the matter is finished, the QBCC get involved, and now they are wondering whether this person is fit and proper. The department could not tell me who referred the matter to the QBCC from workplace health and safety. Something is going on in the Office of Industrial Relations. This minister does not support her independent workplace health and safety officers.

That is what I said at the time. That is a quote from me at the time. All of a sudden issues are raised about non-union EBA subcontractor SEQ Formwork and then they get harangued and harassed by the QBCC. Who was on the board of the QBCC? Jade Ingham, appointed by the Labor Party and he was a union official. This disgraceful behaviour will not, and cannot, continue. It will not continue under this government. It should not continue under any government in the future.

I refer to an ABC article on Thursday, 11 June 2026 at 5.23 pm, titled 'Former Labor ministers accused of political interference at Queensland CFMEU inquiry'. It states—

The Commission of Inquiry into the CFMEU has heard allegations that former Labor ministers Mick de Brenni and Grace Grace intervened in operational matters at Queensland's building regulator and Office of Industrial Relations.

It goes on further to state—

'Under pressure' from minister

In his testimony on Wednesday, Mr Easterby suggested the CFMEU wielded influence over the highest levels of the QBCC, including then-commissioner Brett Bassett and the board.

It goes on further to state—

"I was a little dumbfounded," Mr Easterby said, adding that regulators were "meant to be independent".

"It struck me as unusual that the minister—

that one down there—

would actively intervene in operational matters," he said.

He said he had "never experienced that kind of ministerial involvement" during previous roles with Queensland Health and the Australian Federal Police.

That was the disgrace of the Labor Party for 10 years in government where they not only took over the regulator and let the CFMEU do the bidding of the regulator of the Office of Industrial Relations but also this poison continued and grew into the QBCC. It is because they put their people from the CFMEU into these positions—the QBCC and Work Health and Safety Queensland. We, on the other hand, have good people on these boards now that will protect workers and protect both employees and employers, without the political interference and the behaviour that we have seen that has been borne out, laid bare in the commission of inquiry.

Mr SPEAKER: I will go to non-government members, and I go to the member for McConnel.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, is there any chance we have that figure for the 2026 premium updates at all during—

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Speaker. We committed to getting it by the end of the session. That is what I committed to do and we will do that at the end of the session.

Ms GRACE: I am just checking, Speaker, if they were able to obtain that figure.

Mr SPEAKER: They will have it by the end of the session. Do you have another question, member for McConnel?

Ms GRACE: I do, Speaker. Mr Ferris, is the \$947,000 KPMG proactive claims management engagement still operating in WorkCover?

Mr Ferris: I will have to call on and ask Mr Michael Pennisi to answer that question, if I can.

Mr Pennisi: Yes, that is correct. KPMG was engaged to undertake a PCM, or a proactive claims management, program of work. That was a critical piece of work with an important deliverable that was not only going to bring global best practice approaches to claims management at WorkCover but also, importantly, going to transfer knowledge to our staff and to build sustainable internal capability. Importantly again, WorkCover always retained overall accountability for claims decisions. This program has been delivered in a collaborative way with targeted reviews to prioritise claims to identify and address factors, and this work has been underway since November 2025. WorkCover is now transitioning the remaining activities to our internal specialist team.

Ms GRACE: Can I just clarify, Mr Ferris, it is no longer operating at the moment?

Mr Ferris: I will ask Mr Pennisi to provide that clarification.

Mr Pennisi: The work is currently underway. It is being completed and transitioning to WorkCover on or thereabouts 5 August.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, was WorkCover or yourself aware that KPMG in March advertised for the role of senior claims consultant and needed to recruit specialist claims capability after securing the contract?

Mr Ferris: I will refer the question in relation to the advertising of that particular position by KPMG to Mr Pennisi.

Mr Pennisi: KPMG, as I have said—and I will not repeat it, if that is okay—were recruited to bring in global best practice. How they recruited their staff and built their team was a matter for KPMG. We were purchasing a number of things including the methodology upon which they were bringing global best practice to WorkCover Queensland. How KPMG recruited and populated the team was independent of WorkCover.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, if the KPMG engagement has ceased, who is now undertaking the complex claims review work? Are any of these global consultants employed?

Mr Ferris: I will refer that question in relation to the work of KPMG to the WorkCover CEO.

Mr Pennisi: Would you mind restating the question, please?

Ms GRACE: I think you have said the KPMG engagement has ceased.

Mr Pennisi: May I respond?

Ms GRACE: Yes.

Mr Pennisi: That will be ceasing on 5 August.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, I believe this contract was until 31 December. Is the contract being paid out and, if so, at what cost?

Mr Ferris: I will also refer that question to Mr Pennisi to answer in relation to the contract matters you have asked about.

Mr Pennisi: The contract will cease on 5 August, as I have said. The total cost of the engagement will be \$591,100, which is below the original budget of \$947,000.

Ms GRACE: What measurable claims outcomes has WorkCover received for the expenditure to date, and who is now accountable for delivering the remaining benefits?

Mr Ferris: That is also a question for Mr Pennisi in terms of the outcomes of that contract.

Mr Pennisi: I will answer that in three parts. Firstly, what we have now is a definition of the methodology, and that has now been completed as part of the engagement. This part of the engagement focused on designing and establishing a repeatable, data-driven methodology to proactively monitor claims and performance across the portfolio. It also included the development of a structured monitoring framework which was capable of identifying claims at risk of suboptimal outcomes as well as the underlying drivers of those things. This was co-designed with our key stakeholders to ensure it reflected the operational realities of WorkCover and could also be practically rolled out. The outcome of this is the scalable methodology we have now imparted and put within WorkCover.

The second part was validating that. To put that very simply, it is applying the methodology we have now as a result of the work and the knowledge that KPMG brought to bear into our live environment. That has meant we now have targeted claims and support activities across all of our key portfolios of government, private business et cetera. The way it has operated is we have had specialist KPMG advisers working with our people and implementing proactive management review plans on these particular claims to help us help these individuals get back to work, which is obviously what we are all about. At this stage, 250 of those plans have been developed and a high proportion of those have been endorsed and progressed.

The feedback we have received from our frontline team members has been overwhelmingly positive, particularly in relation to the level of support that has been provided in relation to those individual claims. The initiative is also giving us valuable insights into what factors and underlying behavioural and cultural factors we can continue to build upon.

The next and final stage, which we as WorkCover Queensland will now be taking over, is optimising. It is taking all of that work and inculcating it into our business and driving these outcomes in a sustainable way.

Ms GRACE: From that answer, Mr Ferris, it appears that KPMG personnel had access to individual claims or medical or rehabilitation information; is that correct?

Mr Ferris: I will refer that also to Mr Pennisi.

Mr Pennisi: KPMG individuals whom we engaged were required and had access only to our system within WorkCover's confines on our premises, as they were working with our own claims staff. As you would expect with an organisation like WorkCover, we have contractual terms and conditions to ensure all of that information is retained within WorkCover.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, in view of the recently reported KPMG scandal involving the leaking of confidential information received from contracts, what has WorkCover put in place to ensure its systems are secure?

Mr Ferris: I will also pass this question to Mr Pennisi to provide a view.

Mr Pennisi: In terms of the actions that we have taken since some of these issues have come to light, I have written a number of letters to KPMG seeking their attestation to a range of issues, including about maintaining privacy and all of the things that you would expect such as confidentiality of the data that we hold. Again, they hold none of our data. It is all contained within WorkCover Queensland.

I will say it a different way, if I may. There is nothing that leaves our business or our building. Every piece of work is undertaken, as best as I understand, on our claims management system within WorkCover's premises.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, can WorkCover advise one measurable improvement in claims duration, claims cost or return-to-work performance that WorkCover can directly attribute to the KPMG consultancy?

Mr Ferris: Mr Pennisi will be able to provide an answer to that.

Mr Pennisi: This is part of a broader program that we are undertaking at WorkCover, as we are making significant changes across the whole of the WorkCover business. What we have done in the past 12 to 18 months has been to focus on claims when they are in their early stages. That has delivered direct benefits in terms of a reduction in the number of open claims, which is a good thing for our injured workers. As planned and agreed with the board, that was our initial focus.

The second focus area that comes under this particular program of work is the proactive claims management, which are the longer claims that have been within the business for a significant period of time. Having addressed the early claims and made some very significant progress, we have now turned our attention to the longer claims. This particular piece of work under proactive claims management has only been in place for a short period of time as a pilot. As I said, we have 250 of these plans to get our injured workers back to work. Over the next six months we will assess the outcomes of that and then we will make decisions as to how we embed that within the business.

Ms BUSH: My question is to the acting director-general and it goes to the issue of the new proposed construction code. Mr Ferris, I am curious whether the department will be making a submission to the commission of inquiry's proposed draft Queensland building code.

Mr Ferris: I will ask my Deputy Director-General of the Office of the Industrial Relations, Megan Barry, to provide a response in relation to the building code of practice.

Ms Barry: As the committee may well be aware, the commission of inquiry has recently published a draft building code. Organisations have been able to provide submissions to that. We have had discussions with the commission, as we were invited to do so. We await further outcomes from them. I understand those submissions close on the 24th of this month.

Ms BUSH: Will you be making a submission or are you giving it time? Do you have a position on whether you will be making a submission?

Ms Barry: Submissions would need to be made on behalf of government, so that would be a government decision.

Ms GRACE: I have a follow-up question, Mr Ferris, in relation to the KPMG contract. Was the early end time of this contract determined before or after the widely reported scandal involving KPMG?

Mr Ferris: I will ask Mr Pennisi to provide some detail.

Mr Pennisi: The decision to cease or to bring internal the work that KPMG was doing occurred after the issues with KPMG were first raised. I also hasten to add that this was a business decision by the business.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, was the board informed of this and were they aware of the situation around the KPMG contract?

Mr Ferris: I do not have any awareness in relation to advice that may have been provided to the board on the KPMG contract matter, but I am happy to refer it to Mr Pennisi for further advice in relation to that.

Mr Pennisi: We have kept the board apprised of the issues obviously around KPMG and also the correspondence that I have had or sent to KPMG. I am sure that is the case, to the best of my recollection. However, in relation to the decision that the business has taken in relation to this particular piece of work, I cannot 100 per cent say that was a matter that was discussed with the board because it is an operational decision.

Ms GRACE: Acting Director-General, how many labour hire licences have been issued in the 2025-26 financial year?

Mr Ferris: We will have to come back to you by the end of this session, noting that we do not have that much longer left. We will come back with the number of licences that have been issued to labour hire companies. Can you confirm the period?

Ms GRACE: That is for 2025-26. Do we know as yet the licensee numbers for 2026-27? Are renewals starting? You would have the full licences for last year—just to compare.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Speaker: trying to ascertain who is going to apply for a licence in the next 12 months—we are not Nostradamus. We cannot possibly answer that. That is in the future. We do not know who is going to apply for a labour hire licence. It is impossible for us to get the information before the end of the session.

Mr SPEAKER: It is up to you, Deputy Premier, whether you take the question or not.

Mr BLEIJIE: We do not know who is going to apply for a licence in the future, so we could not possibly answer that. It is a ridiculous question.

Ms GRACE: My first question was for 2025-26.

Mr BLEIJIE: We can do 2025-26 but not for the future.

Mr Ferris: The team who are supporting us today are very quick. In terms of labour hire licences that were issued in 2025-26 FY, 489 new licences and 3,248 renewed licences. The team have confirmed that they do not have the detail for 2026-27. My apologies.

Ms GRACE: I was just wondering. That was all. Mr Ferris, given the number of licences issued, what is the budget and has it been increased to meet the regulatory demand for this important service?

Mr Ferris: This was a question that we were going to loop back towards the end of the session today, member. The labour hire licensing compliance unit budget for 2026-27 is \$4.37 million. That is an increase from 2025-26 of \$4.196 million.

Mr BLEIJIE: Wonderful.

Ms GRACE: Sorry, could I have those figures again? They were a bit fast.

Mr Ferris: My apologies. I am happy to repeat those, member. The labour hire licensing compliance unit budget for 2026-27—again, that was a question we agreed we would come back to by the end of the session—is \$4.37 million, I have been advised. That compares to the labour hire licensing compliance unit budget for 2025-26 of \$4.196 million. So \$4.196 million for 2025-26 and an increase to \$4.37 million for 2026-27.

Ms GRACE: Mr Ferris, how many infringement notices or prosecutions were commenced under the labour hire licensing scheme during the 2025-26 financial year and for what issues?

Mr Ferris: Disclosure of confidential information about investigations is something that I cannot do. What I can give you is, for the year 2025-26, five entities were prosecuted, 15 licences were cancelled and eight licences were suspended during that period.

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

Dr ROWAN: I most certainly do, Mr Speaker. Can the Deputy Premier advise whether the government is aware of trade union misconduct that has impacted workers and businesses and what changes the Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government has made to overcome this approach that was prevalent under the former Labor government?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member for Moggill for the question. I would say at the outset, member, this is a two-hour budget estimates that I have gone through unscathed without getting one question from my opponents. I cannot believe it. I had no idea. We are here in budget estimates. It is about ministerial accountability and I have not got one question from my opponents. I cannot understand their strategy or why they even turned up. Anyway, here we are. Thank you for the Dorothy Dixer. It is a great question. I will take the question because, as I said, I do not get them from anyone else.

For a decade we saw the CFMEU run roughshod—I mentioned the CFMEU more than 200 times in parliament. More than 200 times in parliament I mentioned the CFMEU. During an industrial relations bill debate in 2016, the member for McConnel said about me, '... continually broken record talking about one particular union—the CFMEU'. The member for McConnel went on in 2018 to tell the House, 'Every time we sit in this House, the member for Kawana and the Leader of the Opposition come in complaining about the CFMEU.' Often the member for McConnel ridiculed me for bringing these matters to the floor of the parliament. I was just quoting her whingeing about me bringing the matters of the CFMEU to the floor of parliament. Then you go to the commission of inquiry. This is where the rubber hits the road and how disgraceful it was that nothing happened—that over 10 years the CFMEU were not told not to do what they were doing.

Mr Grant Galvin, the former CEO of Master Builders, was in the witness stand. The commissioner said—

I don't want to pry, Mr Galvin, but when you say you're lucky I'm here today, what do you mean by that?

Mr Grant Galvin said—

I had a mental breakdown and attempted to commit suicide.

This is just one of the tragic stories we have heard as a result of the bullying of the CFMEU and inaction by the former Labor government. A direct stakeholder, the CEO of Master Builders at the time, attempted to commit suicide—to kill himself—because of the behaviour of the CFMEU. His cries for help were unanswered by the former Labor government. What did Minister de Brenni and Minister Grace do at the time? They are the questions they need to answer. When these cries for help were mentioned in parliament for 10 years, when people were pleading for help, as ministers of the Crown they sat there and nothing happened.

There was testimony from women who now work in my department. They were crying while on the witness stand during their testimony about the CFMEU. When opposition leader Steven Miles was asked about it he said, 'The Labor Party, we look forward to interrogating those witnesses.' I would say to the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow minister for industrial relations: haven't these women had enough interrogation by the CFMEU? Haven't they been through enough? Don't they need support from government and opposition at this juncture, not more interrogation? Member for Moggill, that was the behaviour of the CFMEU, that was the behaviour of the Labor Party, and it continues to be the behaviour of the Labor Party.

Mr McDONALD: Can the Deputy Premier advise of any action taken to restore leadership standards to the Queensland Work Health and Safety Board, and is he aware of any approaches in the past that lacked the same focus as these standards.

Mr BLEIJIE: The Work Health and Safety Board is important. As the Liberal National government is not owned by the union movement, we do not owe anything to the union movement. We do not rely on their political donations during campaigns, so we do not believe they have an automatic right to be on these boards because of their linkage with the Labor Party. We want employer reps and we want employee reps.

The member for McConnell asked questions about boards today. As I said, I did get rid of Kurt Pauls from the Work Health and Safety Board. The member for McConnell's selection process involved appointing worker representatives who abuse and belittle workers. In September 2023 the member for McConnell appointed removed CFMEU official and recidivist law-breaker Kurt Pauls to the Work Health and Safety Board six months after the Federal Court imposed significant penalties on him for breaching workplace law. He had gone to court, the Federal Court imposed penalties on him for breaking the law, and six months later the member for McConnell put him on the Work Health and Safety Board. That is like putting the fox in charge of the henhouse. That is literally what the member for McConnell did. The last person you would put on a work health and safety board is anyone associated with the CFMEU, particularly someone who had broken the law and contravened federal workplace laws.

