WEDNESDAY, 29 JULY 2026

ESTIMATES—PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE—NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES, MANUFACTURING AND REGIONAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker (Hon. Pat Weir, Condamine)

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Jon Krause, Scenic Rim)

Committee Members

Mr SA Bennett MP—Chair

Mr JR Martin MP

Mr NJ Dalton MP

Mr RI Katter MP

Mr GR Kelly MP

Mr TJ Smith MP

Mr LP Power MP

Members in Attendance

Mr MC Berkman MP

Hon. MC de Brenni MP

Hon. CR Dick MP

Dr CAC Rowan MP

In Attendance

Hon. DR Last, Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development

Ms Ally Foley, Chief of Staff

Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development

Mr Graham Fraine, Director-General

Mr Gobind Kalsi, Executive Director, Strategy, Capability and Cabinet Office

Resources Safety and Health Queensland

Ms Claire Cooper, Acting Chief Executive Officer

Department of Transport and Main Roads

Ms Sally Stannard, Director-General

The committee met at 9.00 am.

Mr SPEAKER: I declare this hearing of the estimates for the Primary Industries and Resources Committee open. I acknowledge the Aboriginal people and the 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, the 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 Primary Industries and Resources Committee are: Mr Stephen Bennett, the member for Burnett and chair; Mr James Martin, the member for Stretton and deputy chair; Mr Nigel Dalton, the member for Mackay; Mr Robbie Katter, the member Traeger; Mr Glen Kelly, the member for Mirani; and Mr Tom Smith, the member for Bundaberg, who has been replaced by Mr Linus Power, the member for Logan for this morning's session. The committee is joined by other members who have been granted leave to attend and ask questions at the hearing today.

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

The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcasters of proceedings are available from the secretariat. Staff who are assisting our witnesses here today are permitted to use personal electronic devices in the chamber. I ask all present to ensure that phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode or turned off if not in use. I also remind everyone that food and drink are 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 2026 for the portfolios of the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development; and the Minister for Primary Industries. I remind honourable members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can only be raised during the times 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 of the natural resources and mines portfolio areas until 11 am. We will suspend proceedings for an intermission from 11 am to 11.15 am, before examining the portfolio area of manufacturing and regional and rural development until 1.15 pm.

I remind everyone that these proceedings are subject to the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly. In respect of government owned corporations and statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides—

... a member may ask any question which the committee determines will assist it 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 Minister, the Director-General, officials and departmental officers and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or director-general. Please remember to press your microphones on before you start speaking and off when you are finished.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of natural resources and mines open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes for the portfolio area currently under examination.

Mr LAST: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I begin by acknowledging the tragic loss of a mineworker at Peak Downs coalmine last week, Andreas Loizou. I extend my condolences to Andreas's family, friends and colleagues. Mining is more than an industry in Queensland. It is a community, a way of life and in many respects a family. When tragedy strikes one part of our resources sector it is felt across every mine site, every regional town and every family connected to it.

I welcome the opportunity to appear before the committee today to discuss the 2026-27 budget and how it delivers for Queensland's resources sector, our regional communities and the thousands of Queenslanders whose livelihoods depend on these industries. I thank my Director-General and the team for assisting in the preparation for estimates and acknowledge the work of the committee, parliamentary staff and everyone who contributes to this process.

Queensland's resources sector has always been the engine room of our economy. It supports tens of thousands of jobs and stimulates regional communities. When we came to government, we inherited a sector that had lost confidence. Investment had stalled, projects had become bogged down and businesses were questioning whether Queensland was a genuine option for investment.

The Crisafulli government is restoring confidence by providing certainty, supporting investment and ensuring Queensland remains one of the world's premier destinations for responsible resource development. Central to that is our commitment to developing Queensland's critical minerals sector. I am pleased to have officially launched our Critical Minerals Strategy earlier today because, as global demand accelerates, Queensland is uniquely positioned to become a world leader not simply in extraction but also in processing, manufacturing and value-adding. That is why we are committing $146.1 million to unlock critical minerals. This funding is about more than just exploration; it is about positioning Queensland to lead the global energy transition while creating secure jobs right here in Queensland. We are accelerating geological exploration, supporting new discoveries, investing in enabling infrastructure and providing targeted assistance to help companies progress from exploration to production.

This budget continues investment in the Queensland Resources Common User Facility, helping unlock downstream processing opportunities and strengthening Australia's sovereign capability in the critical minerals supply chain. In short, we are backing regional Queensland. One of the clearest examples of this has been our work to secure the future of the Mount Isa copper smelter, the Townsville refinery and the Phosphate Hill fertiliser plant. Working alongside the Commonwealth, industry and key stakeholders, we have helped to secure an outcome that protects thousands of regional jobs, supports Queensland's agricultural sector and preserves Australia's only domestic producer of diammonium phosphate fertiliser.

A critical component of this investment is the completion of the independent Mount Isa Transformation Study, which is currently underway. The study will conduct a thorough assessment of the full copper value chain across the North West Minerals Province and examine opportunities across regional supply chains and emerging projects, with the aim of strengthening Queensland's industrial capability and sovereign resilience. The review of Queensland's financial provisioning scheme is about ensuring environmental protections remain strong while removing unnecessary barriers that tie up investment capital and discourage new projects.

The Crisafulli government is also taking practical action to strengthen Queensland's fuel security by investing $19 million over two years to unlock the enormous potential of the Taroom Trough. This investment is about ensuring Queensland can produce, refine and store more of its own fuel here at home, reducing our reliance on overseas supply chains while creating jobs and attracting private investment in regional Queensland. We are also investing $6.4 million to recommercialise abandoned mines and legacy sites. Projects like the revival of the Mount Chalmers mine, which has been dormant for more than 44 years, demonstrate what is possible when government works with industry to turn legacy assets into new economic opportunities.

This budget also supports better land administration and projects that unlock economic opportunities while protecting the interests of landholders and communities. Whether it is progressing prescribed projects, supporting tourism opportunities or ensuring the sustainable use of our natural resources, the Crisafulli government is focused on practical outcomes. We are demonstrating that good government is about delivering certainty.

We have secured the long-term future of Yarranlea Primary School in Brisbane by ensuring the school, along with its valued community and sporting facilities, can continue operating. Rather than allowing uncertainty to continue, we acted to provide confidence for students, parents and teachers while protecting important community assets and neighbouring high-value bushland.

Protecting Queensland's natural assets is not about locking them away, it is about managing them responsibly so they can continue to deliver environmental, social and tourism outcomes. That balanced approach is reflected in our work to unlock Double Island, ending years of uncertainty and paving the way for the island's rejuvenation. This budget backs in regional Queensland, backs investment, backs jobs, backs safety and backs industries that continue to build this state.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. We will now go to questions, firstly to the opposition, and I call the member for Logan for the first question.

Mr POWER: I would like to call forward the CEO of RSHQ, please. On indulgence, I want to join the minister in offering my condolences to the family and to the whole mining community at Peak Downs. It reminds us of the stakes of what we are doing here.

Ms Cooper, thank you. The Safety in Mines Testing and Research Station, known as Simtars, 'has an emergency response team on-call 24/7 available to provide assistance to underground coal mines'. That is still the case, is it not?

Ms Cooper: Yes, Simtars does provide a number of testing facilities. A research station provides independent testing and certification of equipment for use in hazardous environments, laboratory testing of mine dust, roadway dust, spontaneous combustion dust testing, occupational hygiene services, calibration of equipment, gas monitoring software and support, safety and health training and underground coal emergency response services.

Mr POWER: I was particularly interested in emergency responses. How many emergency responses have Simtars' teams been involved in?

Ms Cooper: We are involved in a number of different deployments. We have deployed in emergency response in terms of post-incident investigation support for significant events—inspectors as well as investigators. It has deployed its scanner, LiDAR. That helps to see exactly what is happening on the ground and be able to capture the scene.

In 2025, we attended the Jimboomba fireworks incident. Later on that year, we also went to Charters Towers for the incident involving a loader falling into a void at Pajingo underground mine. There was also a rig rollover in the Surat Basin that we attended. Unfortunately, there have been a number of fatalities that Simtars has attended to support investigators and the inspectorate, including the fatality at Mammoth mine in Blackwater, which was a roof collapse. There was also a rockfall at Mount Britton gold mine which ended in a tragic fatality. There was a fatality involving a forklift rollover at a Redlands quarry. There was a post scan at that quarry. I believe they did not arrive on the Friday, but arrived on the Saturday to support all of the investigators who were out there at the tragic event on the Friday. The investigation is continuing there.

Mr POWER: When I was in Mackay last week, I went to visit the Simtars office in Mackay and, given the number of mines in central and regional Queensland, I was disappointed to find that the office in Discovery Lane was closed and, in fact—

Mr SPEAKER: You are using props, member for Logan.

Mr POWER: Sorry, I am tabling this, Mr Speaker. In fact, the logo had been ripped from the wall and there were shredding bins around. Where is the closest dedicated Simtars office to Mackay?

Ms Cooper: I will speak a little about the closure. The Mackay laboratory ceased operations on 30 June this year. Fee-for-service occupational hygiene services will also cease in March 2027. Simtars does provide commercial offerings to industry when market gaps are identified. When it comes to that particular service, the commercial gap for occupational hygiene and mine roadway dust testing has closed, and a decision has been made to close the Mackay laboratory on 30 June 2026 and to cease commercial occupational hygiene services by March 2027, as I said. Hygiene resources will be redirected to support endeavours of RSHQ's research and industry education. The two displaced staff from Simtars Mackay laboratory have been redeployed to support RSHQ's Mackay office.

The reason for Simtars' creation was around being able to fill gaps where commercial services were not supporting the industry. We continually check to see whether or not there are commercial services that are available. Where we see there is no longer a gap, we look to redeploy any staff and cease those operations. That is what has occurred here. There are commercial services available in the occupational hygiene services area.

Mr POWER: I want to quote here. It says on the Simtars website under 'Contacting the emergency response team' that 'Our team is on call 24/7. To contact us, call the 24-hour support hotline on 1800331991.' If someone calls the Simtars 1800 emergency number from a mine in the Bowen Basin, what is the response time from Redbank? I was concerned that you said that the team was not able to respond to Peak Downs on the same day.

Ms Cooper: We deployed our staff as soon as possible to get there. I can check to see exactly when they arrived. We did have all—

Mr POWER: I can tell you that Discovery Lane is two hours from Peak Downs.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: the member for Logan has asked the question and the acting chief executive officer is being responsive to the question. It is not appropriate to interrupt the acting chief executive officer when she is being responsive to the question as asked.

Mr SPEAKER: That is a valid point of order. Ms Cooper is being directly relevant to the question as asked.

Ms Cooper: As soon as we were made aware of the tragic incident on Friday, our inspectors and investigators went directly to the mine site. They were the first people on the scene. At the same time, the Simtars scanning and testing staff were there. Police were there immediately and secured the scene. There was an immediate response.

Mr POWER: Were local mines informed of that closure?

Ms Cooper: Could you please explain the question?

Mr POWER: Were local mines, given they ring the 1800 number, advised of that closure?

Ms Cooper: I will check to see exactly what the notifications were around that, but I am assured there are a lot of processes in closing a service. I will check exactly what occurred, but I am sure there would have been the appropriate notifications given.

Mr SPEAKER: You will come back with that information before the end of the session, Ms Cooper, with the minister's agreement?

Mr LAST: Yes, that is correct.

Mr POWER: Are we still paying rent and lease costs on the Discovery Lane site?

Ms Cooper: I will need to check that one also.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, are you happy with that?

Mr LAST: Yes, I am happy with that, Mr Speaker.

Mr POWER: Lastly, Simtars has been based in Mackay for 30 years and moved to a new office because of the need in Discovery Lane. Who made the decision to close the Mackay office of the Safety in Mines Testing and Research Station?

Ms Cooper: I will need to check exactly who would have been—I was not there at the time, so I will have to refer back to my executive leadership team. The way we operate is to bring those types of decisions to the executive leadership team and to also consult with the minister.

Mr SPEAKER: So you will also come back with that one, Minister?

Mr LAST: That is correct, Mr Speaker.

Mr POWER: Thank you, Ms Cooper. It is good to meet you. I know that these are difficult circumstances, but I hope to work with you in the future. Director-General, the budget papers show a 42 per cent reduction in royalties in gas condensate and crude oil between 2026-27 and 2029-30. Can you confirm that projected reduction?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek your guidance and clarity in relation to royalties and whether that would be more appropriately directed to the Treasurer's section, which was held last week. I think that would be the most appropriate portfolio for questions of this nature to be submitted to.

Mr SPEAKER: That is a valid point. Member for Logan, are you trying to use those figures to get the production of tonnages or petajoules? Royalties do come under the Treasurer's portfolio.

Mr POWER: I understand that they are linked to volumes—the amount of production at new mines or new gas sites and oil production over that time period. They are directly linked.

Mr SPEAKER: I will ask you to reframe the question in that case.

Mr POWER: Given that the budget papers show a 42 per cent reduction in royalties between 2026-27 and 2029-30, how much of that is linked to volume change over that period?

Mr Fraine: Good morning. A number of factors go into the forecast of royalties, as you mentioned. Is there a budget paper reference you can provide me?

Mr POWER: There is. It is page 60 of Budget Paper 2. I can give you a copy and table it for the entire committee.

Mr SPEAKER: If you could table that, we will get that to Mr Fraine. That would be great.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: I would submit to you again that this question as put does relate to the Treasury portfolio area. It would have been more appropriate to have put that question into the Treasurer's section last week. I ask you to consider that matter.

Mr POWER: If I could—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Logan, do you have a point of order?

Mr POWER: Last week the Deputy Speaker said—

If it is a resources question, it should be directed to the Minister ...

He specifically said—

... your question, which was in relation to the volume produced ... would seem to me to be more relevant to the Minister for Natural Resources. If the Treasurer and the Under Treasurer are inclined to give a response ... that would be an acceptable outcome.

It was to be put in this department. The Deputy Speaker's ruling is why those questions were not asked.

Mr SPEAKER: As I said before, royalties can be a measure of your output of tonnage and petajoules. On that basis, Mr Fraine can respond on a production side, not a monetary side.

Mr Fraine: As I was mentioning, royalty payments are a production of a number of factors, one being production itself and the other being prices, as we discussed. If we look at coal, for example, in the 12 months to March 2026 Queensland produced approximately 226½ million tonnes of coal, which was an increase of one per cent from the previous year. Of that total, 134.8 million tonnes, or just under 60 per cent, was metallurgical coal, which is used for steelmaking, which is the primary part of our production—

Mr POWER: Point of order: just for clarification, because there was a bit of to and fro, the question was specifically about gas condensate and crude oil.

Mr Fraine: Certainly, as I look at matters around gas condensate and crude oil, and as I look at the figures for petroleum royalties in front of us, the Queensland Treasury's budget estimates that the petroleum royalties generated about $1.1 billion in revenue for the state in 2025-26, and it is forecast to increase to nearly $1.86 billion next year. Again, that will be a function of a couple of different factors. We in Queensland already produce condensate and oil out of a couple of different parts of the state.

Mr POWER: Director-General, what volumes of production are projected to be from crude oil specifically in 2029-30?

Mr Fraine: That speaks to a lot of the work that is currently going on around future fuel supplies in this state. As I mentioned in response to the last question, oil production was roughly about 1.2 million barrels in 2025. A range of things are going on in this state to drive greater production into the out years. I will mention a few of those. We in my agency, along with a number of other agencies, are working around key contributions to the Queensland Fuel Security Plan. They are looking to deliver short-, medium- and long-term actions to maximise Queensland's capability by optimising existing production and identifying opportunities to accelerate additional supply—the sort of additional supply, member, that you are talking about. For instance, at the moment Cooper-Eromanga is doing 3,000 to 5,000 barrels a day.

A number of government agencies are progressing the Taroom Trough in an orderly way by supporting exploration, conducting appraisals, coordinating approvals and planning the infrastructure needed to support the development of the Taroom Trough. We are also looking to identify where gas, oil and liquid opportunities can be expanded, including through the targeted assessment of conventional oil.

Mr POWER: Point of order: I asked specifically about crude oil in 2029-30. Could I phrase it differently? Did your department provide advice to Treasury on future crude oil production in 2029-30 from the Taroom Trough?

Mr Fraine: Certainly my department, along with other departments working in this space, provides advice to Treasury on the future fuel security work. For instance, our current assessment is that approved work programs already in the Taroom Trough will total approximately 500 million in about five years in an effort to increase the work that is coming out of there.

Mr POWER: In reference to the government's Fuel Security Plan, what advice have you provided to the minister about when Queenslanders will be fuelling up with at least 10 per cent of the petrol and diesel in our cars and trucks using oil from the Taroom Trough?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order: under standing order 115, the question as I heard it and as framed maybe a hypothetical. I ask you to consider whether it needs to be rephrased.

Mr POWER: I am perfectly happy, if the department has given no advice, they can give that answer.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Logan, I am happy to let the question go. I am happy for the director-general to answer that.

Mr Fraine: The Taroom Trough has the potential to be Australia's first oilfield in 50 years and could be a key part of driving oil and condensate into the future. On 23 April this year, for instance, the Governor in Council approved the State Development and Public Works Organisation (Taroom Trough Development Plan Works) Amendment Regulation, which directed the Coordinator-General to prepare the Taroom Trough Development Plan.

We have, as the member knows, a substantial hydrocarbon resource base with the Taroom Trough being identified as a potential medium- to long-term development opportunity to strengthen domestic fuel supply and support regional economic development. The state, as I mentioned in response to the previous question, already has a well-established petroleum industry. However, to your point, overall production remains limited for the broader supplies that we have as a state, and not all supply is retained in Queensland for domestic use. The priority now is to look at how that capacity and ability is expanded over time.

The Taroom Trough Development Plan, which is being led by the Coordinator-General, will establish a whole-of-basin framework to enable the orderly, efficient and responsible development of oil and gas resources within the Taroom Trough. It will provide greater certainty to support project level decision-making, infrastructure planning and investment sequencing for power, water, roads and other trunk infrastructure. It will provide clarity on the nature, timing and opportunities associated with industry, community stakeholders and the Australian government.

Although, to your point, there are no formally declared reserve figures in the Taroom Trough at this point, there is already work and production going on out there based on some of the existing tenements that have been let. The basin has already demonstrated the presence of gas, oil and condensate through appraisal wells, noting that the work that is underway will quantify the levels available.