The member for McConnell's ministerial office was also cc'd into an abusive email from Kurt Pauls to senior OIR staffer Sarina Wise calling for her resignation. Pauls's email said—

Ms Wise if you are not going to put the safety of Queensland HSR's, workers and the community as a priority the CFMEU ask for your resignation immediately.

Did the member for McConnell or her office protect Sarina Wise? She still works for the department. As abused senior OIR official Sarina Wise put it—

... the emails of Mr Pauls were a normal and acceptable form of communication to the Minister's office from the CFMEU.

The evidence has been clear. Over 10 years the evidence has been laid bare about the CFMEU and their connections to the Labor Party. The fact that the member for McConnell sat idly by and did not protect work health and safety officers, those in the Office of Industrial Relations, shows a complete disregard for those workers.

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, point of order: I take personal offence and ask that the member withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. When I talk to workplace health and safety officers they tell me how offensive it was that the minister, the member for McConnell, did not support them for 10 years.

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, point of order: I take personal offence and ask that the member withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr JAMES: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Delivering workers compensation and rehabilitation services that are fair is important to workers and businesses in my electorate. Will the Deputy Premier inform the committee how the Crisafulli government is addressing workers compensation fraud and the impact this is having on the Queensland scheme?

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, just be conscious that we have a couple of questions to wrap up before we finish at three o'clock.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker; we will get to those. I thank the member for Mulgrave for his important question. Workers compensation is vitally important for businesses and employees. Workers compensation is a framework by which workers, if they are injured, can return to

work as quickly and efficiently as possible so they can keep earning income. It is not designed as a welfare scheme; it is designed as a support mechanism for getting people back to work. That is why it is so important that we go after the fraudsters, and we are. We have put a fraud squad in workers compensation, the regulator, so we are pursuing that.

I can advise the honourable member that two employers were successfully prosecuted and collectively fined \$98,500 for providing false information to WorkCover. We have investigated 97 cases of workers compensation fraud. In 2025-26, 13 defendants were charged with fraud, making a total of 18 fraud prosecutions currently on foot. Fraudulent activity is primarily detected through reports from insurers undertaking claims management.

To ensure Queensland businesses are not wearing the costs of fraud through increased premiums, WorkCover Queensland has made improving fraud detection a priority in its corporate plan and is working collaboratively with the Office of Industrial Relations on potential options for managing fraud. It is not only the fraud issue we are seeing but, as I said, the new leadership at WorkCover has made fraud detection a priority while also freezing premiums.

We have frozen premiums for two consecutive years. Under Labor they were going to go up substantially. We froze them the first year of the Crisafulli government and we froze them the second year of the Crisafulli government because we recognised the cost to business. The workers compensation premium is in a good way, but we have to keep doing everything we can because we have seen a huge increase in psychological claims and we have to act on that. That is why we have the industrial relations review taking place with Glenn Ferguson and former commissioner Black. They are doing a great job at the moment. It is important that, as we are doing this, we help workers out if they are injured while also respecting taxpayers' money.

That is why I was so concerned because, whether you look at workers compensation schemes, WorkCover or the Office of Industrial Relations, I found out that the former Labor government was funding the Queensland Council of Unions' Labour Day march. Taxpayers were literally funding the Labor Party's party on May Day—so they could walk down the street on Labour Day, and taxpayers were funding it. Money that should have been invested in workers compensation and workplace health and safety was being funnelled to a march orchestrated by the QCU for Labor Party members. Queensland taxpayers were paying for the march. Not only that, but during the COVID year the QCU got \$109,918 for a march that never took place. The march did not go ahead, yet the former Labor government forked out \$109,000 for the march. We have seen that it cost Queensland taxpayers \$1.2 million for the Queensland Council of Unions to hold the annual Labour Day march. We do not accept that. We are not going to fund the Labour Day march. We are not going to fund the Labor Party's little party with CFMEU union officials once a year. We have stopped that. That money will obviously be reinvested back into workplace health and safety.

I thank all of the officials from the Office of Industrial Relations. It has been a difficult year and a half at OIR with the CFMEU commission of inquiry. As Minister for Industrial Relations, I am incredibly proud of the entire team we have in OIR across Queensland. I thank everybody for their work and commend the courage of the witnesses who are coming forward to finally be heard. It has taken 10 years, but they finally have a government that is listening to them. The commission of inquiry is important in that regard.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, do you have answers to those questions, please?

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you. I can advise that OIR was made aware of the chair's management of conflict of interest matters on 9 July. I can also advise the total premium income received from Queensland state government controlled entities will be published in the next tabled WorkCover annual report. I would say to the honourable member for McConnel, who asked the question, that next year perhaps she could ask me the question because I did not get a question from her at all.

Ms GRACE: Speaker, point of order—

Mr BLEIJIE: I am finalising the response to that.

Ms GRACE: I am just wondering: is the figure known in relation to 2026-27?

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, as I said, it will be known when the next tabled annual report is released.

Ms GRACE: But, Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: That is the response that the Deputy Premier is giving you.

Ms GRACE: This is the budget for 2026-27. If they know the figure, I think it should be said.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order—

Mr SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier is giving his answer. It is up to him as to what response he gives. Deputy Premier, is that all?

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. That is the two. I thank the committee and I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: We have run out of time.

Mr BLEIJIE: It is a shame the Labor Party did not ask me any questions about the CFMEU.

Ms GRACE: Because we want answers.

Mr SPEAKER: That is it. We have reached three o'clock.

Mr BLEIJIE: I look forward to what the member for McConnell has to say about the CFMEU—maybe in the dock on the stand.

Ms GRACE: Because we want answers, not diatribe and rubbish.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. We have now reached the end of the time allocated for consideration of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of industrial relations. The questions have been answered. Thank you, Deputy Premier, officials and departmental officers. Can I please ask that there is a prompt changeover in witnesses and officials for the examination of estimates for the portfolio area of infrastructure that is about to commence.

The committee will now examine the estimates for the portfolio area of infrastructure. Deputy Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement regarding the infrastructure portfolio area for a period of up to five minutes?

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you. At the start, pursuant to standing orders 262 and 263, may I declare a conflict of interest with respect to the Wave stage 2. It is a declaration that I have made on a number of occasions. It is contained in my publicly available pecuniary interests over many years both in the House and publicly. For the benefit of estimates, if I am asked questions with respect to this matter, I want to again reaffirm that conflict pursuant to standing orders 262 and 263.

Mr Speaker, Queenslanders voted for a government that would get building again in Queensland, and that is exactly what the Crisafulli government is delivering because Queensland is now open for business. After a decade of Labor decline, waning productivity in infrastructure and budget blowouts under the former Labor government, the Crisafulli government is delivering for Queensland through its largest infrastructure program our state has ever seen. We are: investing in the projects that matter; unlocking land for new homes through the Residential Activation Fund; delivering world-class games and legacy infrastructure, including the new Brisbane Stadium; delivering world-class precincts like the Gabba arena; and investing in the roads, transport and community infrastructure Queensland deserves.

The Residential Activation Fund is a prime example of how the Crisafulli government is delivering for Queensland by backing the infrastructure that unlocks new housing and supports growing communities across our state. Round 1 of the \$2 billion Residential Activation Fund is already unlocking more than 98,000 residential lots through our \$1 billion investment, with more than 50 per cent of this funding directed to regional, rural and remote Queensland as we promised. From the Torres Strait to Goondiwindi, we are delivering the infrastructure that councils need to get more homes built where Queenslanders want to live. Unlike the former Labor government, we are working in partnership with councils to deliver the infrastructure that local communities need, not steamrolling them and not playing the political blame games that the former Labor government did.

The overwhelming response to round 2 of RAF demonstrates just how critical this investment is and how supported it is by local governments. We received a record \$3.32 billion worth of funding requests across 209 projects, giving us the confidence to bring forward another \$500 million and double round 2 to a \$1 billion investment. That means more roads, water, sewerage and essential infrastructure to unlock housing sooner and support communities right across Queensland.

We are also delivering an even greater share of this investment to the regions, with a record 56.86 per cent of the remaining \$1 billion allocated to regional, rural and remote Queensland. Unlike the former Labor government, which allowed housing supply to stagnate while demand surged, we are investing where the need is greatest and ensuring all Queensland shares in the benefits of economic growth and finding a place to call home for Queenslanders right across our decentralised state.

I have already announced that the Residential Activation Fund has unlocked more than 116,900 places to call home across Queensland, and there is more to come. As we continue to announce the successful round 2 projects, Queenslanders will see even more evidence that the Crisafulli government is delivering the infrastructure our growing state needs, unlocking the housing, supporting more jobs and building a stronger Queensland for generations to come.

We are working with councils and the property industry to unlock land. Meanwhile, Labor and specifically the Leader of the Opposition continued to demean them as recently as last week, saying—

Just because Jarrod Bleijie gives some tax payer money to his developer mates to pipes into an estate isn't going to get houses built.

That was from the *Cairns Post* on 17 July. Tell that to Mayor 'Tractor' Ferguson from Bulloo shire who I met yesterday about our partnership to unlock 24 new places to call home in South-West Queensland. Tell that to regional and rural Queensland where we are unlocking hundreds and hundreds of parcels of land for people to move to regional and rural Queensland.

After 1,200 days of chaos under the former Labor government, the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games are back on track, with significant progress made in just over 12 months since the Crisafulli government released the 2032 Delivery Plan. Our plan delivers a games for all of Queensland, as well as generational infrastructure and housing well beyond 2032. We are ensuring that momentum continues. This includes finalising designs and procuring construction partners for 2032 and beyond. March 2026 marked a year since we released the 2032 Delivery Plan, which is our blueprint for delivering games infrastructure the right way. This is a games for all Queensland. We are working to deliver a games that Queenslanders will be proud of and ensure all of the state will benefit from a legacy.

In South-East Queensland, we promised to deliver major city-shaping developments to ensure the games are ready for the future, including a 63,000-seat stadium, a new National Aquatic Centre, and new or upgraded venues. There is plenty happening on the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast council offered to fully fund and build an arena, which was the deciding factor in the government choosing to host events like basketball there. It means the Gold Coast has its time to shine and its fair share. When a council offers to do the heavy lifting, they should be rewarded, and that is exactly what we made viable. We will continue to work with the councils as we deliver all of this infrastructure. Whether it is the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast or regional and rural Queensland, this is a government that is getting on with the job. We are delivering, and that is why our infrastructure budget is \$119 billion.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to the opposition for questions. We have been joined by the member for Woodridge and he has the first question.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Speaker. With your indulgence, I want to begin by thanking the staff of the department of state development and associated agencies for the incredible work they do for Queensland and in preparing for this estimates hearing. My first question is to the Chief Executive Officer of the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority, Mr Crooks. When will the project validation report be completed in relation to the National Aquatic Centre, and will it be publicly released on that date?

Mr Crooks: The National Aquatic Centre represents a flagship investment in world-class sporting infrastructure, delivering lasting benefits for athletes and the community and the Queensland aquatic sports legacy as part of the 2032 Delivery Plan. On 25 March the Queensland government released the delivery plan in response to 86 recommendations contained in the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority's 100-day review report.

The 2032 Delivery Plan announced the National Aquatic Centre is to be developed at the site of the existing Centenary Pool at Spring Hill. The centre will feature two aquatic halls: a main competition-grade hall and a training-grade hall, each with large indoor pools to support elite aquatic sports. The venue will make provision to expand to a capacity to host the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games using temporary seating.

The National Aquatic Centre is currently being planned to host the swimming, artistic swimming and diving for the full games program. The Aquatic Centre is also expected to host the water polo finals, with the preliminary rounds being hosted at the Brisbane Aquatic Centre. Beyond the games, the National Aquatic Centre will provide a world-class legacy facility delivering long-term benefits for the aquatic sports community. GIICA has prepared governance, project and procurement documentation for the project, with further refinement expected prior to early contractor involvement stages. As part of the appointment—

Mr DICK: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I know this is the chief executive officer's first estimates but, on relevance, it was a simple question. When will the validation report be completed and what date will it be released?

Mr McDONALD: On the point of order, Mr Speaker, the CEO is being very fulsome in his answer. He is answering the question directly.

Mr SPEAKER: You are giving a lot of context. You did hear the question, so could you provide those details?

Mr Crooks: The question was on the PVR. We are in the middle of a PVR process. That is somewhat flexible in dates depending on how we progress because we have two funders we have to satisfy: the Commonwealth and the state. We are progressing through that reasonably well. There are timelines in those PVR processes that state and Commonwealth want, and the completion of the PVR will depend on their satisfaction and what we do. I expect it will take most of this year to do that. I would hope it would take less, but it is not in my purview to manage the approval of the Commonwealth.

Mr DICK: Mr Crooks, the member for Kurwongbah will table media reports from the *Australian* newspaper and the *Courier-Mail* of 29 May this year which reported that the authority had ordered architects to rework the National Aquatic Centre project to ensure it came in on budget. The Deputy Premier was quoted in both articles as saying—

So GIIICA went back to them and said you've got to do it within budget.

Mr Crooks, what is the budget for the National Aquatic Centre?

Mr Crooks: The budget sits within the overall \$7.1 billion program for the 17 new and improved venues for the games. I am not going to comment on what was reported in the press. I expect designers and our contractors to live within our budgets and that is what they are doing.

Mr DICK: There is not a discrete budget for the National Aquatic Centre out of the \$7.1 billion?

Mr Crooks: I would make the point that we are in the middle of a PVR process. At the end of that PVR process we will have an agreed budget with the Commonwealth and the state for those elements. I will not predict how that sits at the moment because we are in the middle of a PVR process. I would also point out that in parallel we are in the middle of an ECI contractor selection process, so discussions about what a budget could be could actually impede competition between those two parties and value for money for us. I do not have a habit of talking about budgets at the moment because pretty well everything could impact on how people price.

Mr DICK: Mr Crooks, the *Australian Financial Review* today reports that architecture firm ARM has been tasked with reducing the scope of the National Aquatic Centre. Just to be clear, the scope of the National Aquatic Centre as set out in the games delivery plan is an 8,000-permanent-seat stadium with a 25,000-seat capacity in games mode; that remains unchanged. That is correct, isn't it?

Mr Crooks: The scope as identified in the delivery plan remains unchanged. I would point out that we are going through a PVR process; there are always value compositions when going through this. I have done this for 40 years for hospital programs and others. You always have a conversation about what is value for money. My overriding driver for this is meeting the obligations of the games and, on top of that, meeting the \$7.1 billion budget and delivering 17 new and improved venues. That is my priority. That is what we are delivering on. The process for the NAC sits within that.

Mr DICK: Just to clarify, there is no change to the scope?

Mr Crooks: No.

Mr DICK: I have a further question to Mr Crooks. Earlier this week the Olympics minister, Tim Mander, indicated venues could be expanded to generate more ticket sales. Can you confirm if the National Aquatic Centre is being reduced in size, including a reduction in seating, or otherwise developed to fit within budget or is being expanded in size to increase ticket sale opportunities?

Mr Crooks: I have not really taken part in this discussion because it is not part of my portfolio. The discussion around ticket sales is not something that I am directly involved in; that is Minister Mander's department. We do not have that role. I cannot really comment on potential increases in revenue or reductions in revenue because it is not part of my precinct.

Mr DICK: You have had no contact from Minister Mander's department, no communications from them, in relation to any change to the National Aquatic Centre or any other venue to increase size for ticket sales?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: the witness has answered the question. He has clearly referenced that it relates to another portfolio area. There will be an opportunity over the next two weeks to put those questions to the relevant minister at the time, particularly in relation to ticket sales.

Mr SPEAKER: This question was a little different, so I will allow Mr Crooks to answer.

Mr Crooks: Can you repeat the question, please?

Mr DICK: You have had no contact—you have not received any communications or any request for information from Minister Mander's department to increase the size of any venue to enable more ticket sales?

Mr Crooks: I think this probably relates to temporary capacities. There are also temporary venues that reflect on this. I can confirm that I have had no conversations around revenue with Minister Mander's department. As I say, it is not my part of my role.

Mr DICK: Mr Crooks, has any budget allocation been set aside or any funding envelope identified for the 17,000 temporary seats to be included in the National Aquatic Centre?

Mr Crooks: I do not think the number of 17,000—unless you are adding the 8,000 you referred to beforehand. We have a role to deliver the venue within the \$7.1 billion and that is what we are doing.

Mr DICK: Deputy Premier, will all swimmers and support staff training at the National Aquatic Centre be allocated car parking or will they be expected to take public transport to access and use the National Aquatic Centre?

Mr BLEIJIE: Luckily, this government is delivering all of it. We are delivering the National Aquatic Centre—and I still do not understand whether you support it or not, because you said it was a 'vanity project ... of the ... Deputy Premier'. If you talk to any Olympian or Paralympian, particularly from Queensland, who has won gold for Queensland, I do not think they would think this is a vanity project. In fact, I have seen nothing but support from the swimming community—both Olympians and Paralympians, particularly the female Olympians and Paralympians I have spoken to. We are designing a master plan for Victoria Park which will include our new 63,000-seat stadium at Victoria Park, which is Brisbane Stadium. In the master plan, across the road there is the National Aquatic Centre, which I am surprised the member is asking about because it was not in their plan. They were not going to deliver a national aquatic centre; they were going to put a drop-in pool at an arena above a rail yard in Roma Street that every engineer said was not possible. That was their plan. I do not know whether they actually back the National Aquatic Centre.

If the member wants to talk about parking, it is in the context of the whole master plan because you cannot look in isolation at one venue without the rest. There is the Brisbane Stadium. Across the road is the National Aquatic Centre and then just down from there we have the famous Ekka, the RNA showgrounds. That is the Victoria Park master plan. When we look at connectivity and buses and trains, we look at that whole master plan.

As the government advised, honourable member, we are about to release the draft master plan where Queenslanders can have a say on the draft master plan. It is a master plan that will show what is needed before 2032, in games mode and then in legacy mode post 2032, and of course in that is connectivity. Connectivity is absolutely vital, whether it is trains, buses or road transportation. As the CEO of GILCA has said, they are going through the PVR process at the moment. We are going through the design, and watch this space—great announcements coming. We are working very well with the Labor federal administration. Catherine King and I have signed the deal. Many people said that we would not be able to get a deal with the federal government after our election but we did, and guess what? The federal Labor government are funding half of the National Aquatic Centre. We are on track with the draft master plan to be released. The master plan talks about connectivity. Because I have seen some early designs, it also talks about connectivity in that you will be able to walk out right in front of the new Brisbane Stadium that the Crisafulli government is delivering—

Mr DICK: Just on a point of order, please, Mr Speaker, on relevance. It was about car parking at the National Aquatic Centre, so if the Deputy Premier could address whether that connectivity plan or the master plan contains car parking please.

Mr SPEAKER: So if you could—

Mr BLEIJIE: That is interesting, Mr Speaker, because the master plan is about connectivity. I am surprised the Labor Party are asking about more car parking because they have been an administration that wants to get people out of cars and car parks and on to public transport. Luckily, people can now catch the Crisafulli government's permanent, locked in 50-cent fares public transport like I did this

morning when I went on the Mango Hill line on the train. So it involves everything. It involves car parking and accessibility. Accessibility is in the master plan, so not only car parking but also buses and trains at the Exhibition station that we have recently opened. The draft master plan is a whole concept, so I am very surprised that the Labor Party are asking us to now concrete and bitumen car parks when they have been a political party that has advocated for public transport and for fewer car parks, but we will provide the car parks needed, we will provide the buses needed and we will provide the trains needed.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, guess what we will also provide? A National Aquatic Centre that they can actually train from, because if the Labor Party had been re-elected they were not going to build a National Aquatic Centre. So he is not concerned about the actual swimming pool or what they train in; he is concerned about where they park!

Mr DICK: Point of order, Mr Speaker—

Mr BLEIJIE: What is their position on the National Aquatic Centre? Do they support it or don't they support it?

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Deputy Premier. I think it is answered.

Mr DICK:—proper titles and relevance. I think we are close to five minutes on that answer. If I could put another question?

Mr SPEAKER: I just said it is answered.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Speaker: a minister replying does not, as I understand it, have a time and I was very relevant to the master plan and connectivity.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, that is what I said. It has been answered.

Mr BLEIJIE: So I am happy to answer another one if you have the courage to ask it.

Mr DICK: Thanks, Mr Speaker, and on a point of order in respect of personal reflections and language that is unbecoming and offensive under standing order 234, I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Do you have another question, member for Woodridge?

Mr DICK: Thank you. Mr Ferris, page 2 of the department Service Delivery Statements states that \$693.4 million has been allocated over five years to deliver the Redland Whitewater Centre and commence delivery of the Brisbane Stadium and the National Aquatic Centre. Mr Ferris, from the total of \$693 million, what is the budgeted amount allocated for the construction of the Redland Whitewater Centre over five years? I am sorry: the Deputy Premier said something. I did not quite catch that.

Mr BLEIJIE: It was not to you. It is not always about you, mate.

Mr SPEAKER: We are not going to have across-the-chamber sparring, thank you.

Mr DICK: Thank you. I thought he was seeking to answer. I am sorry.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am allowed to talk to my chief of staff, aren't I?

Mr SPEAKER: You are allowed to talk to your chief of staff. I call the acting director-general?

Mr Ferris: I just sought some advice on that. The \$693 million that is in the SDS relates to a range of venues and there is no allocation specific to the whitewater-rafting venue that you have referred to. I would say that projects are still in design and procurement and we want to ensure there is value for money in these processes. The government has been transparent around the venues budget and the venues to be delivered within that and that \$693 million is broader than the venue that you have referred to.

Mr SPEAKER: You have another question, member for Woodridge?

Mr DICK: Acting Director-General, do you intend to publish an amended service delivery statement that actually states that—that the \$693.4 million relates to all venues? As it reads, it says—

... five years to deliver the Redland Whitewater Centre and commence delivery of the Brisbane Stadium and National Aquatic Centre. ...

Will you publish a new and amended SDS to reflect what you say is the truth?

Mr SPEAKER: That is a very long question, member for Woodridge.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I just wanted to give some fairness to the witness.

Mr Ferris: There will be no revised SDS that will be published. The approved venues include Redlands and other approved venues within that.

Mr SPEAKER: Next question, member for Woodridge.

Mr DICK: Mr Crooks, the Deputy Premier stated at a media conference on 27 February 2026 that the cost of games venues would be released when contracts are issued. Mr Crooks, how many contracts for the construction of games venues have been issued?

Mr Crooks: It depends on what you define as 'construction'. As you are aware, we have let multiple contracts for earthworks and early engagement on the Victoria Park site. That includes areas such as archaeological investigations and geotech. We have also done piling and we are going back to do some more piling. So if you count them into construction, there have been a number. The major contract that we have let to date, which was announced recently, is the earthworks and the initial earthworks for the stadium, and that has been appointed to BMD, which are a proud Queensland company. That is only recent. The other contracts are either all in tender or in the prephase before that.

Mr DICK: Mr Crooks, I table leaked Games Leadership Group minutes that state on page 6 that the Rockhampton Flatwater Facility options assessment would be completed by the end of March 2026. It is correct that the options assessment has now been completed?

Mr SPEAKER: Were you looking to table something? You cannot table something, member.

Mr DICK: I apologise to you, Mr Speaker; the member for Kurwongbah will table those documents. Thank you.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, and we will get one over to Mr Crooks.

Mr Crooks: Through the Queensland government's 2032 Delivery Plan, the Rockhampton Flatwater Facility will be upgraded to be available to host flatwater events during the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. While the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority's 100-day review report recommended moving the rowing and flatwater canoeing events to Sydney to host the event, a Rockhampton flatwater rowing course on the Fitzroy River will provide a long-term benefit to regional Queensland. The existing venue has hosted regattas including the state titles and has often been used as a training venue for both the Australian men's and women's Olympic rowing teams and several international teams. I would also note that I think the Queensland schools regatta is there in September. The proposed upgrades to the Rockhampton Flatwater Facility are included in the \$7.1 billion venues program. Early technical works occurred throughout late 2025 and GIICA are progressing a project validation report to start an investment decision from the Queensland and Australian governments. I am not party to the minutes that you talked about because I do not sit on it, so I cannot comment about what was in there. All I can say is the project validation report—

Mr DICK: Just a point of order, Mr Speaker, on relevance. I am asking whether the options assessment has been completed. That is the only question I asked.

Mr Crooks: I make the point that we are going through a PVR process. The PVR process has some time to go. Some of that is options, some of that is technical and other parts are ensuring all of the venues are ready for the games.

Mr DICK: So it has not been—

Mr SPEAKER: No, we are going over here now. I will go to government members, starting with the member for Mulgrave.

Mr JAMES: Deputy Premier, with the announcement of architects to design the upgraded Barlow Park Stadium near my electorate and that works will begin after this year's footy season finishes, can the Deputy Premier advise the committee on the progress of GIICA and explain how this budget supports the delivery of this plan?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member for Mulgrave for the question and for his advocacy as one of the Far North Queensland advocates for the Barlow Park Stadium upgrade near his electorate. It is a fantastic facility. We are getting on with the job and delivering for the people of Far North Queensland.

I want to congratulate all of the team in the department of infrastructure, particularly GIICA, for the amazing work they have done. We inherited a real basket case in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. We inherited a so-called plan from the Labor government. No-one knew where the stadium was going to be. There was going to be a \$2.25 billion temporary facility upgrade at QSAC, which we

never supported. They did not support a national aquatic centre—they did not even come up with a national aquatic centre. They were going to do a drop-in pool at an arena that sat over a rail station when no-one had asked the engineers whether it was actually impossible. It turns out it was not—that is why we are not doing it over Roma Street railway station.

We are getting on with the job. GIIICA has taken possession of Victoria Park. As Mr Crooks said, the early works have commenced—the archaeological reports, the assessments they have been doing. Aecom has been appointed as the delivery partner. Cox Architecture and Hassell with Japan's Azusa Sekkei as the principal architects at the Brisbane Stadium have been appointed. Demolition work has been completed for the Logan Indoor Sports Centre. It was great to join the Labor Logan mayor and the Labor federal Treasurer. We knocked down the old PCYC. The Crisafulli LNP government will be delivering a new indoor centre at Logan, just as we are delivering for Far North Queensland with the Barlow Park upgrade. That is our delivery plan.

Incidentally, before the estimates hearing I noticed that the member for Woodridge, who is here today, did a video. He videoed himself crossing the road, which I think is probably a bit unsafe—filming yourself crossing the road and not looking at the traffic—but that is a matter for him.

Mr DICK: Point of order: the language is unbecoming and offensive. They are the words of standing order 234. I take personal offence and ask the member to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: You didn't walk across the road?

Mr DICK: No, what the honourable member was saying was inappropriate.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask that you withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. A video was made, with the honourable member walking across the road filming himself, and he was asking Queenslanders what he should be asking me—

Mr DICK: On a point of order: those words are offensive. I was not filming myself and I ask the honourable member to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: Someone was filming him?

Mr SPEAKER: The member has asked—

Mr BLEIJIE: Okay, I withdraw. Anyway, the member put a video up and he is in the video—

Mr de BRENNI: Point of order, Speaker: relevance. The member asked a question about Barlow Park. I do not see how this response is in any way relevant to that question.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order: the Deputy Premier is giving context to the question as asked. I ask that he be permitted to continue his response because of the context he has given.

Mr SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier knows the question.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you. It was a question about the delivery plan, the Olympics—getting the games back on track—the Paralympics, GIIICA. As I say, the member for Woodridge did a video. He was asking Queenslanders what he should ask me today. I had a look at the social media account and saw that Queenslanders did put some suggestions for questions that they want him to ask, but I do not think it was the response he anticipated. Warren Leigh said, 'Does the CFMEU have too much control of the Queensland Labor Party?' Lewis Perkins asked the member for Woodridge for all the details of the CFMEU corruption while Labor was in government and to list all on the social media page—

Mr DICK: Point of order, Speaker: relevance. The CFMEU is not relevant to this hearing.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order—

Mr SPEAKER: Do you have a point of order?

Mr BLEIJIE: The point of order is: the member for Woodridge was asking what questions he ought to ask me—he was outsourcing his responsibilities—and this is what Queenslanders were saying for him to ask. These are direct answers to what he asked Queenslanders to tell him.

Mr SPEAKER: Are you talking about delivery?

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, indeed. Aaron McAdie asked why Labor try to look like they care about people in opposition but worked against the people while in power? These are all very relevant questions that the member for Woodridge should be answering for those people. It did not have the effect the member for Woodridge anticipated, but we are getting on with the job of delivering the games. We are delivering the venues, just like we promised.

Dr ROWAN: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier update the committee as to the progress the Crisafulli LNP state government is making on the once-in-a-generation opportunity for the Gabba entertainment and housing precinct, and is he aware of any previous approaches to that precinct?

Mr McDONALD: Point of order: I ask that the question be heard in silence. The members opposite are making a lot of noise.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a fair bit of chatter. If you could keep it down, it would be much appreciated. I trust you heard the question over all of that, Deputy Premier?

Mr BLEIJIE: Barely, Mr Speaker. I got glimpses of it. If I had the time I would ask for it to be repeated, but I have a lot to say about the Labor Party and the member for Woodridge. I thank the member for the question. It is a great question because the former Labor government's plan for the Gabba entertainment precinct had two or three different locations—my memory might be wrong; definitely two locations—for what they were going to do for the arena. We talked to engineers, we talked to industry, and they said it is not possible to build that sort of arena for that cost over the top of the rail at Roma. We worked a deal with the federal government. We said we would get private sector investment into the arena, we will knock down the Gabba after the 2032 games, and we will build the arena.

It is progressing well. We are out to market for the Gabba entertainment and housing precinct. We have two proponents shortlisted for that, which is exciting. We have Capella Capital, Lendlease Construction, Lendlease Development, AEG and Legends Global. The other shortlist consortium is Gather Brisbane, consisting of Plenary Group, Live Nation and Oak View Group. There is real interest to develop this Gabba entertainment precinct, which will be a 17,000-seat indoor entertainment and sports arena at the site of the Gabba stadium. People may have seen in the last couple of days the sheds that were used for the Crisafulli government's Cross River Rail that we are delivering. That has already come down. We are well progressed to do some early works and site preparation for the Gabba arena once we announce the successful proponent later in the year.

Mr KEMPTON: Given the former Labor government's lack of investment in housing supply, can the Deputy Premier outline how the doubling of the Residential Activation Fund to \$1 billion in the latest budget has helped unlock new housing opportunities in regional and remote communities, particularly in my wonderful electorate of Cook?

Ms BUSH: Point of order: I wonder if there is imputation in the way the question was framed. I ask that he re-put it.

Mr SPEAKER: I said earlier that I did not want statements. It is up to the Deputy Premier. He does the politics; we ask the questions. I will ask you to rephrase the question, member for Cook, without being argumentative.

Mr KEMPTON: Can the Deputy Premier outline how the doubling of the Residential Activation Fund to \$1 billion in the latest budget has helped to unlock new housing opportunities in regional and remote communities, particularly in my wonderful electorate of Cook?

Mr BLEIJIE: It is a wonderful electorate. Just like I visited Far North Queensland with the member for Mulgrave and Barron River when we talked about Barlow Park and turned the sod with your council for the Residential Activation Fund in round 1, it is exciting. This Residential Activation Fund is about all of Queensland. It is a \$2 billion infrastructure fund. Labor left us with a \$2.2 billion trunk infrastructure black hole. Housing lot approvals fell by 29 per cent, there was record low vacancy rates and the social housing waiting list jumped by 77 per cent. Labor's answer now, member for Cook, is to have another little red booklet talking about how bad they were in government and to have another roundtable. Here is one we prepared earlier, member for Cook! It is a bad document. The only positives in this book are in the last 18 months. It is actually a record of how bad it was under the Labor government. You would believe it. The member for Woodridge was the treasurer and he was the planning minister. Maybe the member for Woodridge should accept some responsibility for that.