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

Mr DALTON: Minister, the Service Delivery Statements state that the department will support new and expanded resource opportunities across Queensland. Can the minister outline how the Queensland critical minerals strategy will help attract investment, create regional jobs and grow Queensland's critical mineral industry including the benefits that will be delivered in Mackay?

Mr LAST: It gives me great pleasure to speak to the *Delivering Queensland's critical minerals future 2026-30* document. Queensland has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to cement its position as a global leader in critical minerals. The Crisafulli government is determined to ensure we seize that opportunity.

Critical minerals, as we know, are the building blocks of the modern economy. They are essential for advanced manufacturing, renewable energy technologies, defence capability, medical technology and the digital devices that we rely on every day. As global demand continues to grow, so too does competition for investment, and Queensland is exceptionally well placed to meet that demand. I am pleased to table our new strategy now. We have copies for everyone.

Mr SPEAKER: You are seeking leave to table that, Minister?

Mr LAST: I am, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mr LAST: Queensland possesses world-class geological potential, an established resources sector, skilled workers, strong environmental and regulatory standards, and access to export markets. These are significant competitive advantages. We recognise that investors also want certainty, clarity and confidence before committing billions of dollars to new projects. That is why *Delivering Queensland's critical minerals future 2026-30* is so important. This strategy is more than a document. It is a practical investment road map that clearly sets out Queensland's competitive strengths and the government's vision for growing the sector. It can act as a guide to step investors through why Queensland is the best place to invest, highlighting our extensive resource endowment, existing infrastructure, skilled workforce, research capability, strong partnerships with industry and commitment to responsible resource development.

Importantly, it provides investors with confidence that Queensland has a coordinated plan to unlock new projects and support downstream processing where it makes commercial sense. By clearly articulating Queensland's strengths and our long-term direction, the document sends a strong message to global markets that Queensland is open for business and ready to partner with investors looking for stable, reliable jurisdictions.

For regions like Mackay, the benefits extend well beyond the mine gate. Increased exploration, new mining projects, expanded processing opportunities and stronger supply chains all create skilled and secure jobs across engineering, manufacturing, construction, transport, maintenance and professional services. We saw that on display last week at QME in Mackay—record numbers of exhibitors, record attendance and certainly a very well-received industry in that community.

Delivering Queensland's critical minerals future 2026-30 complements the Crisafulli government's broader investments including a $146.1 million commitment in the 2026-27 budget to unlock Queensland's critical minerals potential. Queensland is one of the largest economic demonstrated resource mineral endowments in Australia, coming in at over $1 trillion. It is an extraordinary amount. With the increasing demand, coupled with a large mineral endowment, we have the opportunity to effectively drive investment and innovation in the sector by working closely with domestic producers and potential investors.

There is worldwide interest in our critical minerals in this state. I led a trade mission to the US last year. Off the back of that mission, there were three important deals signed here in this state with the US EXIM Bank—EQ Resources at Mount Carbine, Graphinex in Townsville, RZ Resources out here at Pinkenba. They are real outcomes from that trip but, more importantly, a real commitment from the US to invest in our critical minerals in this state. We know that there is a US-Australia critical minerals alliance. That interest is growing. We are seeing that now with the meetings that I and my staff are having and the interest through the department in investment in this state from those who want to access those critical minerals and see the opportunities moving forward.

Mr DALTON: Minister, with reference to the 2026-27 budget, can the minister update the committee on the review of Queensland's Financial Provisioning Scheme and explain how it will encourage investment while maintaining strong environmental outcomes?

Mr POWER: Point of order: the member seemed to make an assertion about a review process. Would that then be hypothetical? I ask for him to authenticate it.

Mr SPEAKER: I am sure the minister can respond to that.

Mr LAST: I thank the member for the question and acknowledge his strong advocacy for Queensland's resources sector and the thousands of workers, businesses and communities across his electorate who rely on a strong and competitive mining industry. The 2026-27 budget reflects the Crisafulli government's commitment to delivering better services through a stronger economy. That starts with ensuring Queensland remains the best place in Australia to invest in resources. That is why we have released terms of reference for a targeted review of Queensland's Financial Provisioning Scheme.

The scheme plays an important role. It exists to ensure that if a resource operator fails to meet its obligations there are financial arrangements in place to protect Queensland's taxpayers and ensure mine rehabilitation can still occur. We support that objective. We also recognise that Queensland's resources sector has changed significantly since the scheme was introduced. Queensland is experiencing unprecedented opportunities in critical minerals, continued strength in coal and growing interest from investors looking to develop new projects. We need a regulatory framework that protects the environment while supporting investment, jobs and economic growth. This is precisely what this review is designed to achieve.

One of the issues I hear most often from industry, particularly smaller explorers and mid-tier operators, is that the current settings can unnecessarily tie up capital that could otherwise be invested in exploration, expansion and creating jobs. We listened, we committed to a review and we are getting on with delivering it. The terms of reference released last week provide a clear road map for that work. They will examine whether the scheme is effectively managing financial rehabilitation risk while supporting investment and industry growth.

Importantly, the review will consider: Queensland's competitiveness against other jurisdictions; opportunities to improve investment settings; how the scheme operates for small and mid-tier operators; and whether risk classifications remain appropriate. Throughout this process we will maintain our unwavering commitment to strong environmental outcomes. There is no trade-off between responsible environmental stewardship and a thriving resources sector. Queensland can, and must, achieve both.

Our objective is to ensure companies meet their rehabilitation obligations while creating a policy environment that attracts investment instead of discouraging it. Consultation with industry and stakeholders will commence in September because we want to get this right. We will work closely with operators, communities and experts to ensure Queensland has a scheme that is fit for the future. This is particularly important for the member for Mirani's electorate, which is home to one of Queensland's most significant mining regions, with globally significant operations and a growing pipeline of resource opportunities that support thousands of direct and indirect jobs through the Mackay and Isaac regions. Those businesses need confidence to invest, to employ local people and to continue contributing to regional Queensland's prosperity.

Unlike Labor, which spent a decade creating uncertainty through anti-resources policies, the Crisafulli government is backing the resources sector with practical reforms that encourage investment while maintaining robust environmental protections. This review is another example of our government delivering sensible policy that supports responsible development, strengthens Queensland's global competitiveness, and ensures our resources sector continues creating jobs and opportunities for regional Queensland.

Mr DALTON: Minister, Queensland has climbed significantly in the Fraser Institute's investment attractiveness index. I refer to page 1 of the SDS, which states that you will promote investment opportunities across Queensland and the resource sector. Can you outline the significance of this ranking increase and recent investments in the sector?

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, point of order: in relation to the assertion about the increase in ranking, I would ask that the member authenticate the assertion.

Mr POWER: I have a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: I will get a response from the minister. There was a report that was referenced. Are you aware of the report?

Mr LAST: The Fraser Institute report? We can authenticate that.

Mr SPEAKER: You had a point of order, member for Logan?

Mr POWER: The standing orders require the questioner to provide the authentication. That is very clear within the standing orders. For example, would I be able to make an assertion and say, 'The minister will be able to authenticate that what I have asserted is correct'? No, I would not.

Mr SPEAKER: I will ask the questioner to rephrase the question.

Mr DALTON: Certainly.

Mr SPEAKER: Is that the point of order you had, member for Springwood?

Mr de BRENNI: Yes, correct, Speaker. It is up to the member to authenticate.

Mr DALTON: I will rephrase the question, if that helps. Page 1 of the SDS states that you will promote investment opportunities across Queensland and the resources sector. Can the minister outline the significance of these investments?

Mr POWER: Mr Speaker, point of order: previously where authentication been questioned and they are not able to provide it, they are usually not given the chance to rephrase and instead the question has been ruled out of order.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: We have done this over the last two weeks. Do you have a point of order, member for Moggill?

Dr ROWAN: My point of order was exactly that, Mr Speaker. Members were provided the opportunity to rephrase, and that has been the determination of the chair at these estimates hearings over the last week.

Mr POWER: I am glad he supports it.

Mr SPEAKER: What was that, member for Logan?

Mr POWER: I am glad that the deputy chair supports that. It is an important thing to be able to say that and then to be able to rephrase.

Mr LAST: The Fraser Institute's rankings are a strong endorsement of the work the Crisafulli government has undertaken to restore confidence in Queensland's resources sector. We know that under the tenure of the former Labor government Australia was ranked below Tanzania and Zambia.

Mr POWER: And in your first years. Tell the whole story.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Logan, right at the beginning of these hearings I said that I will not tolerate cross-table chatter. The minister has the call.

Mr DALTON: Mr Speaker, point of order: I wish to table this *Annual survey of mining companies, 2025*.

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, point of order: I do not think that intercession by way of point of order to table a document is within the standing orders. The member has asked his question. The minister should answer it as asked. If the member is seeking to table a document, perhaps he can do that when he next asks a question.

Mr LAST: I am happy to table that document.

Mr SPEAKER: One of the members is seeking leave to table the document.

Mr DALTON: I seek leave to table the document.

Mr POWER: There has been a practice where the Leader of the House has asked all—

Mr SPEAKER: Give me one second to get advice and I will come back to you.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, point of order.

Mr POWER: I am happy to move on, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Your point of order, member for Moggill?

Dr ROWAN: My point of order is that members should be able to table any information. That is a longstanding precedent. I would submit to you also that the member for Logan is deliberately interrupting the proceedings.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, a member of the committee can table documents. Member for Logan, are you looking for copies? Is that what you were alluding to?

Mr POWER: I wanted to point out that previously we have been held up with our questions where members had said about authentication purposes. My understanding is that it only authenticates for the purposes of the Speaker. For authentication purposes previously we insisted on having copies for all and then there was a delay as people read through it, which in this case I think is a 30- or 40-page document. I am happy to move on. If you are happy with the authentication, Mr Speaker, I am happy to move on.

Mr SPEAKER: We will move on.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, point of order: I believe that in making those statements the member for Logan is being deliberately argumentative with the chair with respect to your rulings and also providing substantial statements, which is not in accordance with the standing orders applicable to the estimates hearings and relevant sessions.

Mr SPEAKER: I will deal with that. Minister, you have the call.

Mr LAST: After years of decline under the former Labor government, Queensland has indeed surged from 39th to 13th on the Fraser Institute's investment attractiveness index. That is a good news story for Queensland. It sends a clear message that Queensland is once again a competitive destination for resources investment. The significance of this cannot be overstated. The Fraser Institute survey is one of the most respected measures of global mining investment sentiment. Companies making billion dollar investment decisions look to these rankings when deciding where to invest, create jobs and develop new projects.

This is the first survey to reflect investor sentiment during the Crisafulli government's time in office, and it demonstrates that our commitment to restoring certainty, reducing red tape and delivering timely decisions is already rebuilding Queensland's international reputation. Unlike the former government, which allowed Queensland's standing to fall behind jurisdictions like Tanzania and Zambia, we have made it clear that Queensland is open for business. However, we are not resting on this achievement. We are not resting on our laurels. While the improvement is substantial, it also reinforces that there is more work to be done. That is why this government is continuing to deliver reforms that improve investment confidence while maintaining Queensland's strong environmental standards. We are streamlining approvals, improving turnaround times, providing proponents with greater certainty and ensuring government agencies work together to facilitate investment rather than frustrate it. Importantly, these reforms are already translating into real economic outcomes.

Since coming to office the Crisafulli government has backed projects that will support thousands of mining jobs across Queensland. I will give you some examples: in 2026, Argo Natural Resources's acquisition of Bowen Coking Coal, with 250 jobs secured; in 2026, the Meandu coalmine extension approved, with 500 jobs secured; and in 2026, Dhilmar Ltd's acquisition of Anglo American's five steelmaking coalmines, with 3,550 jobs secured. I met with the CEO of Dhilmar yesterday and he wants to open more coalmines in this state. He is committed to reopening the Moranbah North and Grosvenor underground mines. That is a good news story for this state because that is what we do: we work with these mining companies which develop our resource sector. When you have someone like Dhilmar coming into this state picking up resources like Anglo's assets and committing to their continued operation and ongoing development, that is a good news story.

I continue: in 2026, Yancoal Australia's investment in Kestrel Coal mine, with 800 jobs secured; in 2026, the Ensham Coal Mine extension approved, with 700 jobs secured; in 2025, Argo Natural Resources's deal on Fitzroy Resources, with 1,000 jobs secured; in 2025, Centurion Mine declared a coordinated project, securing 525 jobs; in 2025, Eva Copper's investment decision secured, with 1,450 new jobs; in 2025, Bravus expansion announced, opening the door to 600 new jobs; and one of the success stories in Queensland at the moment, in 2025, Graphinex's Esmeralda Graphite Project declared a coordinated project, securing 200 jobs.

They are not just statistics; they represent improvement in Queensland's global investment ranking and they represent the fact that confidence is returning. This government is committed to ensuring the resource sector remains a key driver of jobs, economic growth and prosperity for regional Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to the opposition for a couple more questions. I will go to the member for Logan.

Mr POWER: Just picking up on fuel, you mentioned the Moonie oil going to South Australia—

Mr SPEAKER: Who is this is directed to?

Mr POWER: To the director-general. I was just continuing my questions. Director-General, you mentioned the fuel going to South Australia through Moonie and limited amounts in Eromanga. How much is processed, and what percentage of Queensland consumption comes from the Taroom Trough currently?

Mr Fraine: I thank the member for the question. Of course, as I was saying earlier, the work that is happening in the Taroom Trough is to unlock an emerging near- to medium-term opportunity. Omega, which are working out in the Taroom Trough, will start doing further drilling, beyond the exploration wells that they have done, in the next 24 hours. This in and of itself, members of the committee, is a significant milestone because it represents, again, that future development of what is the potential both for crude and for condensate, the two types of effectively—

Mr POWER: Liquid petroleum.

Mr Fraine:—material to come out of there. That represents a great deal of confidence from industry in the potential of the Taroom Trough. For the nerds in the room, they will be using Australia's largest drill rig to do that and to start looking at untapping the potential of the Taroom Trough.

Mr POWER: Mr Speaker, point of order: just to clarify, I mentioned the fact that the director-general had a clear reference to the amount of oil coming out of the—

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker—

Mr POWER: Sorry, can I finish?

Mr SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr POWER: But my question—and I go to relevance here—was clearly about currently out of Taroom.

Mr SPEAKER: Did I hear a point of order from the member for Moggill?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: in relation to standing order 118, the director-general is being relevant to the question. He was interrupted and then there was a lengthy statement from the member for Logan before he raised his point of order. If he wants to raise a point of order, he should reference what his point of order is. I just submit that to you.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes. We are getting very long points of order which is consuming a lot of time, so make your points of order short. I will go back to the director-general. You have heard the question, Director-General.

Mr Fraine: Yes, thank you. As I think I have explained in responding to some of the earlier questions, the Taroom Trough is an emerging field.

Mr POWER: How much?

Mr Fraine: It has been quoted, member, that it is currently doing a couple of hundred at least barrels a day as part of the early appraisal wells that are ramping up over time as those tenements get further explored. As industry works on the Taroom Trough as that medium- to long-term supply, those numbers will become available.

Mr POWER: Understood. I note that you have advised there will be a 42 per cent drop. I table a news story from May 2023—

Mr SPEAKER: Just stop. We do not have commentary in the lead-up to questions. If you have another question, just read it.

Mr POWER: I table a news story from May 2023 outlining that Omega had already commenced exploratory drilling in the Taroom Trough and that Shell commenced exploratory drilling in the Taroom Trough in September 2024. Can you confirm that both of those wells were started under the former Labor government?

Mr Fraine: I thank the member for the question.

Mr SPEAKER: We will just get that document to you.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order—

Mr POWER: Although we are authenticating for the purposes of the committee, I think the director-general is well aware of these timelines.

Mr SPEAKER: Just give me a moment to look.

Dr ROWAN: My point of order is that we need an opportunity to see the document as tabled and also that it is furnished to the director-general.

Mr SPEAKER: Director-General, you have the document. Are you ready to respond?

Mr Fraine: Thank you. Those timeframes seem as reported in the article. As I have mentioned, in early 2026 petroleum and gas exploration permits were awarded in the Taroom Trough following the competitive tender process to increase the production that is happening as we speak, with Omega doing additional drilling in the Taroom Trough in the next 24 hours with a very large rig.

Mr POWER: Is it true that they are drilling the same hole horizontally, aren’t they?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: that is seeking an opinion but also the question—

Mr POWER: I will move on.

Mr SPEAKER: I am hearing a point of order.

Dr ROWAN: I am happy that the member for Logan is moving on, but I was making a point of order. The point of order is that he was seeking an opinion. Also, the way the question was asked was not in accordance with the standing orders and the processes that are applicable to these estimates hearings.

Mr SPEAKER: And that was my concern. Member for Logan, I am going to caution you to just ask specific questions. It is not an opportunity to badger the witness. Please ask your next question.

Mr POWER: Director-General, what advice have you provided on the timeline for building the refinery in Labor’s Taroom Trough?

Mr BENNETT: Can I ask for—

Mr POWER: I want to table for authentication Dale Last’s quotes about the Taroom Trough refinery in Labor’s Taroom Trough.

Mr SPEAKER: You are going to rephrase that question because it was argumentative.

Mr BENNETT: And I still have a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr POWER: I just want to clarify—

Mr SPEAKER: I am taking a point of order. Member for Logan, you are so close to being warned. If you want to stay here at this committee hearing, I suggest you consider your behaviour.

Mr BENNETT: Mr Speaker, I want to raise with you the issue of the relevance of that question to the 2026-27 Queensland budget.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, I have a point of order as well. My point of order is that it was argumentative. There was also a lengthy statement and preamble, under standing order 115. Also, with the additional elements that were added to it, there were multiple parts to the question. I would submit to you, again, that in accordance with the standing orders there needs to be one question put.

Mr SPEAKER: There is only one question at a time. Member for Logan, you will either rephrase your question or move on. I warn you once again that you are on very thin ice.

Mr POWER: Can I address the first point of order?

Mr SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr POWER: It is about the budget in that the minister said ‘my phones have run hot in the last week’ about this Taroom Trough refinery. I want to ask: how much of our budget is being expended on this Taroom Trough refinery that this article talks about?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order: that is another question.

Mr SPEAKER: That is a different question.

Mr POWER: I just want to reframe my original question.

Mr SPEAKER: There is another point of order.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, that is a different question to the original question which was put, which had multiple elements—and I am still seeking a ruling in relation to that. It was also argumentative, and I know you have cautioned the member around that. There was also the lengthy preamble, which I raised in relation to standing order 115. Also, with the tabling of documents, I believe the member for Logan is not a member of the committee and so he has to alternatively use another member to have those documents tabled.

Mr SPEAKER: He is a substitute member today. Member for Logan, I am going to ask that if you have a question you ask your question without any imputation and without any argumentative aspect. Do you have a question?

Mr POWER: Director-General, what advice have you provided on the timeframe to build a refinery at Taroom Trough?

Mr Fraine: As I talked about earlier, there is a lot of work going on in this space at the moment around the broader future fuel security and supply space. That includes the work we have just discussed in the Taroom Trough. It includes the work we are doing around broader gas, oil and liquids opportunities and also looking at the opportunities around things such as domestic refining and domestic storage that the member is referring to. To get a good handle on that situation and to maximise the collaboration with industry, who are very interested in this space, the Queensland government has launched a market engagement process to identify and assess private sector proposals for fuel storage and refining.

Known as the Accelerating Fuel Infrastructure Program and led by the Office of the Coordinator-General and supported by EDQ, this program will facilitate market-led solutions to explore improving fuel security in Queensland. Stage 1 of the process is an expression of interest that is currently going on to identify suitable projects for further assessment, be they storage, refining or other ideas around those other fuel supply options. Members would have seen a few pieces surrounding that, whether it be in the Deputy Premier’s space with the $25 million for the Ampol renewable diesel co-processing facility under the Sovereign Industry Development Fund or the work that happened to fast-track the leases around BP’s Bulwer Island storage facilities. What we call AFIP, the Accelerating Fuel Infrastructure Program, is looking to really identify when there are those ideas coming in from the private sector so the assessment will be done. Whether they are storage, refining or other ways of producing fuel, that process will explore those and give subsequent advice to government on that basis.

Mr POWER: Director-General, at last year’s estimates it was revealed Mr Ian Davies was paid $187,500 for 25 days of strategic analysis. Has that strategic analysis been completed?

Mr Fraine: Yes, that strategic analysis has been completed. It was completed in October last year.

Mr POWER: Will you release the strategic analysis that Queenslanders spent $187,000 on?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: in relation to the questions when they are put, under the standing orders there should be a reference to the individual the question is directed to, not asked directly across the table. It is about correct titles.

Mr POWER: The question is for the director-general. My apologies.

Mr SPEAKER: Director-General?

Mr Fraine: As explained at last year's estimates, drawing on best practices and insight, Mr Davies has worked alongside the department to provide analysis and advice that informed the deal between the state and the Commonwealth government in order to invest in continued operations for the Mount Isa copper smelter and the Townsville refinery. Those are two key assets for the future of the north-west along with the Phosphate Hill space that members may have heard about in recent times. The work Mr Davies undertook with us was around analysis, practical commercial insight and assisting the department in developing options for government consideration. Those considerations were both cabinet- and commercial-in-confidence and will remain so.

Mr POWER: Director-General, on 17 February the opposition lodged a right-to-information application relating to all analysis and advice provided by Mr Davies. I reference here RTI 25-454 for authentication. The RTI application has been delayed by your department three times by approximately 105 business days. Are you aware why this RTI has been delayed?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: in relation to standing order 115, again, in relation to an imputation or inference that is contained within the question, I would submit to you that is contained within the question and that it be rephrased.

Mr POWER: For the assistance of the committee, we do have the letters that show them asking for extra time and the delays, so I am not sure about the imputation.

Mr SPEAKER: The question was asked of the director-general. I will let you answer.

Mr Fraine: As a department we will be going through due process, as we do with every other RTI application.

Mr POWER: I might get a similar answer, but I want to emphasise this is a separate RTI, RTI 124-373. Are you aware your department has also sought extensions several times on an RTI from the opposition which has now been processing since 11 April 2025?

Mr Fraine: As per my previous answer, we will be going through all due process with regard to consideration of the RTI request.

Mr POWER: Director-General, are you aware of reporting that the Premier would reduce coal royalties for new production while maintaining the existing system for pre-existing royalties on existing mines?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: in relation to portfolio related matters with respect to royalties, as has already been indicated in this session—and there has been a ruling—those matters should have been put to the Treasurer in his section, which was held last week.

Mr SPEAKER: That is a valid point of order. Royalties are not relevant to this hearing. They should have been asked of the Treasurer. Do you have another question, member for Logan?

Mr POWER: It has been reported that ideas about mining costs were floated at a closed-door round table with mining CEOs in December. Were you actually present at that closed-door round table?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: it goes to authentication in relation to the question as asked.

Mr SPEAKER: We are moving on, member for Logan. I have ruled the first question out of order. That one has very little difference.

Mr POWER: I have the authentication here.

Mr BENNETT: What about Robbie Katter? Does he get a question?

Mr SPEAKER: Do you have some authentication?

Mr POWER: Yes.

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

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: again, in relation to the information that has been provided as a basis for authentication, this is all about coal royalties. Again, I submit to you that those questions should have been appropriately asked in the Treasurer's session, which was held last week.

Mr de BRENNI: Point of order, Mr Speaker: the SDS for the agency clearly outlines key deliverables including supporting new and expanded resource opportunities and it goes on to talk about investment opportunities, competitiveness et cetera. I think that goes precisely to the operating environment. I do not think the question is about the specifics of a regime. It is about the operating environment that is created for prospective or existing operators and, therefore, the question is appropriate to be asked in this session.

Mr SPEAKER: The only thing I would say, Director-General, is that it does speak to new production, so if you could address that aspect of it.

Mr Fraine: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Member, could I have the question again, please?

Mr POWER: Certainly. It is reported that this idea of reducing royalties was floated at a closed door round table with mining CEOs in December. Were you at that closed door round table?

Mr Fraine: I am often at meetings with mining companies. That is part of the role I undertake as director-general for the department. They will sometimes be with ministers. They will sometimes be meetings that I undertake and, from time to time, there will be meetings that I am at with the Premier, so yes.

Mr POWER: You were at that meeting?

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

Mr POWER: Just to clarify: you were at that meeting?

Mr Fraine: Yes.

Mr MARTIN: Director-General, in reference to the Dyno Nobel Phosphate Hill and Mayfair deal, it was reported that this was a joint loan to secure the transaction. Is it correct that your department was at one stage in negotiations with Mayfair about that loan instead being a grant, which would not require them to pay funds back to taxpayers?

Mr Fraine: The deal that was being negotiated between the state and Mayfair was being led by Queensland Treasury. What you have seen reported in the media are the outcomes of those negotiations.

Mr SPEAKER: You have another one, member for Stretton? No, I call the member for Logan.

Mr POWER: Just returning to the meeting that you and the Premier were at, how many 'carve-out'—and that was the quote from the tabled article—royalty agreements have been put in place under this government?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Your point of order, member for Moggill?

Dr ROWAN: Again my point of order, Mr Speaker, relates to the question as it is framed with respect to royalties, and that is a matter that is under the purview of the Treasurer and relevant officials within the treasury department. So I would submit to you again that, as the question is framed, it should have been put to the Treasurer in his session, which was last week.

Mr de BRENNI: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Springwood, your point of order?

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I put to you a submission on an earlier point of order which you ruled in favour of in respect of the operating environment for new and existing resource opportunities across the state. I would submit to you that the general nature of this question means that it can be answered in this session similarly to the previous question that you ruled upon as in order.

Mr SPEAKER: The director-general can only respond to issues that happen in his department, not outside his department, so I will let him respond.

Mr Fraine: The matter of royalties is a matter for Queensland Treasury.

Mr SPEAKER: We have another question from the member for Stretton.

Mr MARTIN: Director-General, with reference to Eva Copper, it was reported that a blue-tongued skink was found onsite. To your knowledge, how is the skink? Is it thriving? How is it going?

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: We have a point of order.

Dr ROWAN: My two points of order, Mr Speaker: I do not see how this is relevant to the Appropriation Bill before this—

Mr MARTIN: It stopped production on a mine.

Dr ROWAN:—committee. The second is in relation to seeking an opinion in relation to the health and wellbeing of the skink.

Mr MARTIN: Well, I think it is a matter of fact—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Stretton, I hear points of order in silence. If you want to respond to the point of order, I will come to you when the member for Moggill has finished his point of order.

Dr ROWAN: The question is seeking an opinion around the health and wellbeing of the skink.

Mr MARTIN: It is not an opinion whether the skink is alive or dead, Mr Speaker, and I think the director-general probably knows.

Mr SPEAKER: I am going to ask you to rephrase that question, member for Stretton. Try again.

Mr MARTIN: Is the skink alive?

Mr SPEAKER: No. I call the Director-General.

Mr Fraine: For committee members' background, the Harmony Gold Eva Copper project is a major greenfield copper gold development located approximately 75 kilometres north of Cloncurry and 95 kilometres north-east of Mount Isa. It is a strategically significant investment in the North West Minerals Province and it is expected to produce approximately 60,000 tonnes of copper and 19,000 ounces of gold annually over a 15-year mine life, reinforcing Queensland's position as a major supplier of minerals critical to the global energy transition. The project is forecast, when it is fully up and running, to support about a thousand construction jobs and 450 operational jobs once in production.

In late May 2026 following preliminary site works Harmony Gold paused further site clearing and earthworks after they advised the discovery of a previously unrecognised skink species within the project areas. Harmony Gold is engaging currently with the federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to determine the appropriate pathway forward under potential requirements of the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, otherwise known as the EPBC Act for people who deal in this space. The department understands that a stage 1 referral under the EPBC Act was released for public comment for 10 business days on 14 July this year. Further assessment by the federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water will occur following the public comment period. Importantly, Harmony is continuing works on areas already cleared for the project and the construction of the Eva Copper mine project is progressing safely and responsibly. This performance reflects their focused execution since the final investment decision in November last year.

Mr SPEAKER: We will have one more question before we change over.

Mr MARTIN: Director-General, just to follow-up, could you answer the question I asked? It was pretty straightforward about the skink.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Director-General.

Mr Fraine: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr MARTIN: If you do not know, you can take it on notice and get back to us.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Stretton!

Mr Fraine: The project is dealing with the skink species as found.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. We will now go to government members for some questions. I will go to the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Minister, on funding for the Queensland fuel security plan, I understand that Queensland recently welcomed a significant discovery of oil and gas in the Denison Trough. Can you outline what this means for domestic gas supply and what impact the federal gas reservation policy will have on Queensland's gas sector?

Mr LAST: The Crisafulli government is committed to strengthening Queensland's long-term energy security by increasing domestic supply and creating the stable investment environment needed for the industry to grow. The recent Denison Trough discovery is a large onshore tight gas discovery that represents a significant milestone in the sector. Importantly, this is not just another exploration announcement; gas from the exploration wells is already flowing into the domestic market, supplying

Queensland manufacturers, including the Boyne Island aluminium smelter and Queensland Magnesia's processing plant. The discovery has the potential to open a new gas hub in the Bowen Basin, replicating the success of the Surat Basin, while creating skilled regional jobs, supporting local businesses and delivering long-term economic growth. With an estimated 566 petajoules of gas, the discovery has the potential to power Queensland homes for more than five years and could begin supplying additional industrial gas users by the end of the year, and that is not to mention the discovery of oil in the Denison Trough. At the present time around 300,000 litres a week is coming out of the Denison Trough into Queensland's market.

Queensland already supplies almost 90 per cent of the east coast gas market, and this discovery further reinforces our position as Australia's energy powerhouse while strengthening domestic energy security. The Crisafulli government has backed this outcome by providing a stable and predictable operating environment, releasing new land for exploration and accelerating fuel infrastructure development so industry has the confidence to invest. This stands in stark contrast to the antidevelopment policies adopted by the New South Wales and the Victorian Labor governments, which have restricted new gas exploration and left Queensland to do the heavy lifting for the east coast market. In relation to the Commonwealth's proposed gas reservation policy, our priority is ensuring Queensland gas continues to flow into the domestic market while maintaining Queensland's reputation as Australia's most attractive destination for energy investment.

Queensland has clearly demonstrated that increasing supply—not creating additional barriers—is the most effective way to improve energy security and put downward pressure on prices. Discoveries like Denison Trough are exactly the type of projects that will deliver reliable gas for Australian households, manufacturers and businesses for decades to come, but unlocking Queensland's energy potential is not just about discovering new resources; it is about developing them responsibly. The work in the Denison Trough is an example of resources exploration, regional communities and individuals working together for the betterment of this great state.

Recently I had the opportunity to travel through the Denison Trough region and I spent time speaking to people from both sides of the fence—a resource company and a landholder. I met with Rick Whitton, whose property co-exists with resource development activity. What struck me was that he did not spend our discussion talking about conflict, he did not speak about opposition, and he did not speak about agriculture and resources being incompatible. Instead, he spoke about the positive relationship he has developed with the company operating in the area. Rick and Leanne Whitton run a 1,800-head cattle herd on their 15,000-hectare property, Myrtleville, near Injune. The first gas activities on their property were in 1976 and Rick worked on a drilling rig on a neighbouring property around that time. They have nine gas wells on their property as well as Denison Gas's Springvale gas plant and pipelines. Rick's great uncle first settled the area in 1920. Rick moved to Myrtleville in 1956 as a four-year-old with his family and he has been working on the property since he finished school. One of their daughters actually works for Origin Energy.

Queensland will continue to do the heavy lifting when it comes to Australia's energy security. We are backing new discoveries, supporting investment, working alongside landholders and regional communities and ensuring more Queensland gas reaches Australian homes and manufacturers. As I like to say, they talk about the east coast gas crisis but I call it the 'southern states gas crisis', because we do not have a gas problem in Queensland. We are meeting our domestic gas obligations in this state. Queensland is doing the heavy lifting for the rest of Australia. It is the southern states that need to pick up their game when it comes to gas production and gas security moving forward. The proposed gas reservation by the federal government will single Queensland out and penalise Queensland when we are doing the right thing by this country. We are opening up more gas wells; we are opening up more gas production. Gas production in Queensland is a good news story, yet these southern states continue to restrict gas supply and move ahead with this policy of non-gas production in those particular states. We will continue developing our gas resources in this state because that is the right thing to do. It is creating jobs; it is creating prosperity; it is underpinning our economy in Queensland. I make the point that this intended gas reservation policy by the federal government will severely impact this state going forward.

Mr DALTON: Minister, a key deliverable in the SDS is to progress reforms to the Resources Cabinet Committee. Can the minister update the committee on reforms to Resources Safety & Health Queensland and explain how they are strengthening outcomes for Queensland resource workers, including those in the Mackay area?

Mr LAST: To give some context in relation to my response, following the resignation of Kate du Preez as commissioner in November 2023 the former Labor government left the position of commissioner for Resources Safety & Health Queensland vacant for 44 weeks. Then premier Miles then appointed Heidi Roberts as the commissioner on 19 September 2024, only for her to resign some two weeks later on 9 October in 2024.

Creating a safe working environment for Queensland resource workers is vitally important. Unfortunately, as I said in my opening statement, this week it was not the case, with the industry experiencing the loss of Andreas Loizou, a mineworker at Peak Downs. Safety must always come first. This is particularly pertinent in Mackay, which has a significant resources workforce. Delivering a safe workplace guided my decision to commission an independent review of Queensland's resources safety and health regulatory model, because it is one of the top issues that resource companies and individuals consistently raise with me.

After five years of operation, it was time to examine whether the system was delivering what workers and their families expected. The review examined the regulatory framework, the structure of RSHQ, how roles and responsibilities operate in practice and whether the advisory committees and statutory commissioner role were delivering the accountability intended when the model was first introduced in 2020. Professor Susan Johnston AM conducted the review, which included a comprehensive consultation process involving 114 stakeholders, 81 interviews and 31 submissions. Stakeholders included major industry bodies such as the Queensland Resources Council, Australian Energy Producers, the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, explosives sector representatives, trade unions and technical experts. It also included employees at RSHQ and individuals involved in the resources sector. If you have read the review, you will know that the report was sobering. As part of the review, Professor Johnston interviewed all members of the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee and all but one of the members of the Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee, or, as they are known in the industry, CMSHAC and MSHAC. Professor Johnston also spoke with several former members of the committees, and the former commissioners and the interim commissioner were interviewed.

The review made 16 recommendations and found the current regulatory framework was lacking. It identified challenges in governance, confusion around roles and a lack of clear accountability. Our government supported or supported in principle 15 of the 16 recommendations. The recommendation to retain the commissioner's role was not supported, with the government instead preferring these functions be transferred to the new board. The changes will give RSHQ the governance structure it needs to lift performance and strengthen accountability, ensuring Queensland continues to set the benchmark for resources safety and health. I am pleased to advise the committee today that the new board has commenced work. They have had a number of meetings. They have been very active since they have taken on that role. We can expect to see significant changes moving forward.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, with reference to page 3 of the SDS, which outlines the objectives of the lands department to support economic growth in Queensland communities, can you provide an update on Yarranlea Primary School following the Crisafulli state government's action to save the site and provide certainty for Brisbane families?

Mr LAST: The Crisafulli government is delivering on the lands portfolio objective of supporting Queensland communities by securing the long-term future of Yarranlea Primary School and the broader Mount Gravatt community facilities after years of uncertainty under the former Labor government. The former government left students, families and staff in limbo after failing to plan for the closure of Griffith University's Mount Gravatt campus, despite being aware as early as 2021 of the university's intention to vacate the site.

Since coming to office the Crisafulli government has acted swiftly to avoid uncertainty by securing the long-term future of Yarranlea Primary School, the associated community facilities and nearby sporting infrastructure. It has called for expressions of interest to identify a new operator for the site, with strict conditions requiring the continued operation of the independent school and preservation of community use. This will ensure the protection of neighbouring high-value bushland areas for future generations and deliver certainty to students, parents, teachers in the wider Mount Gravatt community while a long-term solution is implemented.

Our government has made every effort to take swift action since being elected and is committed to delivering the right solution for the site's future, with the continued operation of Yarranlea Primary School and the community and sporting facilities a non-negotiable part of the outcome. The news was very welcomed by the Yarranlea Primary School board, which said the government's actions provided certainty about the school's future and would allow the school community to continue to grow and flourish for years to come. I went out there as part of the reconnaissance of that particular site and met with the staff, students and parents of Yarranlea Primary School. I assure you that they are very excited and were overwhelmed by the fact that we were securing the future of that school. It is a great little school out there at Mount Gravatt, and the fact that we have now secured its future has been very well received. It demonstrates the Crisafulli government's commitment to working with communities, to preserve important local assets, to support educational opportunities and to provide certainty through the proactive management of Queensland's state land assets.