With respect to the round 1, we have unlocked 3,190 homes across Far North Queensland across 21 projects including to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils such as Aurukun shire, Northern Peninsula and the Torres Shire Council—all in the member for Cook's electorate. I was recently in Mareeba to turn the sod on the council sewer pump station and rising main. I am proud to announce today \$4.5 million for the Ray Road residential subdivision in Mareeba in the member's electorate that will unlock more than 60 new places to call home. This is now more than 2,446 homes unlocked through RAF in the member's electorate of Cook, a \$91.25 million investment across rounds 1 and 2 for 13 projects. We keep delivering, not only in the member for Cook's electorate but right across the state.

Mr JAMES: Can the Deputy Premier update how the Crisafulli government's plan to unlock more housing supply through the investment in trunk infrastructure in rounds 1 and 2 of the RAF differs from previous approaches?

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, member for Mulgrave. It is a great question and you are a great advocate. Whether it is Barlow Park Residential Activation Fund round 1 or round 2, you know the housing crisis is real. We inherited a housing crisis from the Labor government and we are doing everything we can. We are turning and pulling every lever possible in the state government and, dare I say it, doing deals with the federal Labor government to also fix the housing crisis that we inherited from their state Labor comrades. The federal Labor government—the Albanese government—do see what Queensland is doing in this space: our award-winning Residential Activation Fund unlocking hundreds of thousands of blocks of land right across the state. RAF has always been about the infrastructure. You can have a plan for a house, but unless you have sewerage, stormwater, electrical infrastructure you cannot unlock the land and you cannot build a house. That is why the Residential Activation Fund is so important, because it is what goes under the ground before the house gets built, that is needed. That is why it is so important.

I was recently in Atherton, within the member's new boundaries, in the new electorate, to turn the sod on the Peakes Gully trunk sewer main—part of three projects for Atherton, unlocking 450 homes with \$1.54 million for the Tablelands council. I am proud to announce, for the honourable member for Mulgrave today, \$5 million for the Cassowary Coast Regional Council's Coquette Point water main extension near the member's electorate to unlock more than 30 new places. I was pleased to join Mayor Teresa Millwood at a recent sod turn in Innisfail where the council benefited from almost \$8 million in round 1 to unlock more than 115 homes.

I am also pleased to announce that in round 2 a record of 56.86 per cent of funding is going to regional Queensland—an average of 53.86 over both round 1 and round 2. As a former councillor and mayor you will be happy to know that in round 2 of the \$1 billion, \$762 million is going to local government. This equates to \$1.54 billion for 103 local government projects across round 1 and 2. As the Gold Coast acting mayor Mark Hamill said, this is the most significant amount of state funding the Gold Coast has received for critical city infrastructure in decades. Logan mayor Jon Raven wears Labor red. Jon Raven said, 'We love the LNP Queensland government.' How is that, member for Woodridge? Do you want to interject and take personal offence at that? Mayor Raven loves the LNP Crisafulli government because we are delivering.

Mr DICK: Just on a—

Mr BLEIJIE: Here he goes taking offence. I would take offence too if Labor was endorsing our policies.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You have a point of order, member for Woodridge?

Mr DICK: I know the Deputy Premier likes to be flamboyant, but those words used at the end were personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

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

Mr BLEIJIE: Can I confirm with you, Mr Speaker, I said Logan mayor Jon Raven said, 'We love the LNP Queensland government.' Is that what the member takes offence to?

Mr SPEAKER: No. You did ad lib a little after that.

Mr BLEIJIE: Did I?

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, you did.

Mr BLEIJIE: I will keep that part because that is good and I withdraw the second part.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to member for Lockyer.

Mr McDONALD: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Given the announcement of the recent 2026-27 budget and the doubling of the next round of the Residential Activation Fund, can the Deputy Premier update the committee on what the fast-tracking of funding the trunk infrastructure will mean for Queensland, including my electorate of Lockyer?

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, member for Lockyer, and thank you for joining me the other day for a significant announcement in Toowoomba and then after that in your electorate as well, which I will get to in a moment. The Residential Activation Fund is a game changer. That is why the federal government no doubt have essentially copied our Residential Activation Fund but called it something different. They

have invested \$2 billion across the country, which hopefully we will get a bit of. We also have the Infrastructure Activation Fund with the federal government, which is a \$2.4 billion deal. The federal government are now investing in Queensland because they are actually seeing us unlocking the land and they love the Residential Activation Fund.

In fact, it is not just LNP people who love the Residential Activation Fund, it is Labor Party people too. Everyone is loving it other than the opposition in Queensland. I don't know why. It is unlocking land and it is building trunk infrastructure they failed to deliver. They could just get on board, support it like every other Labor person in the state is doing. Labor mayors are endorsing it. Labor mayors are attending sod turns with me. Labor mayors are cutting ribbons with me. The Labor Prime Minister is endorsing it through their equivalent residential activation fund. Labor-love all around for the Crisafulli government's Residential Activation Fund.

I recently joined the member for Lockyer in his electorate. I did say earlier in my opening statement that I was quite ashamed of a recent comment from the opposition leader: 'this is just money for developer mates'. This is local governments and the private sector delivering what the Labor Party in government failed to. The concern I have is the Labor Party opposition have been whingeing about the Residential Activation Fund and they demean the property industry and property developers yet every time I turn up at an after-five event for the Property Council they are happy to be there drinking with the property developers in the state. It is odd to me. On one hand they whinge about the property sector and demean the developers and yet they are happy to get on the drink with them after five at functions, particularly at the Christmas functions. It is hypocrisy that the Labor Party in Queensland are attacking the property industry and then accepting invitations to attend friendly sort of parties with the property sector. The Labor Party in Queensland are attacking the Residential Activation Fund—attacking the very policy that unlocks land across Queensland—and yet are happy to go and drink with the property sector at the after-five events. I think it is a real shame where we have got to in politics in Queensland where the opposition are prioritising drinking rather than delivering land. What we are prioritising is providing drinking water and stormwater.

In the member's area we have unlocked more than 51,150 lots for new homes in SEQ in round 1, representing \$379 million, opening up opportunities for young people like Taylor who I met, a nurse and single mum, who is looking to buy her first home. The member's electorate was successful with three projects in round 1: \$11.5 million for the Somerset Regional Council; \$9.3 million for a landowner to unlock more than 1,800 homes in Fernvale; and \$2 million for the Lake View Estate in Gatton to unlock more than 350 homes.

I was pleased to be in the Darling Downs and Lockyer Valley last week with the member where the Toowoomba Regional Council received the largest ever RAF grant of \$145 million to unlock at least 17,000 lots and a landowner in Gatton in the member's electorate receiving almost \$10 million to unlock more than 2,800 homes. Further to my earlier announcement, I can also say the co-contributions by local government and industry amount to almost \$1.5 billion, meaning a total, on top of the \$2 billion Residential Activation Fund, of \$3.5 billion being invested in Queensland for trunk infrastructure under the award-winning program. When I was with the member in Fernvale, the mayor for Somerset Regional Council, Jason Wendt, said this is a fantastic initiative of the state government. I cannot say the mayor of Toowoomba is dead red—you know him very well, I understand, member for Lockyer—but he was just as supportive as all the Labor mayors have been across the state.

It is wonderful to see the bipartisanship between Labor mayors and LNP mayors across the state because they know a good project and a good initiative when they see it and that is what the Residential Activation Fund is all about. All we have from the opposition is demeaning the property sector and whingeing about the Residential Activation Fund. I have unlocked so many blocks of land through the Residential Activation Fund in their Labor electorates they should be thanking the Crisafulli government for unlocking land that they failed to.

Mr SPEAKER: I will go to non-government members for the next questions.

Mr DICK: My question is to Mr Crooks. I just want to clarify evidence you gave earlier to the committee by asking this question: have you or has the authority been asked by government to make reductions in size or scope of any games venues to fit within the games venues budget?

Mr Crooks: Half the venues are in a PVR process so we have a long way to go before we have a discussion about what scope changes possibly could or would be or should not be made. We are in a process. We are meeting the 2032 plan. I have not been asked to reduce any scope by any members of the government at all. It is my job to deliver the games, the \$7.1 billion budget, and that is what I am doing for 17 venues.

Mr DICK: My next question is to the acting director-general. Mr Ferris, have you been asked by government to action any request by assisting any agency of government, including GIICA, to reduce the scope of any games venue to fit within the games venues budget?

Mr Ferris: I can confirm that I have had no such request in relation to venue scopes. I think, as Mr Crooks has answered previously, there is a PVR process underway and Mr Crooks can add further detail in relation to those considerations and the work that he is doing, but there has been no such request to myself in relation to the venues.

Mr DICK: My question is to Mr Crooks in relation to the contract that has been issued to BMD for major site works for Brisbane Stadium at Victoria Park Barrambin. What is the dollar value for the contracted works for that contract that has been issued to BMD?

Mr Crooks: I will confirm the value on that contract.

Mr SPEAKER: There is not a lot of time. We have 10 minutes left so if you can get that in 10 minutes or less, that would be good.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, point of order: it will be, to the best of our endeavours, before the end of the session. I will come back at the end of the session.

Mr DICK: Just to clarify, Mr Crooks: you have the value? The number for that contract is known? I see a public servant nodding at the back.

Mr Crooks: Yes, we have that value.

Mr DICK: I have a question for the acting director-general. Mr Ferris, in this year's capital statement at page 89, budgeted capital expenditure on the 2032 games athletes villages for 2025-26 was \$150 million. Actual expenditure for 2025-26, according to this year's capital statement, was only \$10.4 million. My question is: with only seven per cent of what was actually budgeted for being spent last financial year, what was the reason for this underspend of approximately 93 per cent on the athletes villages?

Mr Ferris: A provision of \$150 million was included in the 2025-26 budget at the early planning stages for the revised village locations immediately following the release of the 2032 Delivery Plan. The provision was made in anticipation of supporting any early design development costs or early works that may have been required in order to maintain program pace at the election of the village proponents. Funding accessed by proponents thus far has supported technical costs relating to the design of and the planning for athlete village requirements above and beyond planned market accommodation product and to commence early heritage remediation works and design development for the Brisbane Showgrounds arena. Over the course of 2025-26, the proposals received from individual proponents are being developed and refined, which has informed updated expenditure forecasts for the villages program to support proponents' commercial frameworks and when the state's support is programmed to accommodate the athlete village requirements.

Expenditure below the \$150 million provision for 2025-26 does not indicate a lack of progress on the villages. The \$150 million was an early estimate, which has been refined as designs and commercial terms progress. The state is providing partial financial support to ensure the villages and associated infrastructure are delivered in time for the games. Other funding is being provided by the private sector.

Mr DICK: My question is to the acting director-general. Mr Ferris, the GIICA 100-day review said, on public-private partnerships, that GIICA acknowledges the Queensland government advice that any such private sector participation will be treated as government debt and, therefore, will not increase the size of the available funding envelope. I am seeking your advice, Acting Director-General. Can you confirm that remains the case?

Mr Ferris: The games venues being delivered by GIICA are fully funded by the state and Commonwealth governments under the \$7.1 billion intergovernmental agreement.

Mr DICK: It was a question I asked of the director-general last year and I have a further question to the acting director-general this year. I am seeking confirmation of the answer that the then director-general gave to estimates last year, which is that it would not increase the size of the available funding envelope, and whether that has changed.

Mr Ferris: I will refer that to the Deputy Director-General for Infrastructure, Ms Leah Kelly.

Ms Kelly: I can confirm, as stated by the acting director-general, that the games venues being delivered by GIICA are fully funded within the \$7.1 billion intergovernmental agreement. The 17 venues are being delivered within that \$7.1 billion, and that is the funding allocated to them.

Mr SPEAKER: Do you have another question, member for Woodridge?

Mr DICK: I do and it relates to the evidence, but I will move on and we will examine that another time. My question is to the acting director-general. Mr Ferris, has the department received advice from local government authorities across Queensland that, because of increased project costs, they are now facing difficulty in delivering projects under round 1 of the Residential Activation Fund?

Mr Ferris: If I may, I might ask the Deputy Director-General for Corporate, Mr Michael McKee, to come to the table to provide some additional information in relation to that particular question.

Mr McKee: So far, we have had a lot of great engagement with our round 1 recipients under the Residential Activation Program. All but two of the 98 projects that we approved this time last year are underway in construction or tender or are otherwise on track. Only two out of 98 have expressed some concern.

Mr DICK: What are those two projects, please, Mr McKee?

Mr McKee: One of the projects is in Moreton Bay council. It is a corridor upgrade and it involves some significant infrastructure agreement negotiations with both TMR and EDQ. The second one is in Carpentaria Shire Council, where Ergon is their provider for essential infrastructure connections. I understand that Ergon has been assisted to help prioritise getting towards Carpentaria in a timely manner.

Mr SPEAKER: We will have the last question from the member for Moggill. Remember, we have to answer that one question before we finish.

Dr ROWAN: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Now that Queenslanders finally have a games plan with a legacy that they can be proud of, can the Deputy Premier provide an update on the progress of procurement and delivery activities for athletes villages, including the housing legacy this will provide Queensland, and is he aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr BLEIJIE: As a South-East Queensland member of parliament, the member for Moggill knows that having a games delivery plan is vitally important, because the confidence of Queenslanders in the Olympic and Paralympic Games proceeding on time and on budget under the previous government was absolutely gone. They were running out of confidence. They did not believe in it anymore. We absolutely back the Olympic and Paralympic Games. More than that, we back the legacy after it. That is why we are building the athletes villages for homes afterwards.

We have had a couple of questions today. I have had one question so far today from the opposition. That is great. Better than the member for McConnell, I had one from the honourable opposition member.

Even with the athletes villages, there was a \$3.5 billion black hole under the former Labor government. They did not budget for it. They just announced it. They announced it on the Hamilton north shore. It was inappropriate. It was not going to happen. We have moved it to the Ekka site, the RNA showgrounds. We have actually put money in the budget now. We have officials for the three Olympic and Paralympic villages, at the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane. As we approach the Ekka, I think there will be some exciting announcements about what will happen with the athletes village. Of course, we will turn them into homes, pre games and post games. It is going to be an exciting opportunity.

We look at the Sunshine Coast and the Maroochydore city centre. The Sunshine Coast is getting an arena that it never had before, a convention and exhibition centre and an athletes village. The Brisbane Showgrounds, located in Bowen Hills, is synonymous with events destinations and will house more than 10,000 athletes and team officials for the Olympics and more than 5,000 for the Paralympics. On the Gold Coast, located in the Royal Pines Resort will be a master planned residential development including a mix of housing types. They are going to get that. There will be other villages such as in Toowoomba with the equestrian events. We have put this all across Queensland so we will be maximising the opportunity right across the state. Not only Brisbane but all across Queensland will benefit from the games.

I have the answer from before. I thank, in the department, all the team in the infrastructure space and GIICA for delivering this. It is a huge infrastructure spend of \$119 billion over the next four years. It is exciting. We are playing catch-up from the previous Labor government with all of their black holes and blundering, but we are getting there. We are really excited about that.

With respect to contract prices for the venues and minor venues, I can advise that it would be prejudicial to the contractual negotiations at the moment with respect to the two consortia fighting it out currently in tender processes for the construction of the Brisbane Stadium, which as you would know is synonymous with the actual early works and earthworks that are happening. We have committed to releasing the figures. The Labor minister, Catherine King, and I have confirmed that we will release the figures. But guess what, member for Woodridge? It is all in the \$7.1 billion. He might not be able to believe it because they did not have a budget for it. They did not put any money in the budget; we are. We are fixing his mess again.

Mr DICK: Point of order, Mr Speaker: I do take personal offence under standing order 234 at the use of those words about me. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, the member has taken personal offence. I ask that you withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. Mr Speaker, my acting director-general wants to correct something.

Mr Ferris: This is in relation to the answer that Mr McKee, the Deputy Director-General for Corporate, gave. I can confirm that we have not had any councils express any concerns around the rising cost of capital. The two projects that Mr McKee outlined were projects delayed due to complex negotiations around contracts and awaiting approvals from Ergon, the service provider. We have not received any issues that have been raised by councils in relation to increasing costs. I wanted to correct that.

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

Proceedings suspended from 4.01 pm to 4.30 pm.