Mr G KELLY: Minister, the Service Delivery Statements list one of the budget highlights as providing up to $300 million over four years to secure the ongoing operations of the Mount Isa copper smelter and Townsville refinery. I note the government has also recently provided funding to secure the future of Phosphate Hill. Can the minister outline how these support packages are protecting sovereign industrial capability and regional jobs?

Mr LAST: I thank the member for the question. I am pleased to advise that the Crisafulli government, in conjunction with the federal government, will invest up to $600 million over the next three calendar years in Glencore's Mount Isa copper smelter and Townsville refinery, protecting more than 600 direct jobs. I want to acknowledge in this forum today the work that my director-general and the team put into securing this deal. The weeks and weeks of work and the negotiations and liaison with Glencore to get this deal across the line and our work with the federal government was enormous. I want to acknowledge that work here today.

The Mount Isa copper smelter underpins thousands of jobs through North-West Queensland's interconnected industrial system and processing and refining supply chain. The Mount Isa copper smelter provides half of Australia's copper smelting capacity. Maintaining Australia's domestic minerals and metals processing capability is fundamental to our economic resilience at a time where global production is becoming increasingly concentrated in a single market.

Phosphate Hill is a strategically significant industrial asset for the North West Minerals Province and Australia more broadly. As Australia's only domestic producer of diammonium phosphate fertiliser, or DAP as it is known, it supports national fertiliser security and reduces reliance on imports during periods of global supply chain disruption. Its acid plant also underpins the ongoing operation of the Mount Isa copper smelter and contributes to Queensland's sulphuric acid supply, which is important for emerging critical minerals and resource projects. The continued operation of Phosphate Hill supports the long-term development of the North West Minerals Province by maintaining critical industrial capability and integrated supply chains while providing a platform for future investment in resources processing, critical minerals and downstream manufacturing opportunities. Recognising this strategic importance, the Queensland and Australian governments have supported measures to secure the facility's ongoing operation, including Dyno Nobel's recent sale of Phosphate Hill to Mayfair Corporation. That sale reflects renewed confidence in the long-term future of North-West Queensland's industrial and resources sector. They are all interconnected: the smelter, Phosphate Hill and the copper refinery at Townsville.

The joint state and Commonwealth government funded $160 million loan package marks an important step toward securing the long-term future of Phosphate Hill and supporting the 500 hardworking Queenslanders whose livelihoods directly depend on the site. The ongoing operation of the facility also supports thousands of other jobs in secondary businesses that rely on its operation. I know the member for Traeger has been very vocal about the need to keep that facility operating and what it means for the Mount Isa community. The renewed regional confidence is underpinned by the Albanese and Crisafulli government's investment into the Mount Isa copper smelter and Townsville refinery, and now Phosphate Hill, protecting more than 1,100 direct regional jobs as well as thousands more across the supply chain.

The mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship between the smelter and Phosphate Hill's acid plant means if one operation closes then there could be a flow-on effect to the other. In effect, the smelter and Phosphate Hill's fertiliser business operate as an integrated supply chain. The smelter's sulphur dioxide by-product is captured by Phosphate Hill's adjacent acid plant and converted into sulphuric acid, a critical input for fertiliser production alongside mined phosphate. This is why the Crisafulli government focused on delivering the landmark deal to maintain operations of the copper smelter in October last year and has continued to work with the Commonwealth government to support the future operation of Phosphate Hill.

The latest support package secures regional jobs and sovereign capability by supporting Queensland's ability to refine its own copper, produce domestically manufactured fertiliser and compete globally. The government has made clear its expectation that Mayfair invest in the future of the facility, maintain operations and protect local jobs as part of the funding arrangements. Phosphate Hill contributes to Australia's domestic supply of diammonium phosphate fertiliser, supporting farmers, food production and national fertiliser security. It is Australia's only domestic producer of ammonium phosphate fertiliser. This is about delivering a stronger economy, backing industries that create opportunity while ensuring they continue to drive the prosperity of our regional communities.

Mr SPEAKER: I will go to non-government members for questions. Member for Logan, do you have a question?

Mr POWER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Director-General, with reference to page 12 of the previously tabled Fraser Institute survey, now that we have received copies, can you confirm that Queensland also ranked 13 in 2023 and, further, that the 37th, the majority of the survey period, and the closing date for the survey period, was under the LNP government? Do you need a clarification?

Mr Fraine: Could you walk me through the pages again, please?

Mr POWER: I reference page 12 on the previously tabled Fraser Institute survey. In 2023 the Queensland government was also ranked 13th, the same as under the previous government.

Mr Fraine: Thank you, member. Let me have a look. For committee members, the ranks show 2025 back to 2021.

Mr POWER: I am interested in 2023—2022.

Mr BENNETT: I have a point of order. The committee members have not received a copy of that particular document. Could we have it circulated so we can reference it as well?

Mr POWER: It was tabled by the minister, is my understanding.

Mr BENNETT: I am talking to the Speaker, member.

Mr POWER: We did not table it.

Mr SPEAKER: You have it now. I call the Director-General.

Mr POWER: I think he has concluded.

Mr Fraine: I have nothing further to add to that.

Mr POWER: Other than confirming it. Thank you.

Mr SPEAKER: One question at a time, member for Logan. There was too much in that last one.

Mr POWER: The minister referenced Denison Gas. QPM Energy, State Gas Ltd and Denison Gas all received funding from the Frontier Gas Exploration grants program. Can you confirm if the Frontier Gas Exploration grants program is still funded in this budget?

Mr Fraine: There are a range of ways that government provides resources sector support. Our department, through data, through technology, through construction of common user facilities, helps unlock resource commodities, whether it be petroleum and gas, whether it be critical minerals, whether it be coal, and there are a range of ways, as I mentioned, that we do this. For instance, in a very exciting development, again for those of us who are more technically minded, we have a $5.1 million investment in a HyLogger 4 scanner, which is basically taking out core samples out at our Zillmere complex and being able to determine through the HyLogger what is actually inside those samples without having to go through some of the more technically corrosive ways of doing it. If we come to some of the support programs we provide, certainly the Collaborative Exploration Initiative has done more than $4 million through round 9 in the last 12 months and certainly under round 10, 26 projects to the value of $5 million have been awarded for use in 2026-27.

In the gas space specifically, this government has asked us as a department to look at how we facilitate more projects and more gas coming out of the ground. To your point, member, part of that will be through things such as programs and grant programs. Again, there are a range of methods by which we operate as an agency. To give committee members a sense, over about a 20-month period, from 26 October 2024 to 1 July 2026, there have been 23 new petroleum leases approved in this state, which represents something a bit like a doubling of those approved. We have also approved three new authorities to prospect—

Mr POWER: Point of order, Mr Speaker: I just want to be helpful. The question was specifically on the frontier gas exploration grants program. Is it still funded in the budget? I appreciated the context but I wanted that one question answered.

Mr SPEAKER: Come to that part of the question.

Mr Fraine: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you for your guidance, member. As reported in last year's budget and last year's estimates, the frontier gas program finished in 2024-25.

Mr KATTER: This question is about CopperString but, in asking it, I acknowledge the work being done associated with the north-west smelter and the phosphate plant, which I commend the government on. Making reference to page 1 of the SDS and expanding resource opportunities, the North West Minerals Province was promised CopperString would be built all the way to Mount Isa by 2029, when it was announced back in 2023 by the previous government. Minister, have you directly spoken to major mining companies, asking them specifically what their future viability looks like without CopperString after 2029?

Dr ROWAN: I have two points of order, Mr Speaker. One is in relation to the lengthy preamble, under standing order 115. The second point of order relates to the predominant portfolio responsibilities related to CopperString that sit with the Treasurer and Minister for Energy. I ask you to consider that matter with respect to the substantive nature of the question as asked.

Mr SPEAKER: It is the same as I said before, Minister: you can answer to what is relevant under this portfolio.

Mr LAST: As we know, the $400 million Queensland Energy Investment Fund is managed by QIC. The objective of the fund is to leverage government capital to attract investment and stimulate collaboration between the private sector and government owned corporations. QIC's role is to identify, filter, negotiate, execute and oversee direct and indirect investment, leveraging private sector capital into new energy transmission generation and storage assets in Queensland.

The $400 million Queensland Energy Investment Fund was announced on 10 October 2025 as part of the Queensland Energy Roadmap. A further $200 million was allocated to QIC for the specific North West Energy Fund. That fund will support energy generation, battery storage and micro-group projects in the north-west, supporting industries while the CopperString transmission network is being developed. The 2026-27 annual budget outlined a $5.2 billion investment in the energy supply chain to help deliver affordable, reliable and sustainable energy through the Queensland Energy Roadmap. I can confirm that CopperString is proceeding.

Mr KATTER: Thanks for once again confirming it is proceeding. I think the pertinent thing for industry is the date that it would be started or completed, which has not been provided by the government to date. Again I ask: given that there is an absence of a date by which it would be delivered, has the minister engaged any of the major mines to ask about the impact on their viability from the absence of the date that it will be delivered by?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, only answer to what is relevant to your portfolio.

Mr LAST: As we know, the two critical items when we talk about these resource projects, particularly in the north-west area of the state, are energy and water. You need to be able to put a tick in those two boxes. We are very mindful of the difficulties in getting connections to the energy grid for some of those more remote projects in the north-west of the state. As a consequence, as I just mentioned in my previous response, we recognise and we are moving ahead with that support.

Some of these projects, like Eva copper, will be running on a diesel powered generator if they cannot get their solar farm up and running before they commence operations. That is a significant expense. We recognise that. We are doing everything we possibly can to offset that and to ensure they receive a reliable, affordable energy supply going forward. CopperString will be delivered. I know that they are, at the present time, negotiating with a number of communities in the member for Traeger's electorate regarding accommodation camps et cetera and are moving ahead with their work schedule as we sit here today.

Mr KATTER: I still do not feel we have addressed the issue of the date, with respect, Minister. Would you then commit to having a discussion with those major mines about what their viability looks like without a date into the future?

Mr LAST: We are in constant contact with all our resource companies and certainly that applies to the North West Minerals Province area, which the member for Traeger is very familiar with. As I said, energy supply is an important component of that. We are talking with those companies constantly about their operations, their timeframes for when they are coming online and their continued operation, particularly when we look at projects like the copper smelter at Mount Isa and the security of the ongoing supply of concentrate into that smelter to keep that facility operational. We know that during a recent shutdown they have rebricked the chimney and they are looking at resurfacing the furnace at the Mount Isa smelter as well. That augers well for going forward. It is a shot of confidence for the community, that they are committed to the ongoing operation of that particular smelter.

We are seeing some movement in the projects out there at the moment, particularly around copper projects, with some of those projects changing hands. There is a lot of interest in the North West Minerals Province of this state, particularly from overseas investment companies that see the value. We have 51 of the world's critical minerals in this state. We want to capitalise on that. That is why I produced and tabled today the Critical Minerals Strategy. We have an enormous opportunity that we can capitalise on. We will continue our theme that we are open for business and will continue those discussions with both domestic and international companies going forward.

Mr POWER: Director-General, you referenced the Collaborative Exploration Initiative. Graphinex was one of those that has an exciting prospect of discovery at the Esmeralda site under the Collaborative Exploration Initiative. Can you confirm whether the Collaborative Exploration Initiative program is still funded? I want it to be narrowed to that project because that is what funded Graphinex.

Mr Fraine: As I mentioned in the previous answer, the Collaborative Exploration Initiative is rolling out a round over the course of this year. Indeed, in 2026-27 the state government has also approved, as part of the work under the Critical Minerals Strategy, a reprioritisation of $46.12 million that is split into two dedicated streams of work. Member, this will speak to your question about the future of the types of things that get funded under the CEI program. The $46.12 million is split into two, as I mentioned: $26.26 million will be over two years to enhance investment attraction and build value chains for critical minerals growth; $19.86 million will be towards a range of data exploration and other pieces.

Mr POWER: Mr Speaker, I interrupted the member for Traeger and he has more questions. I wanted an answer really quickly: is the Collaborative Exploration Initiative program still funded?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: the director-general was being relevant under standing order 118 and I believe he should be permitted to continue because he was providing important information with respect to the question as asked.

Mr SPEAKER: He was. Member for Logan, we still have time, so I will get back to the member for Traeger. Director-general, you can finish your response, please.

Mr Fraine: Thank you, Speaker. As I mentioned, in that second stream of work, there is work that will be led within our department about geoscience programs to enable critical foundational data to be collected across regions such as the North West Minerals Province and those sorts of parts of the state where Esmeralda is up near Croydon. Secondly, there will be a development accelerator of approximately $6.5 million that will build partnerships with targeted companies to accelerate progress from pre-feasibility studies through to bankable feasibility studies to prove their resource that require more advanced drilling which, as we know, is capital intensive. Member, to the point of your question, CEI is rolling out its current round this year. Through the development accelerator contained in the critical minerals strategy, there will be a program that maintains the types of functions that CEI does.

Mr KATTER: Minister, Glencore at Mount Isa is sitting on 151 million tonnes of copper or 1.5 per cent, while Little Eva is proceeding with the greenfield site at only 0.4 per cent copper. They have been talking about developing an open pit for over 15 years now. Do the actions of Glencore align with page 1 of the SDS on expanding resource opportunities?

Mr LAST: When it comes to Mount Isa, there is a long history to that mine which has been operating for many decades. As you would appreciate, it has substantial reserves of minerals, copper and their by-products as well in their tailings. They are still moving ahead with their Black Star open cut project. All the advice we are receiving to date confirms that they are moving ahead with that. It is something that we would fully support and are working collaboratively with Glencore on. We have certainly made it very clear to them that we would like to see that tailings and that open-pit project proceed because that is more development, that is more jobs, and it certainly would underpin the Mount Isa economy for many decades to come. That is a project that is still proceeding. They are going through that feasibility phase at the moment. As you would appreciate, these mining projects have to comply with all the relevant environmental standards and EISs et cetera, and we are working with them as they work through that process.

Mr KATTER: To be clear, Minister, there are no requirements then on a timeline? If they have constraints in terms of investment decisions, there is no obligation from the government at this point for them to proceed, despite approvals being in place?

Mr LAST: We have certainly made it very clear that we would like to see that project move ahead sooner rather than later. It is also something that, I might add, the Resources Cabinet Committee is currently considering, regarding use it or lose it provisions. We want to see these projects, these tenures in Queensland, operationalised. We do not want to see land banking taking place or these projects sitting there for many decades, as is currently the case. That message has been conveyed to industry and has been very well-received. This is a case where we know there is a known reserve—a resource. We have made it very clear to Glencore that we would like to see this resource and this project move ahead. As I said, it is currently in the feasibility stage.

Mr SPEAKER: I understand the member for Maiwar has a question. We are running out of time. While the member for Maiwar is coming forward, I will go to the member for Mirani as we get organised.

Mr G KELLY: Minister, in line with the support package for the Mount Isa copper smelter and Townsville refinery, page 1 of the SDS lists a key deliverable to undertake the Mount Isa Transformation Study. Can the minister provide an update on the progress of the study and explain how it will support the long-term future of North West Queensland?

Mr LAST: In relation to the Mount Isa copper smelter which you just spoke about and the Townsville refinery, funding will be provided in three payments of up to $200 million over the next three calendar years, contingent on completion of the transformation study alongside other review points. The transformation study is focused on driving sustainable and long-term industrial capability in Mount Isa. It evaluates the end-to-end copper value chain in the region and seeks to understand the long-term opportunity for the facilities, industry and Mount Isa workers beyond the support period, positioning the region for a more diverse and resilient future.

The Crisafulli and federal governments have now taken the next step in delivering a long-term future for North West Queensland's copper industry. The Mount Isa Transformation Study is now underway. A consortium, led by CRU International (Australia) Pty Ltd, has been engaged to lead the study, meeting with stakeholders, including industry, investors, councils, workers and the community to assess the full copper value chain across the North West Minerals Province from Mount Isa to Townsville. The study is now in its consultation phase. It will engage industry, investors, councils, workers and communities to support a more resilient and a diversified regional economy. Community members and industry participants are invited to complete an online survey. The feedback will help inform the transformation study and improve understanding of how ongoing copper processing in North West Queensland impacts communities, workers, businesses and government.

There are two surveys available. The industry survey is for those who work in the resources sector or are providing an industry or technical perspective. It includes, but is not limited to, miners and explorers in the North West Minerals Province, engineering, technical services and equipment supplies, rail, port, energy utilities and water infrastructure operators, regional industry and economic development organisations, and supply chain businesses across the North West Minerals Province. The community survey applies to those participating as a community member—

Mr MARTIN: Point of order, Speaker.

Mr LAST: They are open until 31 July.

Mr MARTIN: I am conscious of the time.

Mr SPEAKER: I think the minister has finished. I will get the response to the questions taken on notice, and then we will go to the member for Maiwar's question. I call Ms Cooper.

Ms Cooper: As to the question were local mines advised of the closure of Simtars laboratory at Discovery Lane, Mackay, the Mackay laboratory performed analysis of roadway dust for six commercial mining clients. The clients for roadway dust analysis were advised of the closure verbally and in writing on 29 January 2026. They were redirected to two other National Association of Testing Authorities—or NATA—accredited laboratories, performing this service in Mackay and Emerald.

As to the question regarding are rent and lease costs still being paid for the Discovery Lane site, the initial lease at Discovery Lane expired on 30 April 2026, but has been extended until 31 October 2026 in order to satisfy make-good arrangements with the Queensland Government Accommodation Office.

Mr SPEAKER: Then the last one: who made the decision to close?

Ms Cooper: Yes. The decision to close was made in June 2025 by the former CEO of RSHQ to cease Mackay laboratory operations at the end of the lease in April 2026. This timeframe was extended to allow sufficient time for clients to secure alternative laboratory providers. To clarify, emergency response was not provided by the laboratory team.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. Member for Maiwar, your question?

Mr BERKMAN: Director-General, in relation to the $9.8 million over four years that was committed in the 2023 budget to reduce emissions from unexplained land clearing, can you advise how that funding is being spent today, including the number of staff now working on the program, how many audits have been undertaken and how many compliance letters, formal warnings and penalties have been issued?

Mr SPEAKER: That sounds like a question to be taken on notice to me, member for Maiwar. You have one minute to respond, Director-General.

Mr Fraine: In terms of the work that we do around vegetation management, there are a number of functions. Are you referring to the enhanced vegetation management project, member for Maiwar? Have I got that correct?

Mr BERKMAN: There was $9.8 million in the 2023 budget over a four-year period. I could not give you the precise name of the funding stream.

Mr Fraine: If I can just get a nod or a shake of the head from—thank you. The work that we do under the enhanced vegetation management project, EVMP, which is now in its third year, continues to bolster opportunities for meaningful community engagement and support. In terms of activities over 2025-26, there were over 3,300 Veg Hub phone inquiries answered around this activity. Over 2,000 of those have been addressed. Over 80 engagement workshops—

Mr SPEAKER: We have run out of time.

Mr Fraine: Thank you, Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, did you want to say something?

Mr LAST: Do I get a concluding statement?

Mr SPEAKER: You will have to be brief.

Mr LAST: I want to thank the director-general and all of my staff for the work they have done in helping to prepare for today. An enormous amount of work goes into this. I could not be prouder of the job they do, and I want to acknowledge their assistance today.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. The committee will now adjourn for a short break. The hearing will resume at 11.15 am.

Proceedings suspended from 11.01 am to 11.15 am.

Mr SPEAKER: Welcome back, Minister and officials. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of manufacturing and regional and rural development open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes for the portfolio area currently under examination.

Mr LAST: I will, thank you. I am pleased to appear before the committee today to outline how the 2026-27 budget is supporting manufacturing, strengthening regional Queensland and creating new economic opportunities across the state. Regional Queensland deserves investment. It deserves opportunity. It deserves a government that understands its enormous contribution to Queensland's prosperity. That is exactly what this budget delivers.

Under the Crisafulli government, manufacturing is, once again, becoming a central pillar of Queensland's economic future. Queensland should not only mine the resources the world needs; it should manufacture more of the products the world wants. That is why we are implementing the Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Strategy, creating the conditions for business to invest, innovate and expand. This includes the delivery of the $79.1 million Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Grants Program. The program awards grants over three years through six competitive rounds, with $12½ million available in each round. The program is providing support for local manufacturers to invest in advanced technologies, improve productivity and strengthen their competitiveness. Importantly, 50 per cent of the available funding is allocated to regional Queensland manufacturers. We will be announcing our first round of grant recipients in the coming weeks.

Across the state, our manufacturing hubs continue to support local businesses, helping them adopt new technologies, improve productivity and create highly skilled jobs. From Cairns to the Gold Coast, Toowoomba and beyond, manufacturers are driving economic growth in regional communities. Since coming to government we have already delivered two new hubs, in Toowoomba and the Sunshine Coast. In this budget the hub network will expand to Maryborough to support manufacturers across the Wide Bay region.

We know that the manufacturing ecosystem along the Fraser Coast is growing, and it will only ramp up over the coming years as we deliver one of the largest manufacturing projects in Queensland's history: the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program. The former Labor government talked about manufacturing trains, but we are getting it done. This investment is creating long-term, secure manufacturing jobs. The program will support more than 1,300 jobs over the life of the project through the construction of facilities, train manufacturing and ongoing fleet maintenance.

Workforce recruitment for train manufacturing is underway, with the number of jobs set to ramp up significantly over the next 12 months to approximately 200 blue-collar positions across mechanical and electrical trades, fabricators and trades assistants and around 100 white-collar roles like production managers, technical specialists and administrators. There will also be positions for at least 22 apprentices and trainees. Queensland workers are building trains for Queensland commuters.

Our support for manufacturing extends beyond traditional industries. The critical minerals sector presents enormous opportunities to build new advanced manufacturing capability right here in Queensland. This budget supports that vision through investment in common-user infrastructure, industrial precincts and workforce development. When it comes to the resources sector, Queenslanders have been exceptional at getting commodities from the pit to the port. What we are focused on are the opportunities in between: processing and product. We want to squeeze every ounce that we can out of the full value chain, because Queensland has the opportunity to become a global leader in advanced manufacturing, powered by our own resources.

Regional development remains at the heart of this government's agenda. Economic opportunity should never depend on your postcode. That is why this budget continues investing in programs that empower regional communities. My regional forums are ensuring local voices shape government decision-making. For example, following my Roma and Emerald forums we have seen real progress such as progressing improved digital connectivity upgrades across Roma and its surrounding communities; progressing youth engagement and support service delivery; and bringing together the council, community and school in Blackwater to investigate options for improved transport for young people. These forums are just one step towards delivering real action to ensure rural and regional communities thrive now and into the future.

QRIDA continues to support regional businesses and producers, while strengthening economic resilience. We are continuing the rollout of the $100 million Country Roads Connect program to seal roads in regional and rural communities that were left to deteriorate under the former Labor government. My Manufacturing Advisory Council is exploring opportunities in AI, defence, procurement and innovation.

Throughout every initiative runs one consistent theme: we are backing regional Queensland. When regional Queensland succeeds, Queensland succeeds. This government understands that manufacturing, mining, agriculture and regional development are not separate conversations; they are part of one economic story—a story built on confidence, investment and secure jobs; a story built on ensuring Queensland remains competitive in an increasingly challenging global economy.

This budget delivers practical support for businesses, workers and communities. It creates opportunities for future generations, and it reinforces our commitment to delivering a better lifestyle through a stronger economy.

Mr SPEAKER: I will go to opposition members for the first question.

Mr DICK: My question is to the minister. Under subsection 236(1) of the Public Sector Act, a special commissioner's instrument of appointment designates a person as a special commissioner and sets out matters relevant to the special commissioner's work. Minister, have you seen and read the instrument of appointment for the Special Commissioner for Rural and Regional Queensland, Andrew Cripps?

Mr LAST: As the member would be aware, Mr Andrew Cripps has been appointed to the role of Special Commissioner for Rural and Regional Queensland. He reports to the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. In accordance with section 239 of the Public Sector Act, the special commissioner is subject to the direction of the chairperson of the Public Sector Governance Council, who is the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Accordingly, the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is the special commissioner's chief executive. The special commissioner has an operational reporting line to the director-general of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development on a day-to-day basis.

Mr DICK: Minister, have you seen and read the special commissioner's instrument of appointment?

Mr LAST: No, I have not.

Mr DICK: Director-General, did you attend a meeting last week after the Premier's estimates hearing was held with senior officers of the Public Service convened by the Premier's director-general, Damien Walker, to discuss the functions, role and work of Mr Cripps?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: in relation to these matters and as provided in the responses by the Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development, all of these matters with respect to the appointment, the oversight and the functioning of the special commissioner are under the auspices of the Premier and the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. There was an opportunity last week to put those questions, of which there were questions put to the Premier and the director-general. I submit to you again with this line of questioning that would have been the most appropriate forum for those to be further asked in.

Mr DICK: Point of order: Speaker, you were present at that hearing with the Premier. It is clear from the evidence of the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that the special commissioner reports on a daily basis, on a day-to-day basis, to the director-general of this department. I table a copy of page 24 of the transcript of that estimates hearing, which makes it clear there is a 'complex reporting arrangement' and that the special commissioner has a 'day-to-day responsibility' with regard to Mr Fraine. I table that document through the member for Stretton. The member for Stretton will also table the appointment media release from this minister in relation to the special commissioner. There is no mention of the Premier in that either. It cannot be that questions cannot be asked in relation to the Special Commissioner for Rural and Regional Queensland in the estimates hearing about regional and rural Queensland.

Mr BENNETT: Could we take a moment to have a look at this, if we may, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, you can.

Dr ROWAN: On a further point of order, Mr Speaker, and in relation to my previous point of order and now having an opportunity to read this transcript from the Premier and Cabinet estimates hearing, I would submit to you again that this role reports via the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Therefore, again, I would say that these questions would be more appropriately put through that session, which was held last week.

Mr DICK: On a further point of order, Speaker: I table an extract from GovNet which reveals that the office of the special commissioner and Mr Andrew Cripps reports to the director-general of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development and the agency listed for Mr Cripps in that document is the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development. That is the agency to which the special commissioner reports, and it is within the scope of this estimates hearing to ask the department questions.

Mr MARTIN: I table that.

Mr SPEAKER: Director-General, you can respond as to what comes under your role as director-general.

Mr Fraine: Would you mind repeating the original question?

Mr DICK: Director-General, did you attend a meeting last week after the Premier's estimates committee hearing was held with senior officers of the Public Service convened by the Premier's director-general, Damien Walker, to discuss the functions, role and work of Mr Cripps?

Mr Fraine: I am not aware of that meeting and, as such, I did not attend.

Mr DICK: Director-General, did you convene a meeting with your departmental officers last week after the Premier's estimates hearing was held to discuss the functions, work and role of the special commissioner, Andrew Cripps?

Mr Fraine: No.

Mr DICK: Your department's webpage headed 'Office of the Special Commissioner for Rural and Regional Queensland' was created on 24 July; is that correct? I table that, through the member for Stretton, for the benefit of members of the committee and also the director-general.

Mr Fraine: I will wait to receive that.

Mr BENNETT: I might take a point of order to give time to absorb the document before the director-general answers, if that is alright, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: Are you happy to table that, member for Stretton?

Mr MARTIN: Yes, I table that, Mr Speaker.

Mr Fraine: What was the question?

Mr DICK: If you look at the bottom of the document, right at the end it says it was created on 24 July; that is correct?

Mr Fraine: Correct.

Mr DICK: Were you aware that that webpage was created on your departmental webpage?

Mr Fraine: Yes.

Mr DICK: Did you direct that it be created?

Mr SPEAKER: Just wait till I call you. I am not having this backwards and forwards. Where are we up to?

Mr DICK: The question is: were you aware that this webpage was created?

Mr Fraine: Yes, I was aware it had been created.

Mr DICK: Did you direct that the webpage be created, Director-General?

Mr Fraine: I did ask for that to be created based on a request that we received from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr DICK: Who did that request come from in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet? Was it the director-general of DPC?

Mr Fraine: That came through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to my department requesting that, post the discussions at last week's estimates session, a clear contact email address be provided for the special commissioner.

Mr DICK: What other requests were made of your department by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in relation to the special commissioner, including any action that should be taken?

Mr Fraine: No others that I can recall.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, point of order: I submit to you that these questions in relation to the issues that are being canvassed should have been put through the session related to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, simply because the reporting arrangements are through to there. Any issues in relation to the establishment of other departments and referrals to other agencies and departments have been put to the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, point of order: you have ruled it is a frivolous point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: The director-general can respond to what sits directly under his control.

Mr DICK: Just to clarify, they are the two matters that your department was asked to attend to: create a website and create an official government email for Mr Cripps. They are the only two matters that you are aware of?

Mr Fraine: My recollection is that there was already an email address for contacting the special commissioner. We were asked to create a landing page to provide that email address for general public use.

Mr DICK: Was your department asked to attend to any matters relevant to the use of a private email andrewcripps81 @ hotmail.com by the special commissioner prior to the creation of the official email?

Mr DALTON: Mr Speaker, point of order: I thought it was protocol to direct the question to a person, not just continue a conversation.

Mr DICK: I will direct the question to the director-general. Director-General, were you asked to attend to any matters relevant to the special commissioner's use of a private email address andrewcripps81 @ hotmail.com, including securing public records?

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, point of order: I believe that, from recollection, those matters were put to the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, who provided a substantial response in relation to matters pertaining to email addresses and other matters associated with that, and that is the appropriate forum for those questions to be asked given the reporting responsibilities of the position of the special commissioner.

Mr DICK: Mr Speaker, point of order: it is clear that the government's official email for the special commissioner is within this department and it would be within the capacity of this department to secure any public records relevant to a previous private email used by the special commissioner.

Mr SPEAKER: As I have said, the director-general can respond to what is directly under his control.

Mr Fraine: That matter is being dealt with through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr DICK: My question is to the minister. With reference to 'enhancing the voice of regional Queensland to be heard through better consultation and engagement', whose responsibility is it to work with the relevant ministers to ensure better access to government services in regional and rural Queensland such as health, education and transport infrastructure?

Mr LAST: Since coming into this role we have run a number of regional forums across this state, including Roma, Emerald, Bowen and Bundaberg. These forums have been very well received in those respective communities. As I like to say, forums offer the opportunity for direct engagement with the minister who attended the forum—or ministers, in some cases—to discuss a range of issues at these forums and then an undertaking from me and the staff who are there to follow up on the issues that are raised at these particular forums. These are not forums that are peculiar to or restricted to my particular portfolio; they are across the board. They are an opportunity to take on board the feedback, to listen to the challenges. More importantly, they are an opportunity to give these communities a chance to promote initiatives, projects or opportunities that they see in their particular communities as well.

We involve school leaders in these forums, which has been very well received, and engage with a younger demographic to gauge their opinions and feedback as we move forward. If there are issues—for example, in health, education or any of the other departments—then we take those on board. We have a process in place to follow up on those particular issues. The feedback from the rural and regional communities where we have held these forums has been overwhelmingly positive. This is in direct contrast to the former government. I remember asking the minister, when I sat on that end of the table, how many regional forums he had conducted, and the answer was zero.

We are out there in rural and regional Queensland running these forums and engaging with our rural and regional communities because we understand that Queensland is a big state and that our rural and regional communities matter. We want to give them a voice. As I say to them, we are giving you a voice directly back to cabinet. If I am running a forum on a Friday, on the following Monday I am reporting back to cabinet about what was discussed at that particular forum. It does not get any better than that, and they appreciate that opportunity.

In terms of your question, member, it is certainly the case that these rural and regional forums are working very well. We are fine-tuning them as we go along. We have a number of regional forums planned for the remainder of this year and into early next year. We will continue to take these forums around the state to allow these communities the opportunity to engage with ministers and put forward their thoughts, along with local governments. Local governments appreciate that opportunity as well. We are meeting with mayors at these regional forums. They appreciate the opportunity to speak with a minister about the projects they would like to see taken forward and their challenges. I know that when we were in Bundaberg we met with the mayor and we talked about opportunities at the Bundaberg port. I am sure the member for Bundaberg is familiar with the opportunities that come forth with moving ahead with projects down in that locality.

Mr DICK: Minister, do you agree that this is entirely the point: the creation of a special commissioner's role for Andrew Cripps entirely duplicates your role? As you said, it does not get any better than that—reporting directly to the cabinet following your meetings. It duplicates your role along with the work of five assistant ministers responsible for regional Queensland and shows absolutely no respect for taxpayers' money.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, point of order: there are a number of inferences and imputations contained within the question as asked. Under standing order 115, there was a lengthy preamble as well, so I ask that you consider ruling that question out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Member, you will need to rephrase that question.

Mr DICK: I will ask another question of the minister. Speaker, the member for Stretton will table extracts from the minister's official diary for 2026. According to those extracts, Minister, you have met just once with Mr Cripps since his appointment as special commissioner and since that appointment was announced. How often do you intend to meet with Mr Cripps: annually or less frequently?

Mr LAST: I engage with Mr Cripps on a regular basis. In fact, I spoke with him earlier today. As we sit here, he is meeting with councils in North Queensland to talk about local issues. I will clarify what that role is intended to do. Our government identified the need for a dedicated, senior advisory role operating independently of program delivery functions that could provide genuine insights into regional issues and opportunities. As a result, the special commissioner will operate to identify systemic barriers and complement and amplify the work of the government by advising of potential improvements in government policy implementation and service delivery across all agencies.

The special commissioner, who we know is based in regional Queensland, will engage directly with communities across Queensland and work across agencies to ensure local needs, priorities and solutions inform coordinated government decision-making, policies and service delivery. The special commissioner will provide advice to government on the implementation of key priorities and commitments from a regional and rural perspective to help ensure they reflect the needs and opportunities for our regions. I catch up with Mr Cripps on a regular basis. He attends my regional forums, as he should, and complements, as I said, the role that I perform as the minister in this portfolio.

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

Mr DALTON: Minister, a key deliverable in the SDS relates to driving innovation and growth in manufacturing. During your recent visit to South Korea, you visited Hyundai Rotem corporation. Can you provide an update on the importance of that visit to the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program?

Mr LAST: I thank the member for the question. Let me reassure you that the Crisafulli government is getting this project back on track. Let's not forget for one minute the mess that the former minister for transport found himself in with this project. We remember that the true cost of the project was removed from the minister's media release and replaced with a lower number. The former minister told Queenslanders that there was 'nothing to see here', calling the omission 'a stuff-up'. Well, Queenslanders now have a government that respects their money and is willing to hold those contractors to account.

Work is underway at that facility and the first train is progressing at pace. The first train is being manufactured as we sit here today. Our trip to South Korea was extremely significant because we recognise the importance of Hyundai Rotem corporation to the success of the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program. That visit strengthened our relationship with HRC's senior leadership, and I would like to thank HRC for the resources they have devoted to QTMP to date both in South Korea and in Australia. This trip was important because I secured a commitment from HRC that both prototype trains will be in Australia by the end of the year. I repeat: they will be in Australia by the end of the year. In South Korea I saw for myself the work that HRC is doing on the prototype trains, recently hitting the milestone of connecting up all six cars for the first full train test. I am happy to get photocopies of this photograph.

Mr SPEAKER: Are you seeking to table that?

Mr LAST: I will table that photograph for the information of all members here today.

Mr SPEAKER: We have to table it on your behalf.

Mr BENNETT: I table that.

Mr LAST: Thank you. That is proof positive that the trains are being manufactured and that those two prototypes will be here before the end of the year. I am looking forward to standing on the dock and seeing those two prototypes arrive in Australia. I am even more excited to see them on the tracks and that they have commenced testing in South Korea.

Mr BENNETT: Minister, $925,000 was allocated in the budget over two years to establish a formal Wide Bay Manufacturing Hub. Can the minister provide an update on the work the Crisafulli government has undertaken to expand the manufacturing hub across the state?

Mr LAST: I thank the member for the question. The Crisafulli government is delivering on its $10 million election commitment to expand the footprint of the state's manufacturing hub network with the establishment of the Toowoomba and the Sunshine Coast hubs. The election commitment has been strengthened by the 2026-27 budget to establish the Wide Bay Manufacturing Hub. The new Wide Bay Manufacturing Hub will operate under the manufacturing hub delivery model and will be a great supporter of the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program. This decision shows further support for regional Queensland manufacturers in a key area of food and beverage manufacturing and other industries such as transport, equipment and aviation.

All of our hubs have been working directly with regional manufacturers to improve productive performance, increase advanced manufacturing technology adoption, build workforce capability and identify new business opportunities. The hubs continue to engage with schools, training providers and industry stakeholders to enable a better understanding of the career and employment opportunities in manufacturing and to provide transition from school to work initiatives. This engagement has a strong focus on teacher professional development to build their awareness of the depth and breadth of manufacturing careers and support future workforce development.