Mr SPEAKER: Welcome back, Deputy Premier and officials. The committee will now examine the estimates for the planning portfolio area. Deputy Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement regarding the planning portfolio area of up to five minutes.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. At the outset, I thank the planning group in the department and also EDQ and the Coordinator-General who join us today. Mr Speaker, at the start, pursuant to standing order 262 and 263, may I declare a conflict of interest with respect to the Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme amendment which is relevant to the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. For the benefit of estimates, if I am asked questions relating to that matter, I again want to reaffirm the conflict pursuant to standing orders 262 and 263 which is contained publicly in the House, publicly in media commentary and also in my pecuniary interest.

The Crisafulli government is getting on with the job of delivering for Queensland. After a decade of decline and plummeting housing supply under the former Labor government, we are taking decisive action to unlock land, fast-track housing, back rural and regional communities and build the essential infrastructure that Queensland needs for the future. We made a commitment to Queenslanders that we would pull every lever available to tackle Labor's housing crisis, and that is exactly what we are doing. The government is also delivering the planning reforms and the land activation that Queensland needs to get more homes built sooner after Labor's inaction helped create the housing crisis.

Since becoming planning minister, I have approved 118 ministerial infrastructure designations, including 22 for social and affordable housing, representing almost 1,400 new homes. We have also introduced a streamlined pathway for social and affordable housing on church and charity owned land with 450 homes already approved under that initiative, helping deliver more housing for vulnerable Queenslanders.

As planning minister, I am also delivering new regional plans with supporting infrastructure plans which cover every corner of the state. The Far North Queensland Regional Plan was recently finalised and we are about to go to public consultation on two new plans shortly. Several other plans are currently in development with relevant local governments. The regional planning program is a major undertaking to deliver 13 new regional plans in four years when the going rate under Labor was one or two in that same period. We have approved eight state facilitated developments that will deliver more than 4,200 homes across Queensland, compared to zero approvals under the former Labor government. These are projects that were stalled for too long and our government has acted decisively to get them moving.

We have also committed to refocussing Economic Development Queensland and its core purpose of unlocking land for housing and economic growth through our nation-leading Land Activation Program. We have already released eight sites with the potential to deliver 5,000 new homes, ensuring surplus government land is put to work for Queenslanders rather than sitting idly by.

Our partnership with the Commonwealth through a \$2.4 billion Infrastructure Activation Fund is another example of governments working to deliver for Queensland. This investment will unlock major priority development areas, including Mount Peter, Southern Thornlands and Waraba, as well as other priority development areas critical for infrastructure, bringing more land to market.

We are also delivering our commitment to restore Port Hinchinbrook as a thriving tourism, commercial and residential precinct, creating new opportunities for investment, jobs and economic growth. Just last week, I approved the Halls Creek Priority Development Area on the Sunshine Coast unlocking the potential of around 12,000 new homes for the next 15 years. It is another example of this government making the decisions we need that were left sitting on the shelf by the former Labor government.

The government is restoring the Office of the Coordinator-General to what it has always intended to be—a driver of economic growth, new investment, major project delivery and job creation, not simply another layer of government bureaucracy. After years of treating the office as a project assessment agency, we are putting it back at the centre of delivering major projects, reducing red tape and ensuring Queensland remains the best place in the nation to invest. Today, under the Crisafulli government, the Coordinator-General is proactively facilitating strategic industries, unlocking major investment opportunities and partnering with proponents to deliver projects that will create jobs and strengthen the Queensland economy. We are streamlining approvals, cutting unnecessary delays and using every tool available to accelerate growth in the space.

Across Queensland, we are backing major resource critical mineral projects that will create thousands of jobs. Our focus on securing more critical minerals and the jobs which flow from them is underpinned by reforms that ensure Queensland has a nation-leading approvals framework. We will continue to reduce the unnecessary red tape, provide greater investment certainty and fast-track the approvals which will create highly skilled jobs, strengthen sovereign capability and cement Queensland's position as a global leader in the critical minerals space. Unlike Labor's failed thought bubble of government-owned fuel stations, we are partnering with the industry to deliver practical solutions that improve resilience and attract investment. Through these initiatives of the Taroom Trough Development Plan, the Accelerating Fuel Infrastructure Program and the Sovereign Industry Development Fund, we are backing the infrastructure needs right across the space.

We have fast-tracked so many projects, it is what delivering looks like. It means removing barriers to investment, restoring confidence in Queensland as a place to do business, fast-tracking projects to create secure, well-paid jobs and building the industries that will power our economy for decades to come. Every planning approval, every parcel of land unlocked and every piece of enabling infrastructure brings us closer to our goal of ensuring more Queenslanders have a place to call home. While the former Labor government was content to let the opportunities stall under layers of bureaucracy, this government is getting on with the job and delivering for a stronger economy. We are delivering the homes, the investment and the economic opportunities that will secure Queensland's future for generations to come.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Deputy Premier. I will go to the opposition for the first question and the member for Woodridge.

Mr DICK: My question is to the Chief Executive Officer of Economic Development Queensland, Mr Simmonds. Mr Simmonds, you gave evidence at last year's estimates hearing that you approached the Deputy Premier's Chief of Staff, Mr Nathan Ruhle, to express your interest in becoming the CEO of Economic Development Queensland. Mr Simmonds, have you approached the Deputy Premier, Mr Ruhle or anyone else in the Crisafulli government to express an interest in becoming the Director-General of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning?

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Speaker. Appointments of directors-general are the responsibility of the Premier and Department of the Premier and Cabinet. If the member for Woodridge wanted that question answered, he should have turned up yesterday and asked the Premier. We are not responsible for the appointment or otherwise of directors-general. It is a matter for the Premier.

Mr SPEAKER: The question was asked of Mr Simmonds and he can respond as he wishes. I call Mr Simmonds.

Mr Simmonds: I am very pleased to be back and looking forward to talking about the great work EDQ is doing. In relation to the direct question, the answer is no.

Mr DICK: Mr Simmonds, has anyone approached you to apply for, or has anyone approached you to offer you the position of director-general?

Mr Simmonds: Again, I am very much looking forward to talking about the great work that EDQ staff are doing over the last 12 months, but the answer to your question is no.

Ms BUSH: Acting Director-General, Mr Ferris, I refer to the government's Far North Queensland Regional Plan. Nowhere in this plan do the words 'climate change' appear, the word 'Aboriginal' appears only in proper names and demographic descriptions, and 'Torres Strait Islander' does not appear in the plan whatsoever. Was the department asked to remove references to climate change or to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Mr Ferris: The Queensland government is committed to deliver new regional plans supported by infrastructure plans across every corner of the state. Most regional plans at this point are out of date and must be reviewed to remain relevant and respond to the challenges across Queensland. The Department of Infrastructure and Planning is delivering an ambitious program to review all 13 statutory regional plans over this term of government, ensuring plans are focused, practical and fit for purpose. The scope of the new regional plans has been refined to prioritise housing supply, economic development and key industries, including agriculture, resources, tourism and construction. Other state interests such as biodiversity are considered in informing new areas for housing supply and economic development. The plans are shorter and more streamlined to aid implementation and improve certainty for applicants.

For the first time, each regional plan will also include a supporting infrastructure plan, strengthening coordination between land use and infrastructure planning and providing greater certainty about the sequencing and delivery of infrastructure. The Far North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan is complete. The Wide Bay-Burnett and North Queensland reviews are nearing public consultation. The South-East Queensland review is well underway. Further work has commenced on the reviews of the Greater Whitsunday, Cape York, North-West Queensland and gulf regional plans. In relation to climate change and Indigenous matters, I will ask my deputy director-general and State Planner, Ms Peta Harwood, to provide some further context around how the plans address and deal with those issues.

Ms Harwood: The Far North Queensland Regional Plan was gazetted on 8 May 2026 and came into effect on 9 May 2026 after a statutory consultation period between 12 November 2025 and 5 January 2026. During this time, we received submissions and made responses in the final plan. The Far North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan includes the following elements: residential land supply in well-located infrastructure supported areas—

Ms BUSH: Point of order, Speaker: we are two minutes into the response. The question was simply: was the department asked to remove references to climate change or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Mr SPEAKER: Could you come to that aspect? I believe the acting director-general directed you to answer that.

Ms Harwood: Sure. I can confirm that all regional Queenslanders are acknowledged in the plan. The government style guide does not require an acknowledgement of country in regional plans. In reference to climate change, as you would be aware through the planning framework, we recognise areas that are subject to storm tide inundation and coastal flooding and areas that are erosion-prone. That is factored into growth areas in regional plans.

Ms BUSH: Acting Director-General, is the response no, the department was not asked to remove the references?

Mr Ferris: I will refer that to Ms Peta Harwood.

Ms Harwood: The regional plan was put out as a draft for public consultation and we responded to submissions. The regional plans are more streamlined. They focus on land use. As I said, all Queenslanders are reflected in the plan, including the Aboriginal councils that form part of the region.

Ms BUSH: Acting Director-General, did any draft of the plan prepared by the department for the minister contain those additional references to climate change or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Mr Ferris: The final Far North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan has been published. Any content that was generated in the lead-up to the finalisation of that plan went through a public consultation process. The final document is a matter for cabinet consideration before its finalisation.

Ms BUSH: In response to that answer about draft versions, is that not information you can provide this committee? Are you stating that it is subject to cabinet-in-confidence?

Mr Ferris: No, I was just highlighting that the final plan was a matter for government consideration in the finalisation of the Far North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan.

Ms BUSH: My question was to the draft versions. Did it contain that language in the draft versions?

Mr SPEAKER: The acting director-general was responding to your question.

Mr Ferris: Multiple drafts of all regional plans evolve and develop over time. As I have said, those documents responded to the comments made through the public consultation process and the final document was a matter for cabinet consideration. The Far North Queensland plan and the regional plan were published post that consideration.

Mr DICK: Could you inform the committee how many rounds of public consultation there were on that document?

Mr SPEAKER: That question was to the acting director-general.

Mr Ferris: I am advised that there was one round of consultation in relation to the Far North Queensland Regional Plan.

Mr DICK: That draft document made no reference to climate change or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, other than the matters set out in the first question?

Mr McDONALD: Point of order, Speaker: that is a statement, not a question.

Mr KEMPTON: It is also repetitive.

Mr SPEAKER: I will take it as a question. He is seeking clarification of the response. I call the acting director-general.

Mr Ferris: I will ask my deputy director-general for planning and State Planner to provide some further information in a moment. I will talk to the Far North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan, which includes a range of elements to ensure orderly planning across the Far North Queensland region.

Mr DICK: Point of order: the only question I am asking is whether that plan contained those terms.

Mr SPEAKER: The acting director-general was responding. You are well aware of the question, are you not?

Mr Ferris: I am well aware of the question. I will ask my deputy director-general to provide some further detail in a moment. I want to give the context around the Far North Queensland plan, if I may. It identifies the regional land supply within the infrastructure supported areas that are required. It identifies potential new PDAs. It identifies sufficient land in the urban footprint to accommodate planned growth. It sets housing targets to align with the Queensland government's goal of a million homes by 2044. It supports economic growth and diversification across the urban and rural parts of the region. It strengthens regional centres, precincts and priority sectors as focal points for jobs and investment. Regional plans are varied to ensure proper and orderly planning and to inform local governments—

Mr DICK: Point of order, Speaker: I am aware of those matters. I read the plan. My question was whether the draft plan in the first consultation phase contained those terms. It is a simple question. The point of order is on relevance.

Mr SPEAKER: That is a fair point of order.

Mr Ferris: Thank you, Speaker. I will take your lead on that, of course. Thank you, again, for the clarification of the follow-up question, member. I do appreciate it. I will ask my deputy director-general for planning to provide some detail around the draft plan.

Ms Harwood: The other state interests such as climate change are considered in informing new areas of housing supply and economic development. As we have stated, the plans are shorter and simpler to aid implementation and improve certainty for applicants. The term 'climate change' is not mentioned specifically in the plan, but that does not mean climate change was not considered in the plan.

Mr DICK: My question is to the CEO of Economic Development Queensland, Mr Simmonds. The answer to question on notice No. 112 confirms that the majority of the Banyo Land Activation site will have to be permanently paved under the site management plan to support housing; is that correct?

Mr Simmonds: As you know, and as the committee might be aware, the Banyo site is part of our nation-leading Land Activation Program. It is a 6.46-hectare site that was formerly an Energex depot and has remained vacant since that depot was decommissioned and demolished in 2016—almost a decade ago. The infill opportunity for this land to be returned to Queenslanders to deliver new housing is a great opportunity. That is why it was released to market by the Economic Development Queensland team on 3 February 2026 to deliver more than 450 homes.

I am pleased to advise the committee that three proponents have been selected to acquire and deliver a diverse mix of housing on this site, including townhouses, aged care and affordable housing, on separate parcels within the Banyo site. Again, this is a great opportunity for Queenslanders who are crying out for new housing.

The three developments will deliver 450 homes including 207 build-to-sell townhouses by AR Development Group, 108-bed residential aged-care facility by Rockpool Holdings and 64 affordable one- and two-bedroom homes by Mission Australia. Following decommissioning and while still owned by Energy Queensland, extensive remediation of the site was completed. The site is listed on the Environmental Management Register, but the listing specifically notes that the site is suitable for residential development—in particular, medium density residential that has been allocated to the proposal.

Mr DICK: Point of order, Mr Speaker, on relevance: I am aware of those matters because they are canvassed in the answer. Maybe I could circulate and table, through the member for Kurwongbah, that answer and take the CEO to the answer.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: my point of order in relation to the point of order is that the CEO of EDQ was providing a response to the question. He is not afforded an opportunity to then provide supplementary material to the question as asked. The CEO of EDQ was being responsive to the question as asked.

Mr SPEAKER: I thought Mr Simmonds was being directly responsive to that issue as asked when you raised that point of order. Could you finish what you were saying?

Mr DICK: Point of order, Mr Speaker: it was about permanent paving. That was the question.

Mr SPEAKER: I think that is what Mr Simmonds was talking about, if I am correct.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Speaker: that is exactly right. The CEO had not even finished his answer despite being interrupted by the member for Woodridge. He should be afforded the opportunity to finish his answer.

Mr SPEAKER: Mr Simmonds, you are aware of the question. I think you were talking about it. I will listen closely to your response.

Mr Simmonds: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I appreciate that. I have just got a copy of the tabled document. If it is all right, I will take a quick moment to read it given it was what the member was referring to.

Mr DICK: Just to assist the witness—

Mr BLEIJIE: Let him read it.

Mr DICK: No, I just want to help him.

Mr BLEIJIE: You don't need to.

Mr DICK: It is paragraph (e) at the bottom. It is highlighted too.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Simmonds: I want to thank the member for the help. I greatly appreciate it and I am very happy to take the extra material. I will take a moment to quickly read it. On the basis of that, I can confirm that what I was taking the committee to at the point of the point of order is the correct reference. The site is listed on the Environmental Management Register. The listing specifically notes that the site is suitable for residential development—in particular, medium density residential.

The publicly available EMR listing specifically notes how it might be suitable, and that is included in the answer to the question on notice. EDQ, of course, will manage the planning process for the Banyo site via the provisional priority development area, which was declared on 29 May 2026 and subject to community consultation. As part of that planning process, which is in order to deliver those 450 new homes, those proponents will of course have to go through a development application process.

Mr DICK: Point of order, Mr Speaker, on relevance: I am well aware it is suitable for dwellings. I said that in my question. It is that the majority of the land will need to be paved.

Mr SPEAKER: I think the question has been answered. We will go to the next question, please.

Mr DICK: I want to table an artist's impression of the Banyo site. You would be aware of that, Mr Simmonds. EDQ prepared that.

Mr KING: I can table it.

Mr DICK: Thank you. I will table a copy—

Mr SPEAKER: No, you will not.

Mr KING: I will table it.

Mr DICK: Sorry, through the member for Kurwongbah.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Kurwongbah has put up his hand. He is willing to table it.

Mr DICK: What was the cost to produce that artist's impression, Mr Simmonds?

Mr Simmonds: As the committee might be aware, the artist's impression is for the Banyo site, which is part of our nation-leading Land Activation Program. The way that the Land Activation Program has been structured is obviously to unlock surplus government land and deliver that land back to Queenslanders for housing opportunities.