The Sunshine Coast hub is working with local councils and industry bodies to identify manufacturing related logistics gaps that may be limiting industry growth, while also analysing key sector strengths to better understand and enhance local supply chain opportunities. The hub is also elevating the Sunshine Coast manufacturing profile by driving targeted industry engagement, hosting events, facilitating forums and collaborating across government to support growth, innovation and capability uplift across the sector.

The hub has brought industry bodies, educators and manufacturers together to shape future workforce capability through a range of roundtables and events—for example, co-hosting a practical skills forum with the Sunshine Coast Regional Jobs Committee to address critical skills gaps and engage participants in an interactive round table focused on building the future talent pipeline. Through initiatives like the industry and educator roundtables and the expanded Makers Empire program, the hub connects classrooms with real manufacturing environments and equips educators with practical insights into Industry 4.0 technologies, entry level capability expectations and hands-on learning opportunities. The hub also convenes the quarterly manufacturing leaders roundtables which focus on enhancing manufacturing capability, addressing skills gaps and driving market expansion to strengthen regional competitiveness.

The Sunshine Coast hub also remains focused on enhancing local manufacturing capacity and competitiveness by delivering initiatives that include the catalyst benchmarking and lean manufacturing programs. These initiatives are having a positive impact on local businesses, such as MMD at Narangba, Crown Pack at Kunda Park and Civilmart at Caloundra. The Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba manufacturing hubs have also co-developed and delivered a new program to drive process efficiency and productivity improvements for manufacturers through optimisation of their digital systems. The feedback from local businesses and manufacturers in those communities where we have these manufacturing hubs has been overwhelming. The support they have been giving these businesses and the resources they bring to those communities have been very well received. I have expectations that the Wide Bay hub will likewise be well received in that area and bring those skill sets and resources to that particular community.

Mr BENNETT: Minister, a key deliverable listed in the SDS is to drive innovation and productivity growth for manufacturers. You recently visited White Industries in Dalby. Can you please explain how the new Toowoomba Manufacturing Hub is supporting manufacturers like White Industries?

Mr LAST: I thank the member for the question. The manufacturing hubs, particularly the hub in Toowoomba, are helping businesses like White Industries in a number of ways. Member, you are correct; I did have the pleasure of visiting White Industries and I can say that it is operations like these that the manufacturing hub network is designed to help.

The Crisafulli government is delivering on its $10 million election commitment to expand the footprint of the state's manufacturing hub network, with the establishment of the Toowoomba and Sunshine Coast hubs. The election commitment has been strengthened by the 2026-27 budget decision to establish the Wide Bay Manufacturing Hub. Since establishment, the Toowoomba and Sunshine Coast hubs have been working directly with regional manufacturers like White Industries to improve productive performance, increase advanced manufacturing technology adoption, build workforce capability and identify new business opportunities. The hubs continue to engage with schools, training providers and industry stakeholders to enable a better understanding of the career and employment opportunities in manufacturing and to provide transition from school to work initiatives. This engagement has a strong focus on teacher professional development to build their awareness of the depth and breadth of manufacturing careers and to support future workforce development.

Since its establishment, the Toowoomba hub has been delivering targeted engagement through events, industry forums and cross-government collaboration to support manufacturing outcomes—for example, supporting Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise to deliver a major regional engagement event attracting over 250 attendees. This event showcased the significance of the local manufacturing industry as well as investment by Boeing Defence Australia through the establishment of Australia's first military aircraft manufacturing facility in Toowoomba in over 90 years. The Toowoomba hub has also presented at key forums on future skill and career training needs of the industry. This has included the TAFE Queensland South executive leadership group where the hub focused on strengthening the understanding of the manufacturing sector and to challenge misconceptions.

The programs are having a positive impact on local businesses such as White Industries in Dalby, Goanna Ag in Goondiwindi, SwarmFarm in Toowoomba and Sharpe Engineering in Roma. The department has secured a lease agreement enabling a Toowoomba manufacturing hub to co-locate at the Toowoomba TAFE campus. This collaboration has enabled manufacturers to have improved access to training and skilling opportunities for their workforce and opportunities to develop key future skills in technologies such as robotics, computer numerical control machine operation and advanced manufacturing. I want to acknowledge the work that all our staff do in our hubs right across the state. They are doing a fantastic job, they are proactive and they are certainly well received in those communities where the hubs are located.

Mr G KELLY: Minister, I note a key deliverable for the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority as listed on page 16 of the Service Delivery Statements is to administer the Queensland government's Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme. Can you please provide an update on the findings of the independent PIPES regional economic impact report?

Mr LAST: The Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority plays an important role in strengthening regional Queensland by administering the Primary Industry Productivity Enhancement Scheme, or, as it is known, PIPES, which provides concessional loans to help primary producers invest, grow and improve productivity. The findings of the inaugural independent PIPES regional economic impact report confirm these loans are delivering significant economic benefits well beyond the farm gate. The report, independently prepared by BDO for QRIDA, found that every $1 million invested through PIPES generates approximately $6.7 million in regional economic activity over the life of a typical loan. It also found that on-farm investments supported through the scheme contribute $315.3 million to Queensland's gross state product and support approximately 2,715 full-time-equivalent jobs.

Importantly, the report demonstrates that these investments create both direct and flow-on benefits across regional communities. Farmers invest in machinery, equipment, fuel, freight and local services, supporting jobs and economic activity that flow through to local businesses, schools, hospitals and other essential community services. The report found the strongest economic impacts were in the beef and sugarcane industries, followed by grain, livestock, horticulture and aquaculture. It also highlighted particularly strong regional benefits in areas with high levels of agricultural activity including the north coastal region from Mackay to Cairns, the Western Downs, Central Highlands and the southern coastal region from Curtis to Moreton. This demonstrates that when we back Queensland farmers we are also backing regional jobs, regional businesses and regional communities.

Over the 30-year life of the PIPES program, QRIDA has delivered more than $1.2 billion in concessional loans to Queensland primary producers. The current analysis examined 1,368 active loan accounts with a combined value of $772.5 million, providing robust evidence of the program's long-term value. The scheme continues to support both new and existing producers through First Start Loans of up to $2 million, helping new entrants establish and grow farming enterprises, and sustainability loans of up to $1.3 million, enabling existing producers to improve productivity, profitability and resilience. These findings reinforce that the Crisafulli government is delivering better services through a stronger economy by investing in the productivity of Queensland's agricultural sector. Strong agriculture underpins thousands of jobs, drives economic growth across our regions and ensures regional Queensland remains prosperous for generations to come.

Mr BENNETT: Minister, a key deliverable in the SDS is to support regional and rural Queensland communities through continuing to improve consultation and engagement. Can you please provide an update on the outcomes of your regional forum in Bundaberg?

Mr LAST: Most will know that Bundaberg is where I grew up, so it was great to go back there and see the development and the growth in that area. The student leaders we heard from in the forum were particularly impressive. The vision they had for their own community at such a young age was inspiring. This government is committed to ensuring regional voices are embedded in our decision-making, policy and program design.

To support hearing from our regional communities, I am continuing to host a series of regional forums. In addition to the Roma and Emerald regional forums delivered in June last year, I have hosted regional forums in Bowen in February this year and most recently in Bundaberg on 21 May. Forum summaries are sent to attendees following the forum and published on the department's website, providing attendees and our communities with visibility of the topics discussed. Regional communities are passionate about their futures and through this program we can hear directly from them about how government and communities can work together to support regional growth and prosperity.

The forums provide an opportunity for me, my department and other senior government decision-makers to hear firsthand about community issues and opportunities. The forums also include a student panel to enable future generations an opportunity to shape the world they will inherit. The students offer a fresh and a very valued perspective at these forums. In Bundaberg the Coordinator-General attended and discussed the work regarding the state development area—and we had the newly appointed CEO of Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers, Scott Kompo-Harms, on the panel, recognising Bundaberg's reputation as one of our most important food-producing regions.

Importantly, the forums are delivering real outcomes. Following the recent Bundaberg regional forum we are responding to several opportunities raised, including: improving access to government in Bundaberg and surrounding communities including increasing on-the-ground engagement and direct access to decision-makers locally; reducing fragmentation across government services in the region with a focus on simplifying pathways for local businesses, community organisations and project proponents; strengthening the Bundaberg workforce pipeline, particularly in agriculture, manufacturing and health, and improving pathways for local young people to access training and employment opportunities to be able to stay in their communities long term; supporting Bundaberg's economic strengths, including value-added agriculture, bioeconomy and manufacturing; and unlocking opportunities linked to the Port of Bundaberg and export markets.

These forums are just one step towards delivering real action to ensure regional and rural communities thrive now and into the future. Following each forum, actions are actively progressed, with departmental officers working directly with stakeholders, councils and agencies to progress initiatives, provide updates and escalate issues where required. Progress is monitored through ongoing engagement and coordination with key partners including regional leadership networks and government agencies, ensuring forum outcomes translate into practical delivery and inform broader regional policy and program development. We plan to hold more forums across our regions this calendar year.

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

Mr DICK: My question is to the minister. Minister, in an answer to my earlier question you said that you had met multiple times with Mr Cripps since his appointment. Why are those meetings not recorded in your official ministerial diary?

Mr LAST: As I said, Mr Cripps, as the special commissioner, attends my regional forums. He has also attended an RDA, Regional Development Australia, meeting in his role as the special commissioner. He also attends a number of regional leadership network forums and meets with those groups on a regular basis. If I am there I will speak with him, obviously. In terms of the meetings in my office, one-on-one meetings, they are documented and recorded. I have a program moving forward where I will continue to meet with him on a regular basis.

Mr DICK: My question is to the director-general. Director-General, have you read the special commissioner's instrument of appointment?

Mr Fraine: Our role as a department when it comes to the special commissioner is to provide primarily corporate, administrative and operational support necessary for the role to function effectively. In terms of the support we provide, that is what we do. In terms of the broader functions that he undertakes, both in terms of us and the broader government, because of the complementarity of the work program, we spend time with the special commissioner around the functions he undertakes.

Mr DICK: Minister, in an answer to my earlier question in the hearing today you emphasised that Mr Cripps's work complements your work. If that is the case, Minister, can you inform the committee why you have not read his incomplete work plan and his instrument of appointment?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker, just in relation to whether there is an imputation or an inference within the question. In relation to the lines of questioning as I hear them again as well, the instruments related to the special appointment do relate to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and they are under the auspices of the director-general, but there was an imputation or inference contained within that question and I would ask you that it be rephrased.

Mr SPEAKER: That is a fair point of order. There was an imputation in that question. Member, I would ask that you rephrase that question, if you would, please.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. If the special commissioner's work complements your work, why have you not read his work plan and his instrument of appointment?

Mr LAST: Mr Cripps's work plan is developed in conjunction with the director-general of DPC and my Director-General, Graham Fraine. I can also state that his work program is focused on providing advice to government and facilitating the development of policies and programs. This includes supporting and providing advice on emergent priority service delivery issues within regional and rural communities that require government intervention. He leads that work with a focus on the needs, the expectations and the aspirations of regional and rural communities across the state, and we make no apologies for backing our rural and regional communities. You could contrast that with the former government, which could not find their way out of Brisbane.

The special commissioner is subject to the direction, as I said before, from the chairperson of the Public Sector Governance Council and will work closely with all departments operating as a whole-of-government adviser with a mandate to identify systemic barriers, advise on policy implementation and assist in driving Public Service delivery of outcomes for regional communities. His immediate priorities—and I can share this with the committee today—are listening to regional and rural communities to understand not just the challenges they face but also their goals and aspirations; amplifying regional and rural voices, ensuring those perspectives are heard clearly by senior decision-makers in government; collaborating with departments across government on opportunities for increased efficiency or effectiveness as part of their service delivery in regional and rural Queensland; identifying systemic barriers and work to complement and strengthen Queensland government efforts by advising on opportunities to improve policy implementation and service delivery across all agencies; complementing and enhancing the work of the regional leadership networks—

Mr DICK: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

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

Mr DICK: I accept the minister is reading from the website that sets out those rules. My point of order is relevance about why the minister has not read the documents setting out the work plan and his instrument of appointment. If that is the case, I will move on and ask a further question.

Mr SPEAKER: I will just let the minister finish. He is giving a comprehensive report into the actual role which has been questioned throughout this, so I am going to allow the minister—

Mr DICK: That was not the question, Mr Speaker, with respect.

Mr SPEAKER:—to continue and then we will come back.

Mr LAST: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The role is also about providing high-level advice to public sector leaders in government about service delivery solutions to implement the government's key priorities for regional Queensland; looking at how government decisions and services impact regions, providing direct feedback to the government on what is working and where change is needed; and delivering regular reports to the government on key developments, challenges and opportunities for regional and rural Queensland service delivery. I can add that Mr Cripps's work plan is in the final stages of being finalised.

Mr DICK: Director-General, I previously tabled the GovNet extract which shows that the office of the special commissioner is attached to your office as director-general. In answer to question on notice 350, the Premier advised that three Public Service officers support Mr Cripps in his work—officers at senior officer level, an AO7 and an AO3. Were those officers allocated from your department or to your department from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet?

Mr Fraine: As you mentioned, the Office of the Special Commissioner for Rural and Regional Queensland is supported by three full-time-equivalent positions. These positions were sourced using existing full-time-equivalent allocations, with two of those full-time equivalents transferred from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development and one full-time equivalent coming from the Public Sector Commission to support the role of the special commissioner. The positions and officers are regionally based in line with the work of the commissioner, with one being located in Cairns and the other two positions being located in Townsville, along with the special commissioner. As I have mentioned, no new FTEs were required to establish these positions. Prior to their transfer, the two departmental positions within my department were working on regional and rural development matters anyway, which makes them a good fit for the role being undertaken.

Mr SPEAKER: I will go to the member for Traeger.

Mr KATTER: Minister, the manufacturing industry in Queensland has reported for many years now that gas prices are too high when their competitors are paying $6 to $8 a gigajoule overseas and they are competing. The ACCC in June 2026 said the average retail offer is around $13.89, and that was coming off a stronger base before the LNG of $3 to $4 a gigajoule in Queensland. Has the minister then in consideration of that decided or advised of a target price for activities around gas to make these manufacturers competitive in Queensland?

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

Mr KATTER: I can reformulate it if you like.

Mr SPEAKER: No, we are good.

Mr LAST: On 22 December 2025 the Australian government announced that it had accepted the findings and recommendations in the *Gas market review report*, and this included developing a domestic gas reservation policy that will apply to Queensland's LNG export industry. On 7 and 25 May 2026 the Australian government provided further details on the Domestic Gas Reservation Scheme, including that it will require gas exporters to supply a proportion of their total production to the Australian market equivalent to 20 per cent of exports from 1 July 2027. Key aspects of the scheme remain unclear, with no evidence base provided to support the proposed intervention, which is creating uncertainty for industry and investors.

I say this: the gas sector needs clear and consistent information from the Australian government on how the proposed scheme will operate in practice, including impacts on investment export arrangements, future supply and royalty revenues. In Queensland, government policies have enabled industry to invest in exploration to bring our gas reserves into production. To support domestic gas demand, the Queensland government applies the Australian market supply condition prospectively on particular tenements, ensuring that any gas produced supplies the domestic market—in other words, we are meeting our domestic gas requirements in this state.

More than 24,000 square kilometres of land have been made available for application by competitive tender exclusively for domestic supply since 2017. Queensland continues to support increased gas exploration and industry investment as part of efforts to strengthen energy security and boost supply. Already in 2026 Queensland announced preferred tenders for four new gas areas, including one subject to the Australian market supply condition. New competitive tenders have since been released for 12 petroleum and gas exploration areas totalling more than 7,000 square kilometres, including four subject to the Australian market supply condition. We are receiving bids on those particular tenements where that condition applies.

In 2025-26 Queensland was responsible for well over 80 per cent of gas production by eastern and southern states, and this share is increasing as production from southern gas fields decline. Queensland's position has been very clear: the draft design framework must be redesigned to provide efficient marketing settings and policy certainty to support investment, retain the hard-earned confidence of Australia's trading partners, and encourage the development of new gas supply; recognise Queensland's existing contribution to east coast gas security and ensure the scheme does not disproportionately burden Queensland for developing its resources and investing in national economic prosperity; and ensure structural reforms to the east coast gas market do not proceed unless supported by robust evidence, transparent modelling, meaningful consultation and appropriate consideration of implementation risks.

The east coast gas market is currently well supplied. With average wholesale spot prices in Queensland at around $8.45 per gigajoule, significantly below than reasonable price of $12 per gigajoule under the Commonwealth Gas Market Code. Even if wholesale gas prices fell to $8 per gigajoule, average profit margins would improve by just 0.8 per cent.

Mr KATTER: That wandered around a bit, but I appreciate that the minister tried to comprehensively answer it. I am a little bit confused when referring to your earlier statements about objections—objections came through in that answer—regarding the federal gas reserve. Our production is currently six per cent of global LNG production. It would appear through that answer that you are saying we have to get more out of the ground and increase supply based on the world parity price. Does the minister see that as addressing the price issue? I accept we have supply, but the issue is price coupled with supply. Is the minister satisfied that this will address the price issue for consumers, as they are reporting it is too high now?

Mr LAST: Certainly, my goal since coming into this role has been to open up more tenure in Queensland to increase production in Queensland, and that is exactly what we are doing. We have ample supplies in this state to meet our domestic requirements. It is the southern states that have been found wanting. It is the southern states that are driving this agenda to now have a domestic gas reservation put in place. The overwhelming feedback I am receiving from our resource sector and from the gas industry is that this will stymie investment in this state. It will work against what we are trying to do by opening up more gas fields in Queensland and increasing production in Queensland. There is a direct correlation that if we are producing plentiful supplies of gas the price will come down and we will be competitive. As I have just said with respect to those prices, we will be competitive.

Mr KATTER: Of concern, the minister is talking about positive news in the coal industry, but, with regard to regional development, the Resource Industry Network reported there was a $2 billion downturn in spending in that economy and exports were down 60 per cent last year. Minister, how do you explain that downturn? What have been the impacts that precipitated that, and what actions are being taken to resolve that?

Mr SPEAKER: So we are talking about production.