The idea of the program and the way it is structured is that it is to be self-sustaining. The costs for the marketing activities when these sites are taken to market—and I note we have taken in the last financial year six sites that have been released to market, unlocking 21 hectares of land for housing outcomes for more than 5,000 dwellings—are incorporated within the Land Activation Program, which is self-sustaining. Those costs are covered by the eventual market process when that land is provided to the market for housing.

Mr SPEAKER: We will have one more question before we go to government members.

Mr DICK: My question was not how the costs would be covered, Chief Executive Officer. My question was: what was the cost to produce that, please?

Mr SPEAKER: The member is looking for a figure, Mr Simmonds.

Mr Simmonds: That is much appreciated, Mr Speaker. I just wanted to provide the committee with confidence that those costs were covered as part of the market process and that the program itself is self-sustaining. With the Deputy Premier's indulgence, I will undertake to get the exact figure for that particular render before the end of the session.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to government members.

Mr KEMPTON: My question is for the Deputy Premier. The Crisafulli government's election commitment to update all regional plans is well underway including with the recent release of the Far North Queensland Regional Plan. Can the Deputy Premier please update the committee on the plan itself including how a reset planning partnership with councils helped to draft the plan?

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, member for Cook. What a great question. It shows that you are interested in housing supply and working with councils in your part of North Queensland in the electorate of Cook. With the questions we have just been asked—half of the infrastructure budget estimates is already done today—the opposition are just whingeing about providing a document, getting housing off the ground and then whingeing about not wanting housing on the Banyo site. Now they are whingeing about a photo that shows the houses. Not only have they never delivered real homes; they now complain about homes in a flyer actually showing we are going to deliver the homes because we have done the deal with Mission Australia to deliver affordable housing. One really has to ask the opposition. They did not deliver the housing they needed to when they were in government and they did not deliver the regional plans.

In terms of the Far North Queensland Regional Plan, when I became planning minister I was provided documentation that showed that it was going to be sent out to the local governments. There are eight local governments including, member for Cooper, two Aboriginal shire councils—the Yarrabah and Wujal Wujal councils in the electorate of Cook—and they had not been consulted by the previous former government. We were about to send a document out, but the former Labor government did not consult the Aboriginal councils about their regional plan. I stopped it being sent out. We sent the document to all those councils for their direct input. I think they made hundreds of submissions. I think we approved over 90 per cent of the submissions that the councils, including two Aboriginal councils, put in.

The motherhood statements have been taken out of the document because our priority is to develop economic prosperity, agriculture, resources and housing. They are the priorities. If the member for Cooper, in terms of her questioning about the Far North Queensland Regional Plan, is not as interested in housing but climate change, I am sorry. The Crisafulli government's priority is housing and getting houses out of the ground and economic prosperity for all of Far North Queensland.

Ms BUSH: Point of order, Mr Speaker: that is untrue. I take personal offence and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. We reset the planning partnerships with local governments. We included the local governments in the delivery, and all eight local governments signed off on the Far North Queensland Regional Plan. If members in the Labor Party have an issue particularly with the two Aboriginal councils that have signed off on the regional plan, go and talk to the councils because they support the plan. They want the plan—a plan that we delivered in 18 months. The last one delivered was in 2009, when I was first elected 18 years ago. The Labor government did not do anything. There is a shadow planning minister here who was the planning minister. He did not do it. I did it in 18 months and I took councils on the journey with us, and all signed and were supportive of the Far North Queensland Regional Plan.

Mr DICK: Point of order, Mr Speaker: that is untrue. I was not the planning minister at that time. I take personal offence and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, before I withdraw, is the honourable member saying he was not the planning minister from 2009 to 2024 because that is when I said?

Mr DICK: On a further point of order, Mr Speaker: I take further offence at that and ask that that also be withdrawn.

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

Mr BLEIJIE: He was the planning minister.

Mr SPEAKER: It is not a debating issue. He has taken personal offence.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr McDONALD: Can the Deputy Premier advise how the Crisafulli government's nation-leading Land Activation Program is giving more Queenslanders a place to call home and how this compares to alternative programs that resulted in a housing crisis?

Mr BLEIJIE: We inherited a housing crisis from the Labor government. It is clear that today the member for Woodridge is trying to rewrite history with his leadership ambitions against Steven Miles, the Leader of the Opposition, and he does not want anyone to know that he was a planning minister for some period of time.

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, point of order: standing order 234. I take personal offence to those unbecoming and offensive words and ask him to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. I also note the member for Woodridge was also the treasurer of the state who I do not think funded enough housing supply or unlocked land supply across the state and created the housing crisis. He sat on CBRCs. He was the treasurer of the state—

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, point of order: I take personal offence at the words 'created the ... crisis' and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. I also note that the member for Woodridge was the deputy premier of Queensland, and if anyone was in a position of power to do anything about the housing crisis he could have, he should have and he did not. That is why we inherited the housing crisis when we were elected—

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, point of order: I take personal offence at those words as well and I ask him to withdraw. I also draw your attention to the standing order relating to quarrelling.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. It is clear that the member for Woodridge clearly does not want Queenslanders to be reminded that he was a treasurer, a planning minister, a health minister and a deputy premier of a failed Labor administration for 10 years.

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, point of order: relevance. I do not see that any of this is relevant to the question that was asked.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, the question was about the housing crisis. We inherited a housing crisis, and I am saying that we have a housing crisis because of the failures of the former Labor ministers responsible, some of whom are sitting at the table today.

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, point of order: I take offence at the use of those words—

Mr BLEIJIE: I never mentioned you.

Mr DICK:—‘former Labor ministers ... some of whom are sitting at the table’. I am the only one at the table other than the member for Springwood—

Mr BLEIJIE: Well, I could have been talking about him.

Mr DICK:—and I take personal offence.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Woodridge, I do not take that as a personal offence. There was nobody directly named.

Mr BLEIJIE: We inherited a housing crisis. We are doing everything we can to turn the levers. We absolutely want Queenslanders to have a place to call home. My gosh, you only have to look at our policies, including the Residential Activation Fund and the Land Activation Program, and the Visy site. Under the Land Activation Program we have already released eight sites, which have released over 5,000 homes that are expected to be delivered across 30 hectares. We activated the Visy site, which again sat dormant under the Labor Party. We have done a deal with Lendlease. It will provide 4,000 homes. The Banyo site was the subject of questions about pavement. I have pavers around my house. Pavers are not a bad thing. Plenty of people in Queensland have pavers. I do not know what the opposition’s objection is to people having pavers, concrete, plants, pots or whatever you want. I do not care, as long as there is a house—somewhere for people to move into. If they want pavers and it has to have pavers around it, great, because that means there is a house. To have pavers around a house you have to have a house, and that is what the Land Activation Program is all about: releasing homes. If the opposition wants to get into the colours of pavers, pavements and concrete, that is why we have a housing crisis. That was their priority. That is not our priority.

The demolition of the former Pimlico TAFE site will deliver 150 new homes and it is already underway. Registrations of interest for the new 175-home development in Hervey Bay are now open. At Highgate Hill, registrations of interest are open for six homes. Turbot Street, open for housing, hotel and office space, is at the best and final offer stage.

Mango Hill—this is a good one, because today I used the Crisafulli government’s permanent locked-in 50-cent fares and travelled from Central Station on a train right through to Mango Hill. I stood on the very block of land where Steven Miles, as premier, announced he was going to unlock all of these homes in his own electorate. He never did. It is still a vacant block of land that the kangaroos pasture on every afternoon and the mower man goes to every fortnight. Today I can announce that 117 homes are going to be delivered. Azure Development Group and Coast2Bay are the successful proponents to build homes on the LAP site in Mango Hill just five months after we released the land to market. That is how quick you can do this in a housing crisis; you have just have to make decisions. The former government did not make decisions.

Today I can announce that Red and Co and BlueCHP are the successful proponents to build 270 homes on the LAP site at Varsity Lakes just four months after we released the land to market. We have affordable homes without Labor mandates on the community housing sector. We are releasing land that the Labor Party did an audit on and never released. They got an audit, they sat on it and they never released the land. We are getting on with the job and releasing the land they failed to release.

Mr JAMES: Can the Deputy Premier update the committee on the number of approvals issued by EDQ, including how these figures compare to previous years, and why this issue is important for delivering more places to call home in my electorate of Mulgrave?

Mr BLEIJIE: That is a great question. I have travelled around a lot of regional Queensland in the last 18 months turning sods on RAF projects, cutting ribbons on RAF projects, and announcing the Land Activation Program. I have seen the amazing work of EDQ. I have walked the halls of EDQ; the

Premier has walked the halls of EDQ. There is great excitement in EDQ at the moment about the things they are delivering. It is what EDQ was established for. It was established to cut through the regulation, red tape and a lot of other—I was going to say something unparliamentary, but I will not. EDQ was established to cut through all of that. They were not able to do it because they did not have the support of the former Labor government to let them do their job properly. We are letting them unleash across Queensland, and they are doing a fantastic job.

We are giving more Queenslanders a place to call home. Under Labor there was a 36 per cent reduction in new home approvals. Under Labor there was a 29 per cent reduction in lot approvals. Under Labor, Queensland had the lowest rate of home ownership in the country. Shame on the Labor Party! All of this culminated in a skyrocketing social housing waiting list and a 66 per cent increase in rents. Our response to Labor's housing crisis is supply, supply, supply, fast, fast, fast. Availability equals affordability.

In 2023-24 under Labor, 4,000 homes and lots were approved. In 2024-25 under the LNP, 8,003 homes and lots were approved. Mr Speaker will note that is a 13.5 per cent increase in average approvals over the October to June period under the LNP compared to July to September under Labor. Today I can announce that in the 2025-26 year, under the LNP, 14,687 homes and lots have been approved through EDQ. That is a 29 per cent increase in development applications being lodged, which means we are generating more activity. There is a 45 per cent increase in development approvals, which means we are clearing the backlog and maintaining service standards, and—are you ready for this?—94 per cent of development applications are decided within 40 business days. Under Labor it was 36 per cent. Let me repeat that: 94 per cent of development applications are decided within 40 business days under the LNP; under Labor it was 36 per cent. EDQ has increased development application approvals from 36 per cent to 94 per cent. The work is going great, and I congratulate EDQ on the amazing effort they are all putting in.

Dr ROWAN: Deputy Premier, can you please expand on your previous answer regarding the Land Activation Program, including how this program compares to the former Labor government's ground lease model?

Mr BLEIJIE: That is a great question, because that ground lease model was a doozy of a program. My God, if Labor had been re-elected and had put the ground lease model in place, their definition of affordability was a \$2.4 million house. That is not my definition of affordable. It might be affordable for the member for Woodridge, but it is not affordable for a lot of people.

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, point of order: I do take personal offence and ask that the member withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. Labor's failed ground lease model was announced by then premier Steven Miles in February 2024. It earmarked a 1.5-hectare site in—guess where?—Mango Hill, where I was today after I caught the train using the Crisafulli government's permanent 50-cent fares we have locked in law. He announced this in his own electorate in 2024 as well as Varsity Lakes on the Gold Coast. That was going to be part of their ground lease model. These blocks of land sat vacant for the decade Labor was in government. Following this announcement, Labor commissioned KPMG to produce a report to see whether the policy they had already announced, the ground lease model, was in fact viable. The Labor Party announced a policy called the ground lease model for these two sites, and then after they had announced it they thought, 'Let's commission a KPMG report to see if it is even viable as a policy position.' Labor paid KPMG \$238,345 to receive a report that concluded—

The overall cost to government of a Ground Lease Model is not necessarily favourable relative to other models and there is merit in considering alternative models to improve value for money.

There it is. Who was the treasurer? Who was the deputy premier? Who was on CBRC who approved this expenditure to KPMG? The report said that it is 'not necessarily favourable relative to other models and there is merit in considering alternative models'. They got KPMG to do a report after they had already announced their policy failure. KPMG said that it was not value for money and there were other programs that were better value for money. Guess what we have done. We have the Land Activation Program. It is better value for money and we are delivering affordable homes in all the sites that we have already announced.

You do not need a quarter of a million dollar report to tell you that \$1.7 billion in taxpayer dollars for just 715 homes does not stack up. There were plenty of Labor members who said it did stack up, including the member for Woodridge. Their failed policy would have cost \$2.4 million per home. In contrast, today I can announce that Azure Development Group and Coast2Bay community housing are the successful proponents to build at the LAP site in Mango Hill, just five months after we released the

land to the market. I can also announce, as I did before, that Red and Co and BlueCHP are the successful proponents to build the LAP site in Varsity Lakes, just four months after we released the land to market.

While Labor focused on the failed announcements and media spin, the LNP will deliver more parcels of land to call home. Their policy was that they were happy for it to sit vacant and let kangaroos have a bit of grass every afternoon, but that is not our policy. We do not want the kangaroos on this vacant land; we want houses on the vacant land and we want Queenslanders to have a place to call home. That is exactly what RAF does and that is exactly what the Land Activation Program does.

Mr DICK: Just on a procedural point of order, Speaker: could I ask the Deputy Premier to produce the KPMG report for the committee and table it, please?

Mr BLEIJIE: No, it was your report. You should have it.

Mr SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. We will go to the member for Cook.

Mr KEMPTON: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier update the committee on how the Crisafulli government is providing certainty for the development industry, and is he aware of any approaches that created uncertainty as part of a housing crisis?

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, member for Cook. It is great to have you back in parliament fighting a good fight for the people of Cook. You are doing an extraordinary job. In terms of the housing crisis, I have been with you as we have turned sods and cut ribbons, but there is a lot more to do.

It is important to note, as we deal with the housing crisis from the planning perspective, that the budget that was released by the Treasurer and this government said there would be no new or increased taxes, faster approvals giving greater certainty and partnering with the private sector and not demonising them but then accepting their after-five drinkies, as the Labor Party have done time and again.

We have approved 4,232 homes through the SFD process, whereas Labor did not approve one under their SFD process. They talk a lot about the SFD, and it was their process, but did they did not approve one. I have approved 4,232; they approved none. There were 1,380 social and affordable homes through the MID process, with a further 773 under assessment and a further 1,563 in the pipeline. I have approved over 1,300 social and affordable homes in the ministerial infrastructure designation in the last 18 months I have been the planning minister.

Today I can reveal for the honourable member that over the last 20 months we have approved 69 social and affordable homes per month on average, compared to 35 homes per month in Labor's last 20 months in office. That is almost double the amount of social and affordable homes that I am approving per month as planning minister than was done by the former Labor planning minister in the same time period for their time in office.

Labor's own failed housing document even supports our record of fast approvals and certainty for industry. It says, 'Queensland dwelling approvals grew over the year to February 2026.' That is when we were in government. That is what I think the Labor Party's problem is; they think they are just a government in exile, that they are still there pulling the reins on this. They are not. If they were, these approvals would have been going down, but they are going up because of the policy platform of the Crisafulli government. This is supported by 118 MIDs I have approved since becoming planning minister, which has cut approval times from lodgement to decision down from 10 months under average under Labor. This is helping to deliver community infrastructure like schools and hospitals sooner.

Who could forget Labor property taxes putting the burden on the housing crisis? Labor increased property taxes five times: in 2017-18, absentee land tax; in 2018-19, increased rate on holdings above \$10 million by 0.5 per cent; in 2019-20, land tax foreign surcharge—who could forget that, not the member for Woodridge because he was the treasurer; in 2019-20, increased the rate for companies and trusts; and in 2024-25, a land tax foreign surcharge increase. For that one, I think he was the treasurer. In any event, he has been a senior minister of the Miles-Palaszczuk government for a long time. Who could forget when the member for Woodridge tried to introduce a sixth tax—that was the renters tax—but he got rolled by Anastacia Palaszczuk?

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

Mr SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. On the renters tax, it is a matter of fact: Anastacia Palaszczuk as premier went to Canberra and there were huge issues in the media and she rolled the member for Woodridge and said it was not going to be introduced.

Mr DICK: Just on the point of order: the withdrawal was unqualified.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am moving on to another issue.

Mr SPEAKER: It is still the same.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. The challenges for the housing crisis we inherited from the Labor Party included the proposed renters tax, which the member for Woodridge supported and endorsed. It was Annastacia Palaszczuk—

Mr DICK: On a point of order: those words are untrue and I ask the honourable member to withdraw. It is offensive.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask that you withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I have a right to because I think he is deliberately misleading the House.

Mr SPEAKER: No, Minister.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr DICK: The words I take offence to are the words 'renters tax' and I ask the member to withdraw because it is offensive to me.

Mr BLEIJIE: Okay, what was it then? If it was not a renters tax, what was it?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Stop.

Mr BLEIJIE: What was it?

Mr SPEAKER: Hold it.

Mr DICK: On a point of order, Speaker: quarrelling.

Dr ROWAN: Well, point of order—

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

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. Mr Speaker, whatever you want to call the tax that was about to be introduced on renters in Queensland, it would have had a dire impact on renters and on the housing crisis that was already at bursting point. That is why this government has taken the position of no new or increased taxes. When the member for Woodridge was the treasurer, he had a history of increasing and applying new taxes to Queensland. That is a matter of fact. The member cannot deny it. It is there in his own Treasury documents to show it.

Mr DICK: On a point of order—

Mr BLEIJIE: We said no new or increased taxes and we stuck to that promise.

Mr DICK: I take personal offence at the words used.

Mr BLEIJIE: I would take offence at your taxes that you increased too, mate. I would.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Deputy Premier!

Mr DICK: I take further offence to the subsequent comments.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to opposition members for the next question and I go to—

Mr BLEIJIE: Are they ready? Anyone? If they are not ready, maybe the government could continue.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to the crossbench. Member for Maiwar, do you have a question?

Mr BERKMAN: I do. My question is to the acting director-general. Are you able to tell us how much freehold land in Queensland is currently vacant by both the area and the number of properties? If possible, can you break that down by residential and commercial land?

Mr Ferris: I thank the member for the question. That question around the percentage of land across the state in terms of it being freehold would be a question best directed to Minister Last in his portfolio at a later estimates. They are responsible for the management of freehold and leasehold land and unallocated state land across the state of Queensland.

Mr BERKMAN: I appreciate that, but that is not information—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar, wait until you get the call. Member for Maiwar, do you have another question?

Mr BERKMAN: Yes. Acting Director-General, I understand that that responsibility formally sits with an alternative department, but is that not information that is held by and of great use to the planning department in executing its functions as the planning department?

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order: the acting director-general has said it is not our portfolio responsibility so he cannot be asked now for his opinion on a matter that the member can ask another minister when they are at estimates.

Mr SPEAKER: That is a valid point. You cannot ask an opinion of government officials.

Mr BERKMAN: Sorry. The first part of the question was: is that not information that the department has?

Mr SPEAKER: Okay, that is fair enough.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order: again, in relation to the previous point of order that has already been raised, this sits within another portfolio area. There has already been a response provided to that effect, and there was an opinion that was asked for as well.

Mr SPEAKER: Which I ruled out. I think the acting director-general has already responded, but I will allow the acting director-general to respond to the question.

Mr Ferris: My original answer remains. That is a question for the department of natural resources, mines, rural and regional development. My counterpart director-general will take offence at me potentially getting the name of his department incorrect there, and I do apologise to Graham Fraine. Having come from that department, I do have familiarity with that portfolio, and that question is best asked of Minister Last.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar, do you have another question?

Mr BERKMAN: I am happy to move on given the paucity of time. It is quite staggering that the department would not be paying close attention to it.

Mr SPEAKER: Do you have another question?

Mr BERKMAN: I do. I want to put one question to the Deputy Premier. In the midst of a housing crisis, with record high rents, you would be well aware that the LNP Brisbane City Council backflipped on its promise to regulate Airbnbs and other short-stay accommodation. Did the state LNP advocate for this change and does it support it?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member from the Greens party for a question, because I have not had any questions from the official opposition. We want land supply right across the state. We want all forms of housing, whether it is short-term or long-term accommodation. We want people to be able to aspire to achieve home ownership in Queensland. I have met with Airbnb. They talked about regulation of the industry. We are a government of Liberal-National persuasion and we like less regulation and less red tape, and that is the view that I have on this particular issue.

At this stage they are best regulated as they are currently, with local governments. That is the advice I have given to the LGAQ, so we are not wanting to play in that space. Where we are wanting to play is in all forms of housing, whether it is short-term or long-term accommodation, hotel accommodation, building the homes that the former government failed to deliver or unlocking the land supply. We have adjusted PDAs including the Woolloongabba PDA to allow density and height. We are pulling absolutely every lever available to the state government to provide that land supply because everyone is so desperate for land across Queensland. It has not been a difficult thing to do in terms of the housing crisis when people say, 'What's the best thing the government can do?' It is about the supply and demand; it goes back to the economy and supply and demand. We have way too much demand out there and not enough supply.

Mr BERKMAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: I mindful of time and I feel like the question has been answered. I am satisfied. I am happy to move on, if I can.

Mr BLEIJIE: I have satisfied the Greens member.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Woodridge?

Mr DICK: Through the member for Kurwongbah, I want to table the *Ground lease model (GLM) pilot investigations: phase 2 report*. I want to take the acting director-general to page 10 of that document, please.

Mr SPEAKER: We will get a copy to the acting director-general.

Mr DICK: On page 10 there is a table at the bottom. I know it is small; it is not my document, unfortunately. There is a table titled 'Summary of Financial Assessment'. There are four columns in total but two groups—one dark blue, Mango Hill, and the other light blue, Varsity Lakes. In the third row it says total development cost is \$705,008 per dwelling for Mango Hill and \$921,207 per dwelling for Varsity Lakes; is that correct? Do you see that?

Mr Ferris: I have changed glasses. It is difficult to see; you are right. That is correct.

Mr DICK: This is a report the department has; is that correct?

Mr Ferris: This is a report that EDQ, Economic Development Queensland, have.

Mr DICK: Thank you. You have clarified that for me. Previous statements have been made publicly and in the parliament that the cost per dwelling was \$2.4 million. That figure is not there in that table, is it? That is not the actual cost per dwelling, is it?

Mr Ferris: I will go back to my previous answer, if I can. I would have to ask Mr Simmonds the question as to whether he has this report. I am assuming that, given it is a report prepared for Economic Development Queensland in January 2025, EDQ have that, so my apologies. With regard to the public statement, sorry—

Mr DICK: No, I did not have a further question.

Mr Ferris: You referred to a public statement?

Mr DICK: Yes, \$2.4 million per dwelling.

Mr SPEAKER: Have you referred that to—

Mr Ferris: I will refer the question to Mr Simmonds, the CEO of EDQ.

Mr DICK: It is at the bottom of page 10.

Mr Simmonds: Would the member mind repeating the question for me?

Mr DICK: There is a table at the bottom of page 10 titled 'Summary of Financial Assessment'. It has two columns; one is Mango Hill and one is Varsity Lakes. The first column, third row says total development cost for Mango Hill is \$705,008 and the second column says \$921,207 per dwelling. The Deputy Premier has previously stated it was \$2.4 million per dwelling. They are the actual costs per dwelling, aren't they?

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Speaker: you have dealt with this as a matter that was referred to you before going to the Ethics Committee; you have dealt with this in the parliament. The member is now trying to overrule what you have already determined. If you get the total figures of the budget they had and divide it by the number of dwellings, you get \$2.4 million. You have dealt with this in the House and the member for Woodridge is now trying to have another crack at it. You have dealt with this. It is misleading.

Mr SPEAKER: I will get some advice here.

Mr DICK: I have a point of order, too, that we might get the answer to.

Mr BLEIJIE: Why are you defending your bad record?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DICK: On a point of order: quarrelling—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! No quarrelling.

Mr DICK:—and I take offence at those words and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Woodridge and Deputy Premier, just stop. I said I was going to get some advice. I am just getting some advice and then I will come back to you on your point of order. It is not a point of order because that is not a matter that is outstanding. Member for Woodridge?

Mr DICK: I take personal offence on two matters: the interjection that the Deputy Premier made and also the comments that the Deputy Premier made that somehow I was seeking to undermine your ruling. It is entirely untrue and I take deep personal offence.

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

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Now we are going back to Mr Simmonds.

Mr Simmonds: I am now on page 10, and this was indeed a piece of work that was conducted by Economic Development Queensland following its commissioning by the previous government. I see there that the Mango Hill base case total nominal cost to government is \$717,393,336 and the Varsity Lakes base case total nominal cost to government is \$1,008,788,985. By my maths that would equal \$1.7 billion for the cost of those houses. Just to go back, that was based on Mango Hill with the number of dwellings being 323, and Varsity Lakes 392. The cost of those dwellings to government over the life of the ground lease model would have been \$1.7 billion.

Mr SPEAKER: There are only a couple of minutes left. I will give the last question to the member for Moggill and that will be it for this session.

Dr ROWAN: Deputy Premier, I have spent many wonderful holidays at Bribie Island and in Caloundra. Can you provide an update on the critical work that has been undertaken to restore Bribie Island and the Pumicestone Passage to protect the Caloundra community after years of neglect under the former Labor government?

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, there is a question that has to be answered, too, so your response will have to be very brief.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, there were plenty of breakthroughs at Bribie Island. The government got to work through the Coordinator-General. We put money in the budget last year and in this year's budget to do the emergency repair works. If you go down there now, the residents and businesses are protected in Golden Beach and Caloundra. Jason Hunt, the former member for Caloundra, let the breakthroughs go. He got no investment from the former treasurer of the state to do emergency works. Kendall Hatcher got straight onto it. She got the funding for the emergency works from this government and we closed breakthroughs 2, 3 and 4. That is a one-in-10-year event, but it is there. The island is there. They have replanted; they have revegetated it. It is a positive policy of this government; we are getting on with the job.

In terms of other things, we are having to constantly fix these issues that we inherited from the Labor government including the failed ground lease model on housing. We are protecting homes. We will be able to build more houses in Caloundra because we are protecting them now from Bribie Island and the ocean coming through in future cyclones and things like that.

I am so ashamed of the Labor Party. They come in here and try to defend their bad record. They were voted out of office and, as Mr Simmonds has confirmed, the cost to government was \$1.7 billion. If you divide that by the number of homes they were going to release under the ground lease model, that is 2.4. I was corrected in parliament because I had 2.3 something by recollection and I had to correct the record to 2.4. It is basic math, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: You have a question to respond to.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In conclusion, I thank all of the planning department, EDQ, the Coordinator-General and everyone involved in this. They have been wonderful for budget estimates prep. I can say that the artist's rendering for the Banyo site was \$5,445. The cost includes the time taken to review the master plan, surrounding contexts and render image. The cost is covered by the sale process. The image helped generate over 150 EOIs through the market process. If the opposition would not have proceeded with building homes at Banyo because of a \$5,000 expenditure to get 150 EOIs, that is why we had a housing crisis we inherited from the Labor government.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you for the response. There are no more questions outstanding. We have now reached the end of the time allocated for consideration of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of planning. Thank you, Deputy Premier, officials and departmental officers. Can I please ask for a prompt changeover in witnesses and officials for the examination of estimates for the portfolio area of state development, which is about to commence.

The committee will now examine the estimates for the portfolio area of state development. Deputy Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement regarding the state development portfolio area for a period of up to five minutes.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. At the outset, I thank all of the officials involved in state development. This is about building sovereign capability in Queensland and it is all going very well, so thank you. Mr Speaker, the Crisafulli government have refreshed the state development portfolio and we have put 'development' back into 'state development', refocusing our priority industry areas to where Queensland has a natural advantage, being biomedicine, biofuels and defence. We are putting 'development' back into 'state development', as I said.

Only yesterday I was pleased to be in Thargomindah in South-West Queensland to support Queensland-based defence technology company Black Sky Aerospace, which has just received \$7.5 million to help deliver a new large-scale testing and evaluation launch site at its three-million-acre range, enabling defence and aerospace equipment to be safely tested in Queensland. This facility will be Australia's first and only privately owned horizontal launch and guided weapons test and evaluation range, positioning Queensland as a national leader in defence industry investment. Once operational in mid-2028, Black Sky's MaxQ Phase 1 Infrastructure Program will provide domestic and allied users with access to large-scale test and evaluation infrastructure, with SIDF funding contributing to construction of a 2.5-kilometre runway, fixed and mobile launch infrastructure and secure explosive storage. Black Sky's project is expected to create around 60 jobs, including construction and ongoing operational jobs, while strengthening regional supply chains and supporting economic activity in Western Queensland. Mayor 'Tractor' from out there was so excited at this level of investment in his community. He has never had investment like this and he is just so excited about the new opportunities and the new skilled people coming to South-West Queensland because of this investment of the Crisafulli government.

We know the former Labor government had a haphazard and scattergun approach when it came to industry development in this state with 11 industry areas of focus, including some which were absolutely non-viable. Hydrogen? Anyone want to mention hydrogen and the deal that was done with hydrogen? Maybe the member for Woodridge can update us on that. The former Labor government backed in these industries and were not fazed watching Queensland taxpayers' money wasted on pet projects that aligned with their ideology. Queenslanders have not forgotten that former industry development minister Kate Jones in the Palaszczuk government allocated \$100,000 to a weight loss app for fat dogs. Fat dogs are not the priority of the Crisafulli government. Building sovereign capacity and capability is the priority of state development, not developing apps for fat dogs. The former government also gave thousands of taxpayers' money to YouTube-based make-up artists. This was Labor's idea of industry development.

The contrast could not be clearer. The Crisafulli government through our landmark \$180.6 million Sovereign Industry Development Fund is partnering with the private sector to build sovereign manufacturing capability here in Queensland, restoring our ability to make things with a reliance on foreign supply chains. With over 250 applications made seeking more than \$2.2 billion in funding, it is clear that Queensland under the Crisafulli government is meeting the demand of the market with real funding for projects that will secure our manufacturing future. I stood with the Premier in April of this year to announce a partnership with Ampol, which were successful in their application for \$25 million for their renewable diesel co-processing facility at the Lytton refinery which will produce 20 million litres of renewable diesel from 2028. We announced the SIDF prior to the fuel crisis earlier this year with our fuel security plan, restoring our ability to drill, refine and store right here in Queensland. Drill, baby, drill; build, baby, build.

On the biomedical front, we have announced significant investments in homegrown talent and technology, with \$15.25 million to AdvanCell to establish Australia's first sovereign manufacturing capability of Thorium-228 and \$2.2 million to Southern RNA for a semiautomated sterile fill-and-finish platform for vaccines in Brisbane. We have also attracted investment from both interstate and overseas, with Victorian-based Clinical Trials Group establishing a new 40-plus bed phase 1 Clinical Trials research facility through an \$11.2 million investment and with New Zealand-based BioOra establishing their advanced cell therapy manufacturing facility at ENTRi in Woolloongabba with a \$7.7 million investment. We have Victorian companies fleeing Victoria and coming to Queensland. That is what it is all about. They are fleeing Victoria.

Australians and our allies know that Queensland is strongly placed when it comes to meeting our national security requirements. Queensland has the largest population of current and former defence personnel, with over 160,000 members and former members of our defence forces calling Queensland home. I was pleased to announce a \$31.65 million investment in HeliMods with the member for Caloundra that will provide end-to-end defence grade aircraft maintenance and manufacturing. We have also made strategic investments in maritime maintenance capability with Norship in Far North Queensland and Cairncross Dockyard in Morningside—two major operations employing more Queenslanders. There are also more SIDF announcements to come, with funding rolling out to ensure Queensland is capable of meeting the geostrategic challenges of our time. I appreciate the opportunity to deal with each of the further investments our government has made in undertaking Queensland's sovereign capabilities after a decade of decline of the Labor government.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to the opposition for the first question and the member for Woodridge.

Mr DICK: My question is for the Acting Director-General, Mr Ferris. The member for Kurwongbah will table a media release from the Treasurer that states that on his appointment as the director of QIC Mr Peter Dutton would provide strategic advice on accelerating development through the flagship Sovereign Industry Development Fund, a fund administered by the department of state development. Mr Ferris, has Mr Dutton provided advice to you and to departmental officers on the administration of the Sovereign Industry Development Fund?