Mr LAST: Monthly average prices in June 2026 rose by 36.4 per cent year on year for metallurgical coal and 54.3 per cent for thermal coal. As we know, coal prices are cyclical. We have peaks and troughs. I met with Aurizon last week and coal volumes from our coalmines in Queensland are up. Certainly, we are recognised worldwide for the quality of our metallurgical and thermal coal in this state. Our overseas investors are very keen to get their hands on Queensland coal. We will continue to develop the coal sector in this state. A key part of that is the Resources Cabinet Committee that I chair. The Resources Cabinet Committee includes the Deputy Premier with his state development hat on, the Treasurer and the Minister for the Environment. I want to outline some of the key achievements of the Resources Cabinet Committee because it is important. It demonstrates that we are open for business in this state and that we are driving further investment, particularly in the coal sector in Queensland.

What have we achieved? We have boosted Queensland's fuel security by restoring the state's ability to drill, refine and store fuel locally as part of the government's total package of $90 million over two years to support the Queensland Fuel Security Plan. We have supported the continued operations at the Mount Isa copper smelter, the Townsville refinery and the Phosphate Hill fertiliser facility. We have implemented a streamlined approach to identifying and releasing exploration areas for resources, supported by yearly land release programs. We have progressed a suite of reforms under the Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Bill to increase efficiency, streamline processes and respond to emerging issues and challenges.

We have progressed the State Development and Public Works Organisation (Critical Minerals) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to better enable the government to plan, assess and deliver major projects and economic development—including critical minerals and industrial sectors—more efficiently and effectively. We have progressed the targeted review of the Financial Provisioning Scheme to evaluate policy settings to support new and existing resources investment. We have enhanced our assessment team's knowledge and understanding of the resource sector through mining site visits, which in turn improve the assessment process and its efficiency.

We have delivered clear and efficient approval pathways through the establishment of a cross-agency assessment team. Key projects include Eva Copper Mine, Centurion and Graphinex's Esmeralda project. We have developed a risk-based approach to technical and financial assessment to reduce red tape and improve timeframes for mining lease applications. We have coordinated Queensland government's engagement with the Commonwealth relating to the Commonwealth's EPBC Act reforms, focused on reforms to the mining lease objection process to improve competitiveness, reduce delays and improve approval timeframes. We have developed a new authority register to improve the online management of resource authorities. This work has helped to restore confidence and reduce bottlenecks. It is a clear demonstration to industry that Queensland is open for business.

As I mentioned earlier, yesterday I met with the new CEO of Dhilmar, who has just purchased the Anglo assets in Queensland—a multibillion dollar deal. His words to me were, 'I want more coalmines.' The interest is there. We are seeing these coalmines being taken up. Other overseas investors are coming into my office and asking that question: where do I purchase more coalmines in Queensland? The interest is there. We will continue to work with these companies to grow our coalmining sector. As I said, coal tonnages are up—linked, of course, to worldwide fluctuations in coal prices—but we will continue to work in partnership with the resource sector and our coalmining companies to drive that investment into the industry.

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

Mr DALTON: Minister, coming back to manufacturing and rural and regional development, a key deliverable in the SDS relates to supporting regional and rural Queensland communities. Can you provide an update on employment opportunities for regional Queenslanders in the Maryborough region because of the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program?

Mr LAST: The Queensland government is absolutely committed to creating secure, high-quality and ongoing jobs for Queenslanders. We know what Labor's track record was on regional and rural development. It is easy to summarise because there was none. They neglected the regions and consistently underestimated the contribution of regional manufacturers to the broader economy. The voices of regional Queensland were not heard at 1 William Street under the previous regime.

The Queensland Train Manufacturing Program will support more than 1,300 jobs over the life of the program including through the construction of facilities, train manufacturing and ongoing fleet maintenance. Hundreds of workers have been hard at work on the construction of the Torbanlea train manufacturing facility. It is an impressive facility. At its peak more than 550 full-time-equivalent staff were onsite—sparkies, chippies, concreters, roofers and plant operators—all helping to build one of the most advanced train manufacturing facilities in the Asia-Pacific. Local businesses have also benefited from the QTMP construction boom, with more than 60 of them providing goods and services to the build. This includes businesses like the Maryborough-based Hyne Group, which was awarded a $2 million contract to provide the advance timber framing for the administrative building.

When it comes to train manufacturing, workforce recruitment has been underway for the past year, targeting approximately 200 blue-collar worker roles across mechanical and electrical trades, fabricators and trades assistants. Workers across Maryborough and the Fraser Coast have certainly answered the call. Since the expression of interest process was opened last year, more than 1,800 applications have been received for those blue-collar roles. These are highly sought after positions in a brand new facility. Of these, 71 applications have come from workers at the existing Maryborough service and delivery centre. There are currently 13 blue-collar workers on board at Torbanlea who have started manufacturing of the first train. All of them are Fraser Coast locals. Workforce recruitment will continue in stages to align with manufacturing and operational requirements, with Downer advising the next tranche of onboarding will occur this month and full mobilisation is expected by quarter three 2027.

Then there are all the white-collar roles that are required at Torbanlea—the production managers, the quality testers, admin and technical specialists who are helping to deliver these trains. Approximately 100 of these white-collar roles will be required at Torbanlea. That includes approximately 30 staff that Hyundai Rotem expects to employ who are helping to transfer that technology—and it is advanced technology—and build the capacity of the local workforce. There are currently 63 white-collar staff onsite at Torbanlea. Although more than half are from the Fraser Coast, the opportunity to work on QTMP has encouraged others to move. I met one of the senior leaders while attending the launch of the state-of-the-art production line last month. He relocated from Brisbane to Maryborough, along with his family, to take on the job of general manager at Torbanlea. It is not just at Torbanlea where jobs are being created thanks to QTMP, a further 80 roles will be created through subcontractors across the Fraser Coast and broader Queensland.

QTMP is about jobs for the future, which is why it will employ at least 22 apprentices and four trainees, contributing to the long-term workforce capability. Isn't that a good news story? Any time that we are employing apprentices and trainees is a good news story when it comes to jobs in this state. The first apprentice, Beth, a fourth-year coppersmith, recently started work at Torbanlea. With her father also working at the facility, QTMP is quite literally supporting the continuation of train building skills on the Fraser Coast. Those skills are also being strengthened through the training and development pathways that QTMP brings with it. The Manufacturing Centre of Excellence, delivered with Manufacturing Skills Queensland, is up and running and being used by Downer to train and upskill staff working on QTMP. The centre provides training in advanced manufacturing, including CNC machining and robotic welding technologies. It is an impressive facility with state-of-the-art equipment. The feedback to date from those staff who are working in that particular facility has been overwhelmingly positive. They are working with the very latest technology and that augurs well moving forward in terms of upskilling that workforce. This initiative will provide sustainable local training opportunities and support the broader manufacturing supply chain, developing job opportunities and providing a lasting legacy for the Fraser Coast region.

Mr G KELLY: Minister, still on your regional forums, the Service Delivery Statements reference cross-agency collaborations to support regional and rural communities. Can you please provide an update on the outcome of your regional forum in Bowen and outline plans for future regional forums?

Mr LAST: Our forums are delivering real outcomes. From the Bowen forums some key community outcomes include providing strategic partners in the broader community with clear advice on the revised Abbot Point State Development Area, reducing uncertainty for businesses and investors; planning certainty for the Bowen State Boat Harbour master plan through contractor appointment and community consultation has been initiated; increased place-based skilling programs to build workforce capability for infrastructure projects and addressing housing shortages; the provision of fee-free training for students undertaking certifications to enhance workforce readiness; and the removal of the boat run aground on the rocks at Rose Bay—this has improved safety for residents and marine users and allows for environmental restoration of the foreshore and waterways.

Prior to the Bowen regional forum several community stakeholders requested the forum include updates on the Abbot Point State Development Area and the progress of the Bowen State Boat Harbour master plan. The department engaged with relevant agencies in advance and organised to have the Coordinator-General provide a presentation at the forum on his work in the region. The Coordinator-General also participated in a panel discussion, alongside the director-general of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, who is available to answer questions relevant to her portfolio, including the harbour master plan. On 6 March 2026 the Department of Transport and Main Roads announced the contractor for that harbour master plan and, similarly, following the Coordinator-General's briefing at the forum, an assistant coordinator-general attended an event in Bowen to provide a further update on the state development area.

As a related Bowen forum outcome, departmental reps also visited the Port Denison Sailing Club and were provided with a proposal for new facilities, particularly in the lead-up to the 2032 games. As we know, sailing will be in the Whitsundays and Bowen is ideally positioned to capitalise on that. The department connected the club with the Department of Sport, Racing, Olympic and Paralympic Games North Queensland staff and shared information about the Games On! infrastructure program, in addition to factors the club needs to consider such as identifying co-contributors as a requirement of the program.

Following each forum, actions are actively progressed, with departmental officers working directly with stakeholders, councils and agencies to progress initiatives, provide updates and escalate issues where required. This is not simply a case where we turn up, run a regional forum and they never see or hear from us again. We have processes in place to follow up on those issues which are identified and give advice back to those groups, individuals and businesses that approached us and had meetings with us at those particular forums. That progress is monitored through ongoing engagement and coordination with key partners, including regional leadership networks and government agencies, ensuring that forum outcomes translate into practical activity and inform broader regional policy and program development. We plan to hold more forums across our regions this year, including in Yeppoon and Mundubbera.

Mr G KELLY: Minister, the SDS lists a key deliverable to support regional and rural communities. Can you please provide an update on the Country Roads Connect Program and the work that is being undertaken to boost safety on Queensland roads?

Mr LAST: I thank the member for the question, a member who is very familiar with the roads in Central Queensland and some of the roads that form part of this Country Roads Connect Program. It is a matter very close to my heart. As a former police officer spending much of my service in the bush, attending way too many traffic accidents, the safety of the state's regional road network is paramount. In relation to the Country Roads Connect Program I can say this: in August 2025 Minister Mickelberg and I announced that 22 local councils will receive funding for 22 projects under the Country Roads Connect Program to seal roads in regional and rural communities which became impassable during severe weather events. Think about that. We are sealing roads, because we still have unsealed roads in Queensland that are used every single day, by mums and dads taking kids to school, to transport produce in and out of these areas. They are our arteries in Queensland. They are so important to rural and regional Queensland in terms of connectivity.

A $100 million election commitment, the program is being rolled out over three years, jointly administered by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and my department. Agreements with the local councils were executed earlier this year. As at the end of May five projects were underway, one was complete, with all projects scheduled to be finished by mid-2028. Maranoa Regional Council has completed its project to seal the Yuleba Surat Road with a grant of $3.6 million in state funding. Paroo Shire Council has completed the first stage of the sealing of Jobs Gate Road with a grant of $3 million. Through this program the government is improving safety, strengthening economic resilience and ensuring reliable road access for local communities, freight operators and emergency services. The program underpins the critical economic contributions of regional and rural Queensland in mining, manufacturing and agriculture through safe and reliable access to transport corridors. As of 31 May 2026, $31 million in claims have been submitted by local councils.

The list of roads under this program include: Jakelwar-Goodooga Road in the Balonne Shire; Jobs Gate Road, Paroo; Yuleba Surat Road in the Maranoa Shire; Warri Gate Road in the Bulloo Shire; Richmond-Winton Road in the Richmond Shire; Daymar-Weengallon Road in the Goondiwindi region; Murray Road in the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire; Julia Creek Taldora Road—I know it well—in the McKinlay Shire; Injune Road in the Banana Shire; Wyntoon Road and Springton Road in the Central Highlands; Anderleigh Road in the Gympie region; Barmaryee Road in the Livingstone Shire; China Camp Road in the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire; Cloncurry-Dajarra Road at Duchess, which will enable the Phosphate Hill workers to access that site in all weather conditions; Diamantina Developmental Road in the Barcoo Shire; Stanwell Waroula Road in the Rockhampton Regional Council area; Gayndah Mount Perry Road; Cotherstone-Capella Road in the Isaac region; Bowen Developmental Road in the Whitsunday Regional Council area; and Ootann Road in the Mareeba Shire. Those are roads well known in those communities. They are important roads in those communities. The fact that we are now sealing unsealed roads that had been left in that condition for many decades has been really well received by those particular communities.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, a key deliverable in the SDS is to strengthen the Queensland manufacturing industry's resilience and competitiveness. Can you please outline what the Crisafulli LNP state government is doing to help manufacturers prepare for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games?

Mr LAST: The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games present a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Queensland manufacturers and the Crisafulli government is determined to ensure local businesses are well placed to seize those opportunities. That is why we are taking practical steps now to strengthen the capability, resilience and competitiveness of our manufacturing sector well ahead of 2032.

In April of this year, the department brought together more than 35 senior representatives from major commodity producers, peak industry bodies, Brisbane 2032 organisers, and state and Commonwealth agencies for the Olympic commodities round table. That forum helped shape the development of the Olympic manufacturing and procurement plan, which is focused on maximising opportunities for Queensland manufacturers throughout the six-year lead-up to the games, ensuring the benefits extend well beyond 2032.

We are also making Olympic procurement a standing priority through the Queensland Manufacturing Advisory Council. At its February meeting, the council considered procurement reforms and the opportunities presented by Brisbane 2032 to increase local industry participation, strengthen Queensland supply chains and ensure our manufacturers are positioned to compete for Olympics related work. Importantly, we are backing those discussions with practical support through our network of manufacturing hubs across Queensland. The hubs are helping businesses build the capability they need to compete by fostering innovation, supporting the adoption of advanced technologies, strengthening workforce skills and connecting manufacturers with funding opportunities. By building stronger, more capable manufacturers today, we are ensuring Queensland businesses are ready to take full advantage of the procurement opportunities that Brisbane 2032 will deliver while creating a stronger manufacturing sector that will continue to support jobs and economic growth long after the games have concluded.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to non-government questions.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, with direct relation to manufacturing QTMP rolling stock, what is the value of current contracts with Fraser Coast based businesses?

Mr Fraine: As you point out, a key focus of QTMP is to ensure there are opportunities for both businesses in Queensland and businesses that are in the Fraser Coast area itself. In terms of what is occurring around the current contracts that have been released, at this point there are $1.2 billion worth of contracts that have been spent with small to medium enterprises in the Fraser Coast alone. There are a couple of examples of those that I think you would be aware of, member. For example, Maryborough's Allweld Manufacturing produced the high-fidelity mock-up of the train to test its accessibility features. GMG, otherwise known as Global Manufacturing Group, is providing laser-cutting services and metal fabrication for train car bodies. The Hyne Group, for instance, supplied laminated timber for the administration building at Torbanlea. As a bit of trivia, it is my father's old employer. StyleRide is supplying moulded foam and seat upholstery for QTMP train passenger seats. Bendpro, a subcontractor to another firm, are doing tube bending and they are based in Maryborough. Wide Bay Crane Hire is supplying cranes for construction of the facility and installation of specialist equipment.

The local manufacturing officers based in that region have also been working with businesses to support them in this opportunity. For example, officers have worked closely with Global Manufacturing Group to undertake the catalyst benchmark program, which involved assessing business processes and performance, identifying improvement opportunities and enhancing competitiveness through a structured, data-driven approach. In addition to those local firms, I note that Brisbane-based WRL Shipping was awarded a contract to provide key logistics services. They are experts in heavy logistics and it was their trucks that have been bringing the specialist equipment to the Torbanlea train manufacturing facility. That is the locals as they currently are, but of course there are also the localisation strategy and—

Mr SMITH: Thank you, Director-General. I appreciate that you have answered that question.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker, in relation to standing order 118(b). The director-general was being relevant to the question as asked and was providing additional information. I submit to you that he be allowed to round out his answer.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Speaker: the director-general was absolutely relevant. He answered the question with regard to Fraser Coast based businesses. I accept that and am happy to move on with my next question.

Mr SPEAKER: Is there anything you specifically want to add, Director-General?

Mr Fraine: Only to mention, member, for your benefit, that the localisation strategy, as you may be aware, is about other businesses setting up facilities and business opportunities on the Fraser Coast. For instance, Jinyang Tech, one of Hyundai Rotem's sister companies, has established a $30 million roll-forming facility in Maryborough. This and other opportunities in that space provide other opportunities within the Fraser Coast region as they establish themselves for the existing businesses that are there.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, I appreciate that you mentioned a range of different contracts with regard to the construction of the facility. My question goes specifically to materials that will be used for the manufacturing of rolling stock, so the actual carriages themselves. What is the value of contracts in terms of materials that actually form the trains?

Mr Fraine: As part of that $1.2 billion, I talked through examples such as StyleRide, which is supplying moulded foam and seat upholstery for passenger seats within the trains.

Mr SMITH: So the value of those contracts, though?

Mr Fraine: Member, I will take a bit of advice. I will see if we can get some further information during the course of this hearing.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, is it all right to come back at the end of the hearing?

Mr LAST: Absolutely.

Mr SMITH: I appreciate that. My next question is to the Director-General of Transport and Main Roads, Ms Stannard. Director-General, does the Department of Transport and Main Roads hold a contract agreement with Hyundai Rotem?

Ms Stannard: The Queensland Train Manufacturing Program is building over 65 new six-car trains. The total program value is over $9.5 billion. Downer was awarded a $4.6 billion design, build, maintain contract in June 2023.

Mr SMITH: Ms Stannard, I refer you to question on notice No. 18. Can you confirm that the answer provided does indeed confirm that overseas employees will form part of the white-collar workforce?

Ms Stannard: I have question on notice 18 in front of me. The question refers to budget papers and asks, of the announced 800 jobs, the number that will be filled by employees of Hyundai Rotem and workers on an international working visa. The question response talks about the 800 jobs in construction and manufacturing over the life of the contract. There will be 380 jobs directly involved in building the 65 trains at Torbanlea, including approximately 200 blue-collar jobs and approximately 100 white-collar jobs at the facility itself, as well as a further 80 estimated in the wider Fraser Coast region and across Queensland.

Downer was awarded the contract. The response goes on to answer that Downer has partnered with South Korea's Hyundai Rotem corporation for the design and delivery of the trains. Hyundai Rotem corporation expects to engage up to 30 site-based personnel as part of the white-collar workforce. It is a normal part of the transferring of that technology capability to Australia that we would see that subcontracted partner bring experts to Australia to work with the local workforce. They will be working with those technology transfer vehicles that are coming to Australia to work with the local workforce to transfer details about technology and the building of capability. Those personnel will be some employees drawn from their operation in South Korea as well as some local employees in Australia. Hyundai Rotem corporation will have Australian employees as well who are in that facility. As at June 2026, the question on notice response advises there are 19 Hyundai Rotem corporation employees working there.