Mr Ferris: The \$180 million Sovereign Industry Development Fund, as the Deputy Premier and yourself said through the question, supports projects to build sovereign capability, economic resilience and accelerate growth across the three sectors of defence, biomedicine and biofuels. In relation to the consideration of the projects that were applied for through the Sovereign Industry Development Fund, we had a robust assessment and governance process that was managed by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. As I said, it was robust. It was a competitive process and a merit-based assessment process supported by formal governance arrangements to ensure transparency, consistency and value for money for Queenslanders. The applications that were assessed through that process—a multistage process—were supported by an advisory committee and a moderation committee that was made up of senior representatives from across the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. We also sought—

Mr DICK: Just on a point of order, Mr Speaker, on relevance: it related to Mr Dutton's providing advice to the department and the acting director-general on the administration of the fund. I am aware of how the fund works, Acting Director-General.

Mr Ferris: I am just providing some context around the governance structures that we had in place in relation to the consideration of the application, if I may continue just for a moment.

Mr SPEAKER: And then get to the point.

Mr Ferris: It was made up of senior representatives from across the department who are experienced across the three key industries, being defence, biomed and biofuels. We also partnered very strongly with our regional staff who have place-based knowledge around the need for industries across Queensland, the stakeholders that we were engaging with through the application process and—

Mr DICK: Point of order: non-government members have 12½ minutes for questions. I would appreciate an answer that is relevant.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: the acting director-general is being responsive to the question as asked. He is providing important information and he should be allowed to continue.

Mr SPEAKER: I think you can get to the point of the question so we can have some more questions. We have not got long in this session.

Mr Ferris: Of course, I understand. I think it is important to provide the context around this.

Mr SPEAKER: I am asking you to come to the point of the question now, please.

Mr Ferris: Fair enough. Thank you, Mr Speaker. We engaged through the process with QIC, of which Mr Dutton is a member of the board. We did not engage with Mr Dutton in relation to the assessment process. We have strong relationships with a range of individuals within QIC—

Mr DICK: Thanks, Mr Speaker. I wonder if I could ask another question. He has answered that question.

Mr SPEAKER: Did you have anything further to add?

Mr Ferris: I was just going to end, if I can—very briefly—by saying that our relationships with QIC are strong and they informed a whole range of consideration processes around the Sovereign Industry Development Fund and the projects that were funded through that.

Mr DICK: Mr Ferris, how often does Mr Dutton meet with department officers to advise on the Sovereign Industry Development Fund? Is it daily, weekly, monthly or some other period?

Mr Ferris: We have not met with Mr Dutton in relation to the Sovereign Industry Development Fund, but we meet on a regular basis with other staff members from QIC who have a forward-looking, environmental scan of business and investment opportunities across the state of Queensland. We use—

Mr DICK: Thanks.

Mr Ferris: Sorry, member, if I may. We use those relationships to inform our investment decisions around the Sovereign Industry Development Fund.

Mr DICK: Mr Ferris, to the best of your knowledge, Mr Dutton has not provided any advice to you or to department officers on the fund?

Mr McDONALD: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr KEMPTON: Point of order—

Mr SPEAKER: We have points of order everywhere.

Mr McDONALD: My point of order is that the question has just been asked and answered.

Mr DICK: On the point of order, it was not answered and I am seeking clarification.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Speaker: Mr Ferris said Mr Dutton had not provided input into the SIDF funding and then the member for Woodridge said, 'So to the best of your knowledge that has not happened?' He had already answered the question. Now he is trying to have a second chop at it.

Mr DICK: No, that is not accurate, and I take offence at that mischaracterisation of my question.

Mr SPEAKER: Let's move on. Do you have any other questions, member for Woodridge?

Mr DICK: I do, Speaker. Mr Ferris, are any departmental officers allocated to support Mr Dutton in his work on the Sovereign Industry Development Fund?

Mr Ferris: I thank the member for the question. I am happy to answer the question very completely for the member. We have had no engagement with Mr Dutton through the consideration of the Sovereign Industry Development Fund. I can speak from a high degree of authority in relation to that, not only in my role as acting director-general but also in my role substantively as the director-general for state development and also the chair. That is the reason I was trying to give context around the governance that we had in place in relation to the assessment process—

Mr DICK: Thanks.

Mr Ferris: Sorry, member—as the chair of the advisory committee that would bring forward a recommendation for the director-general to consider. Through our moderation process and our advisory committee process, we did not engage with, nor seek any advice from, Mr Dutton in relation to the Sovereign Industry Development Fund.

Mr DICK: Acting Director-General, in last year's Capital Statement, budgeted capital expenditure on the Mount Isa Transition Fund was \$11.79 million for 2025-26. The actual expenditure for 2025-26, according to this year's capital statement, was only \$2.9 million. With only 25 per cent of what was actually budgeted for being spent last financial year, which was the reason for this underspend of almost 75 per cent of the Mount Isa Transition Fund last financial year?

Mr Ferris: In relation to the North West Minerals Province and Mount Isa, we recognise the challenges posed by the closure of Glencore's Mount Isa copper mine, the copper concentrator and its Lady Loretta zinc mine. Uncertainty regarding the ongoing operation of Dyno Nobel's copper smelter and the Phosphate Hill mine also presents challenges. We have continued discussions as a department with both Glencore and Dyno Nobel to address the potential impacts of those closures.

Along with the Commonwealth, the Queensland government has secured the future of Phosphate Hill and thousands of jobs across the north and north-west of Queensland by providing a \$160 million loan facility to lock in the ongoing operations of the Phosphate Hill fertiliser facility. That secures more than 500 direct jobs at Phosphate Hill, 600 direct jobs at the Mount Isa copper facility and the Townsville refinery close to Townsville, as well as thousands of indirect jobs across the north and north-west of Queensland.

In October 2025, Glencore reached a heads of agreement with the Australian and Queensland government for a support package of up to \$600 million to continue operating the Mount Isa copper smelter and the Townsville refinery for the next three years, securing over 600 jobs and 500 jobs at Phosphate Hill. The department is continuing to deliver the Mount Isa Transition Fund, supporting the community and workforce affected by the closure of Glencore's Mount Isa copper mine. The \$20 million fund is supporting projects in Mount Isa including upgrades to community infrastructure and sporting facilities, expanded childcare services and building local manufacturing and resource capability.

Mount Isa City Council has been allocated \$7.3 million under the fund which has supported the ongoing viability of the Mount Isa rodeo from 2025 and will support the implementation of the Mount Isa Future Ready Economy Roadmap. Projects include developing the critical minerals industry in the region, supporting investment-ready projects, developing industrial precincts and supporting small business. The department has also delivered a sulphuric acid supply study, with further work being

undertaken to support the development of a long-term solution and a potential supply/demand imbalance. On 3 March of this year, Glencore also announced it planned capital expenditure of \$2½ billion in the region over the next six years including progressing the Black Star Open Cut project for zinc, lead and silver. Austral Resources acquired the Lady Loretta mine from Glencore, transitioning to copper.

The funding allocated to Mount Isa City Council has supported the ongoing viability of the rodeo—as I stated earlier, it was for \$915,000—and a range of subprojects identified in the Mount Isa Future Ready Economy Roadmap. These include: the Critical Minerals and Rare Earth Elements Research Centre, a business case and detailed design, for \$282,500; a CBD shopfront revitalisation, a dollar-to-dollar contribution, at a cost of \$500,000; Elevate Isa, a feasibility study and investment-ready development package for a medium-sized commercial and residential CBD project, a contribution of \$500,000; the Mount Isa small business gateway, which allows small businesses service support and co-working space to assist local workers with marketing, expansion and maturity build for businesses, at a contribution of \$1.705 million; and the Mount Isa circular economy industrial estate, a concept design and marketing to develop council owned property in a circular economy industrial hub, a contribution of \$1 million.

Mr BERKMAN: I have one question for the CEO of Economic Development Queensland.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Speaker: this is the state development portion of estimates.

Mr BERKMAN: On that point of order—

Mr SPEAKER: We have not heard the question.

Mr BERKMAN: The administrative arrangements order makes clear, as I can tell, that the Economic Development Act is under the state development portion of the minister's responsibilities.

Mr SPEAKER: Let us hear the question.

Mr BERKMAN: Mr Simmonds, in relation to the Land Activation Program you would be aware that there is a new scheme within this where industry and the public can be suggest state owned land to be sold off. It is referred to in EDQ materials as unsolicited proposals from industry. How many sites have been proposed for consideration under the program by a developer who subsequently purchased it and how many of those instances took place without a market process?

Mr Simmonds: Would you repeat the last part of the question for me because there were multiple parts?

Mr McDONALD: Point of order, Mr Speaker: I listened to the question closely and I really believe that should have been asked in the session on planning. Further to that, I do believe that question contained an imputation that was not appropriate under the standing orders.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Speaker: we dealt with the Land Activation Program in the previous hour in the planning session. If there was a question to be asked about that it should have been asked in that session.

Mr BERKMAN: On that point of order, page 3 of the administrative arrangements order has economic development, including development and the Economic Development Act, in the same category as industrial development and integrated resort development. This is the state development proportion of the minister's responsibilities under the administrative arrangements order.

Mr SPEAKER: We will allow it if it is in the responsibility of EDQ.

Mr Simmonds: Thank you, I appreciate that. With the discussion I really will need the question repeated.

Mr BERKMAN: How many sites have been proposed for consideration under the Land Activation Program by a developer who subsequently purchased it? You can start with that bit.

Mr Simmonds: As you know, the Land Activation Program, is a nation-leading program that was announced in February this year. It did include a process by which the public, and that includes industry, local government and others, may submit sites. So far EDQ has received 191 submissions for sites across 23 local government areas. They, of course, have to go through an assessment process because to be eligible for the LAP the site is to be owned by the Queensland government or related entity and is currently underutilised or surplus. The site has to have the potential to deliver or facilitate

the delivery of housing, including within mixed use development, and the site requires unlocking or activating by EDQ. I do not try and put forward that all 191 sites that have been submitted have been included in the Land Activation Program simply that they have been submitted and are under assessment.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to government members for the remaining time we have. I will go to the member for Lockyer.

Mr McDONALD: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Queensland has the largest population of veterans of any state or territory in Australia. Can the Deputy Premier advise the committee how the Crisafulli government is creating more job opportunities for veterans, including in the defence industry, while securing Queensland's sovereign manufacturing capabilities?

Mr BLEIJIE: Absolutely, member for Lockyer, thank you. I know that you have investment in aerospace technology out in your electorate of Lockyer so thank you for the question. The defence industry is absolutely a priority of the Crisafulli government. You may not believe this, committee members, but I have been told by some companies that were awarded some contracts by the previous Labor government that they were never announced because the Labor members at the time were worried that it would be too pro defence to announce the funding the taxpayers actually paid for. I take a completely different view. Every defence company that gets a contract under this Crisafulli government will be announced because we support the veterans and we support sovereign capability and that is what the Sovereign Industry Development Fund is all about—\$186 million investing in biofuels, biomedicine and the defence space.

I talked about the priorities of the previous government: \$100,000 on a weight loss app for fat dogs and giving money to online YouTube video creators. Contrast that with what we have done. We had 250 applications for SIDF representing \$2.2 billion in funding. Veteran owned EPE Oceania got \$3.05 million to expand their drone manufacturing facility in Spring Hill. Cairncross Dockyards have received \$4.5 million for their nationally significant revitalisation of the graving dock, purchasing a 1,200-tonne and a 400-tonne crane for maritime maintenance. The graving dock operated in defence of Australia and was originally opened in 1942 during World War II. We are bringing it back. It will be operational again. There is \$31.65 million to HeliMods for the expansion of its advanced industry precinct in Caloundra that will deliver defence-grade aerospace infrastructure for end-to-end defence helicopter manufacturing. Well done to Kendall Hatcher, the member for Caloundra, on her advocacy. Other defence projects funded through SIDF include Norship who received \$5.37 million to upgrade and expand its naval-certified servicing yard in Cairns. Rhino Linings got \$285,000 for local production of their BattleJacket coatings to protect military fuel tanks. Victoria based Arkeus got \$1.48 million to move all their drone sensor manufacturing from Victoria to the northern Gold Coast. That is what delivering for Queensland looks like. That is what being open for business means.

I am also pleased to announce the Crisafulli government's partnering with Black Sky Aerospace to deliver Australia's first and largest privately-owned horizontal launch and guided weapons test and evaluation range, which I announced in the opening statement, in Thargomindah with a \$7.5 million grant for a \$15 million project—\$15 million in total. It is a co-contribution. It will compete directly with Woomera in South Australia, building 40 kilometres of road upgrades, fixed mobile launch infrastructure and a 2.5 kilometre runway and secure explosives storage.

Mr KEMPTON: Deputy Premier, can you advise the committee how the Crisafulli government is investing in projects across regional Queensland that will deliver economic opportunity to those communities and are you aware of any reckless alternatives by the former government that failed to benefit Queenslanders?

Ms BUSH: Point of order: there is a bit of imputation in that.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes. That is fair enough. There is and that is valid. Can you ask the question without the argumentative part.

Mr KEMPTON: Can you advise the committee how the Crisafulli government is investing in projects across regional Queensland that will deliver economic opportunity to those communities?

Mr BLEIJIE: I can advise the House that we are, through our \$180.6 million Sovereign Industry Development Fund, and it is all across the state looking at biofuels, biomedicine and defence, of course. As I said, we had 250 applications totalling \$2.2 billion in funding. I was in Cairns on 10 June this year to announce that Norship had been successful in receiving \$5.37 million from SIDF to upgrade and expand their naval certified servicing and maintenance yard at Portsmith. The project will create 63 new jobs: 17 during construction and 46 operational.

The former Labor government had 11 priority areas, including the battery industry, in their reckless rush to renewables. Who could forget all the questions on batteries last estimates. That was propping up a failed Labor policy. All we have seen today is Labor members coming in here and trying to convince everyone about their failed Labor policies. We certainly are changing that and ensuring we are getting on with the job. Labor's 2023-24 budget allocated \$7 million to the Barcaldine Renewable Energy Zone—Steven Miles was the state development minister—as part of Labor's failed Energy and Jobs Plan to develop a new renewable energy precinct through Bubble with Zen Energy. I can advise the committee that late last year Zen Energy advised DSDIP that they could not deliver the project and it was cancelled. Just this month Zen Energy have gone into administration due to viability issues. I am pleased to announce that DSDIP has reallocated the funds to deliver in partnership with the Barcaldine Regional Council an expansion of the John Miller Industrial Estate thanks to the advocacy of Sean Dillon MP, member for Gregory. The development will unlock 25 new industrial blocks, securing Barcaldine's industrial needs for the next 40 years while creating up to 120 new jobs once it is fully operational next year.

Mr JAMES: As a former councillor myself, can the Deputy Premier update the committee about how the Crisafulli government is empowering local governments with the necessary tools to ensure their communities get to have their say on prospective renewable energy projects, and is he aware of any other alternatives?

Mr BLEIJIE: We implemented laws which gave communities a right and a say in renewable energy projects in their communities, something the Labor Party denied. To assist local governments in traversing the new laws and help them navigate assessments of renewable energy projects, the Crisafulli government launched a series of social licensing toolkits which are online resources including tools, templates and checklists developed in partnership with the LGAQ. The first five tools were published on the website in October. I am pleased to advise the committee that a further 17 tools have now been developed and are right now live on the DSDIP website. They include early engagement communication tools to enable robust consultation, provide risk management, social impact assessment tools and support for participation.

I thank the honourable member for the question. Can I thank you, Mr Speaker, in conclusion of this question. I want to thank all my departmental officials who have been in the budget estimates today. I think it is a shame: I think I got one question from the opposition in the five or six hours I have been under the grill. I got one question from my opponents, which I think is disgraceful and shows how bad an opposition they are.

I want to pay tribute to my former director-general, Mr John Sosso, who has resigned for health reasons. Mr Sosso had 42 years in the Public Service, working for both LNP and Labor administrations. I want to thank him because he has been here until the end with his health issues. I thank Acting Director-General Shaun Ferris for coming to the table today and thank all the departmental staff. I think it has been a great estimates—full of Dorothy Dixers because I got one question from my opponents, which is shameful. I think it is testament to the bad opposition in the Labor Party we have in Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: We have reached the end of the time allocated for consideration of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of state development. That concludes this hearing of estimates for the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee for today. I would like to thank the committee members and the visiting members who participated in the hearing. Thank you also to Hansard and the parliamentary broadcast staff, together with all the other parliamentary staff who have assisted here today. I declare the hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 6.01 pm.