Mr SMITH: Ms Stannard, are you aware of any contractual clauses that outline what percentage of manufacturing workforce employees must consist of Hyundai Rotem employees with regard to that contract between Downer and Hyundai Rotem?

Ms Stannard: I can give the committee a little bit of information about the local benefits process in the contract and the way we sought to ensure local benefits were delivered into the region when we ran that tender process. The member would perhaps have some visibility of that. We asked bidders to bid back to the state the best way for them to deliver local benefits, particularly lasting benefits, into the contract.

The member may have seen bids that come in sometimes full of promises. One of the things we made really sure was to take a promises document and contractualise that, to ensure that any commitments made were contractualised into our contract with Downer. As you pointed out, the state's contract is with Downer. There are contractual clauses in the state's contract with Downer that require them to deliver certain local content benefits.

I believe your question referred to the contract between Downer and Hyundai Rotem. I cannot give the committee any information about that. I do not have visibility of Downer's subcontract with Hyundai Rotem. It is not a contract that we are privy to, to my knowledge. I will get a quick nod from my team that that is the case. That is the case; we do not have access to that contract.

Mr SMITH: Ms Stannard, has the department or yourself sought to understand between Downer and Hyundai Rotem how many Hyundai Rotem employees from overseas will form that blue-collar workforce?

Ms Stannard: We take really seriously the commitments made by bidders to deliver local content benefits, whether they are material sourcing—the contracts you just referred to—or the employment. We have a number of mechanisms under the contract to verify that the local benefits promised in the contract are in fact delivered through the project. We do that through a number of different ways—visits to site, talking to people, and talking to the supply chain as well to understand that they are seeing those contracts follow through. We have informal mechanisms, but we also have formal mechanisms by which we can audit our head contractor to see evidence of their subcontracting and that they have, in fact, fulfilled those commitments. The contractor is very interested in that because that is part of how they achieve their milestone payments; they need to deliver against those contractual clauses.

Mr SMITH: Ms Stannard, you just said that you can audit to verify those contract details with regard to that local workforce. Will TMR seek to provide that information of how many overseas employees will take up the blue-collar workforce contract between Downer and Hyundai Rotem? You just said you could do it. Will the department commit to doing that?

Mr SPEAKER: Does that fall under this minister?

Ms Stannard: I am happy to provide some further information if that would assist the member. We have the ability to audit the commitments made in the contract. We do not necessarily have the rights under the contract to order who employees are or where they come from. That will depend—sorry, I do not have the detail—

Mr SMITH: Sorry, Director-General, you are saying that you cannot provide evidence to this committee as to how many overseas workers will take up positions at the Torbanlea QTMP site through that contract; is that correct?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: the director-general was answering the question, and I think that that is an inadequate characterisation of the response that was being provided. I believe she should be allowed to continue with her response so we are able to hear what she has to say as opposed to the hypothetical proposition put by the member for Bundaberg.

Mr SPEAKER: I notice Ms Stannard is getting a bit of advice there. Ms Stannard, can you help us out with that?

Ms Stannard: Certainly, we have provided evidence through the response to the question on notice. I perhaps will clarify also for the member that Hyundai Rotem corporation expects to engage 30 site-based personnel, and they would be white-collar workforce. As at June 2026, per the question on notice, 19 of those employees are already there. We have no evidence from Hyundai Rotem that they would be intending to bring any blue-collar workers from Korea, South Korea or from their existing workforce. They will bring a white-collar workforce and 19 of them, as per our response as at June 2026, are already in place.

Mr SMITH: Before moving on, Minister, with your commitment to ensuring that it will be Maryborough locals who get the blue-collar jobs in Maryborough, will you commit to ensuring you find out whether or not that contract comprises overseas employment?

Mr LAST: As outlined by the Director-General, Transport and Main Roads, there are no blue-collar workers from overseas envisaged to work at that facility. We appreciate that 30 staff from Hyundai Rotem are expected to be employed. They are white-collar workers with highly specialised skill sets, as you would appreciate. These are complex trains with a lot of technology, as you would appreciate, and they are working very closely with our Australian-based staff in the delivery of this contract. The only thing we can audit is what contractual commitments are.

Mr SMITH: Minister, the Primary Industries and Resources Committee published its report, titled *Inquiry into sugarcane bioenergy opportunities in Queensland*. Of the 12 recommendations, which recommendations have you identified for your department to lead with respect to the government's response?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: in relation to portfolio responsibilities related to this, I want to seek some clarity that this falls under the minister's purview as opposed to the Minister for Primary Industries.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Mr Speaker: it was not about primary industries. It was about bioenergy opportunities in Queensland. It was not specifically about primary industries at all.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, can you respond to that under your portfolio?

Mr LAST: Queensland's sugar manufacturing industry is a significant regional employer and an important part of the state's manufacturing base. Sugar mills, as the member would know, support local jobs, growers, contractors, transport operators and broader regional supply chains across Queensland. The industry is facing a range of pressures, as we know, including high energy and diesel costs, low global sugar prices, reduced cane supply and impacts from extreme weather events.

The Queensland government recognises the importance of the sugar manufacturing industry and is supporting the sector through a coordinated, whole-of-government approach. The Department of Primary Industries leads the Queensland government's response to broader sugar industry challenges and opportunities, while my department supports the manufacturing capability and diversification. The department also works closely with the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning on relevant recommendations from the Primary Industries and Resources Committee's inquiry into sugarcane bioenergy opportunities.

While the level of engagement with the department varies across mills, a number have accessed manufacturing hubs, programs and services to support workforce development, skills, productivity and innovation. Diversification presents an important opportunity to strengthen the long-term resilience and profitability of Queensland's sugar industry. Potential areas of opportunity, member, include biofuels, bioenergy, by-product supply chains—

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Speaker: relevance. Which of the 12 recommendations has the minister outlined for his department to lead?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, could you address that in your response?

Mr SMITH: Would you like me to table the recommendations for you?

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, you know my ruling about cross-table chatter.

Mr LAST:—value-added manufacturing and the broader use of ethanol produced at sugar mills. The department arranged a meeting between the Australian Sugar Manufacturers and the Cross-Border Commissioner in his role as the Fuel Supply Taskforce Coordinator to discuss opportunities for ethanol produced at sugar mills to play a greater role in Australia's fuel supply. The recently announced Wide Bay Manufacturing Hub, based in Maryborough, is well placed to support sugar manufacturers in that region.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Do you have a point of order, member for Bundaberg?

Mr SMITH: To assist the member with relevance, I will table the recommendations and he can circle which ones.

Mr SPEAKER: Member, it is up to the minister to respond.

Mr SMITH: Speaker, it is about relevance, though. He has not even said the word 'recommendation' yet. He must be relevant to the question, which is: which of the 12 recommendations is his department leading with regard to the government's direct response to the recommendations?

Mr LAST: Mr Speaker, I can advise that we are working very closely and in collaboration with Minister Perrett's department regarding those recommendations.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, you can ask one more question before we swap over.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, which of the 12 recommendations has the minister directed your department to lead with regard to the government's response?

Mr Fraine: We are working in collaboration with the Department of Primary Industries on the 12 recommendations. As you are well aware, 12 were accepted in principle and one was accepted in full, and we are working with the Department of Primary Industries on those recommendations.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. I call the member for Moggill.

Dr ROWAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My—

Mr SMITH: Speaker, the recommendation number—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, you will be warned if you ignore my instructions. We are not having chatter back and forth across the table. Member for Moggill, could you restart your question?

Dr ROWAN: My question is to the minister. Page 1 of the SDS lists a key deliverable: grow export pathways and attract increased industry investment in manufacturing. Earlier this year Queensland hosted Australian Manufacturing Week. Can the minister please explain how attracting events like that benefits Queensland's manufacturers?

Mr LAST: As the member alluded to, Queensland hosted the Australian Manufacturing Week for the first time in the event's 20-year history, welcoming more than 7,000 attendees. What an event it was at the convention centre. It was overwhelmingly successful. The feedback was positive. It was a great event. I acknowledge the work that my department did in pulling together the logistics and putting on that event.

The Crisafulli government is committed to making Queensland the most attractive place in the nation for manufacturers to invest, build and grow. Local Queensland manufacturers from Toowoomba to Brisbane and the Gold Coast either were on display or provided site tours. The Crisafulli government understands that a stronger economy is built on a globally competitive and future-ready manufacturing industry. From food and beverage production, aerospace technologies and Queensland's cutting-edge mining equipment, the exhibition showcased the strength of Queensland's industry and demonstrated its capabilities on the world stage.

Manufacturing is one of Queensland's largest industries, contributing more than $29 billion to the economy. Through the five-year Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Strategy, the Crisafulli government is backing the sector to deliver a globally competitive and future-ready manufacturing industry. The event reinforced Queensland's position as a leader in advanced manufacturing. Events like pandemics, political unrest and trade and supply chain disruptions continue to highlight the importance of self-sufficiency and sovereign manufacturing capability, and the Crisafulli government is committed to accelerating the future of manufacturing right here in Queensland.

The event resulted in: increased visibility of Queensland's manufacturing capabilities and competitive advantages; increased awareness of Queensland government support programs and services; strengthened relationships between government, manufacturers, industry bodies and investment stakeholders; improved collaboration across Queensland government departments through a coordinated delivery model; and new opportunities identified to support future manufacturing growth, workforce development and investment attraction. I liken the manufacturing sector in Queensland to a sleeping giant. It is awakening, and the opportunities that now exist in that space are limitless.

We are capitalising on the growth in the manufacturing sector. Some of the manufacturing we do in this state is truly cutting-edge. The work we are doing in attracting events of this magnitude to Queensland underlines how important this sector is becoming to this state's economy. We are certainly keen to grow that sector. We are keen to support that sector. We are doing that through our manufacturing hubs. The work that our department is doing in that space is to be commended.

Mr DALTON: Minister, a key deliverable in the SDS is to 'attract increased industry investment in the manufacturing and resources sectors'. Could you please provide an update on the work undertaken by the Queensland Manufacturing Advisory Council to assist in meeting this goal?

Mr LAST: QMAC is indeed making headway on a number of key issues. The Queensland Manufacturing Advisory Council was established on 8 July 2025 and has since met on five occasions. The council provides advice to our government on the design and delivery of initiatives to support manufacturers to adopt automation and new technologies, improve productivity and strengthen competitiveness.

During the scheduled meetings, the council has also tackled a range of issues including strengthening workforce capabilities through targeted skills development and initiatives to expand the manufacturing talent pipeline. The council also provided insights on key issues, including Queensland's manufacturing brand, to reposition it as an attractive career opportunity that highlights Queensland's capability.

The council noted that outdated perceptions of manufacturing continue to act as a barrier to attracting interest in and promoting the capabilities of the sector. As a result, the department is currently investigating how Queenslanders make decisions about manufacturing as a career from first impressions through to entering, staying in or leaving the industry. This research will inform how we promote the industry moving forward.

Members considered and gave feedback and advice to the department and government enablers for the manufacturing sector including: discussing how to best promote Queensland manufacturing to better showcase its advanced, high-value and future focused manufacturing capabilities; considering artificial intelligence adoption barriers and opportunities to enhance productivity and workforce capability in manufacturing; reviewing procurement reforms and Olympic and Paralympic opportunities to boost local industry; considering opportunities and barriers for Queensland's small- to medium-enterprise manufacturers to participate in defence supply chains; and exploring opportunities and challenges in critical minerals processing including implications for advanced manufacturing capability, supply chain development and Queensland's competitive advantage.

The council has also considered and provided advice to government on the actual and potential impacts of the Iran conflict on Queensland manufacturers at a special out-of-session meeting in April this year. Queensland's Cross-Border Commissioner, Mr Bob Gee, attended the meeting and noted that he would use the matters raised as part of his broader national engagement.

QMAC meetings have also been held on occasion on site with key Queensland manufacturers. The council's third meeting was held at Priestley's Gourmet Delights, where members observed how the company's investment in digitisation and automation has improved production efficiency and supported export growth. The council's fourth meeting was held at Rheinmetall Defence Australia's Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence, where members were provided with insights on emerging opportunities in defence and critical minerals processing.

Future council meetings will include further discussions on a range of matters including AI adoption and government support for manufacturers entering defence supply chains, alongside additional site visits to Queensland manufacturing businesses. Regional manufacturers are well represented on QMAC, with membership including Townsville, Cairns, Toowoomba and Sunshine Coast-based manufacturing business representatives.

Mr DALTON: Minister, page 1 of the SDS lists a key deliverable as strengthening the Queensland manufacturing industry. Can the minister provide an update on the rollout of the $79.1 million Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Grants Program and explain how regional manufacturers including those in Mackay are benefiting?

Mr LAST: I thank you for the question and for the work that you are doing representing manufacturers in your region, which we know is a massive regional manufacturing hub for Queensland. I was in Mackay last week and I had the opportunity to visit several manufacturers at the Queensland Mining Expo including EHS Manufacturing and Dowdens Pumping. These manufacturers are a great example of the potential and growth of manufacturing in regional Queensland, and the Crisafulli government is supporting them through the Transforming Queensland Strategy and the Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Grants Program. The new $79.1 million Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Grants Program delivers on our election commitment to increase funding by $5 million per year from 2025-26. This demonstrates our commitment to back Queensland manufacturing and to secure future jobs.

The program awards grants over three years through six competitive rounds, with $12.5 million available in each round. It supports local manufacturers to invest in advanced technologies, to improve productivity and to strengthen their competitiveness. Importantly, 50 per cent of the available funding will be allocated to regional Queensland manufacturers. Isn't that a good news story!

The program will support a pipeline of projects across the state that will boost capability, create jobs and strengthen Queensland's manufacturing sector for the long term. The first round closed in April 2026, receiving 119 applications seeking $65.3 million in funding, reflecting strong demand from industry. Rural and regional interest in the program is high, with 35 applications requesting $19.5 million in funding from rural and regional manufacturers. Applications are currently under assessment and are anticipated to be announced in the coming weeks. Over the next five rounds of the program we will continue supporting projects that create jobs, strengthen sovereign capability and grow exports and investment in Queensland.

Mr DALTON: Minister, a key deliverable in the SDS is to drive innovation in manufacturing. Can you please provide an update on how the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program is helping to achieve this objective?

Mr LAST: We have built strong partnerships which have seen Jinyang Tech, one of Hyundai Rotem corporation's sister companies, set up their roll-forming facility in Maryborough. It is a good news story. Jinyang Tech manufacturers roll form steel for the QTMP train car bodies, and they are teaching their highly specialised techniques in roll forming and heat bending to give Queensland a key manufacturing capability it previously did not have. This is a very specialised craft and the South Koreans are masters at it. We are proud that our locals will have the opportunity to learn this skill from the Jinyang team right here in Queensland.

Thanks to QTMP, Downer is also the founding partner of the Manufacturing Centre of Excellence in Maryborough. Through the centre, manufacturers have access to world-class training in advanced manufacturing techniques and are helping to equip the next generation with the skills that they need for the future of manufacturing. Together, the equipment expertise and commitment to skills, development and knowledge transfer integral to QTMP is helping to build an innovative, sustainable and export-ready rail supply chain on the Fraser Coast.

The Crisafulli government has committed to building a globally competitive manufacturing industry. Queensland's manufacturing supply chains underpin every industry of the economy from critical minerals and resources to defence, energy, food, medical and the transport sectors. A strong and sustainable local manufacturing industry will also be critical in delivering the products required for the Olympics and Paralympics in 2032. This includes 65 new passenger trains which have officially commenced manufacture at the Torbanlea facility. With over 18,000 businesses employing around 169,000 Queenslanders, including around 83,000 in our regional communities, manufacturing is a cornerstone of our economy. This sector alone contributes around $29 billion to Queensland's economy each year. There are significant opportunities to grow and diversify the manufacturing industry through building industry capability and connecting them with supply chain opportunities across not only Queensland but also the globe.

Through the Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Strategy we are taking proactive steps to increase local production capability and reduce reliance on overseas supply chains. We have businesses setting up shop on the Fraser Coast for the first time thanks to QTMP's localisation strategy, and we are backing them.

Mr DALTON: Minister, with reference to building resilient and thriving regional communities, as outlined in the SDS, can you please provide an update on the Regional Collaborative Governance Model?

Mr LAST: As the member knows, many of the complex issues in regional communities require a collaborative cross-agency response. The Regional Collaborative Governance Model provides a structure to embed cross-agency collaborative practice, capture regional intelligence, improve communication alignment between policy development and regional service delivery, and foster impactful place-based initiatives.

It focuses on three goals: responding to regional challenges and opportunities, enabling cross-agency collaboration and cultivating regional leadership. The delivery of the model occurs through the establishment of regional leadership networks and priority working groups which are supported by dedicated resources. The regional leadership networks and priority working groups provide the model with a clear pathway for government to understand and respond to challenges and opportunities in the regions, strengthen collaboration between agencies to achieve shared regional and whole-of-government priorities, amend statewide policy in response to regional voices, and provide a high return on government investment through better coordination and improved service delivery.

There are six regional leadership networks across the state, each with a unique work plan outlining regional priorities and actions. The regional leadership networks involve 193 members across 20 agencies. Twenty-five priority working groups are focused on progressing complex regional issues and greater involvement of external stakeholders where appropriate to strengthen alignment with community priorities.

Regional leadership networks have collectively delivered and influenced key initiatives including: improving visibility of major infrastructure project pipelines and their cumulative regional impacts; developing an evidence base to underpin coordinated government involvement in supporting a sustainable future for places like Weipa; supporting infrastructure delivery through cross-agency collaboration including water access for the Rockhampton ring-road project; providing regional information to support coordinated action on social housing and government employee housing reforms; and strengthening cross-agency place-based responses to improve coordination and targeting antisocial behaviours across regional locations with a focus on Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Maryborough.

Four regions have established priority working groups led by regional Queensland Police Service representatives to plan and progress structured data-informed action planning to reduce victim numbers. The remaining two regions will have established priority working groups by the end of July 2026.

Regional leadership networks have also supported multiagency delivery of regional priorities including the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday network, which is supporting implementation of the Moranbah Emergency Services Cadets program to increase youth engagement and develop future regional leaders. The North and North-West Queensland network is exploring opportunities to provide employment pathways to support individuals leaving incarceration.

In the Wide Bay-Burnett, the network supported delivery of the Bundaberg First Nations Youth Summit in October 2025. For Far North Queensland, the network has established a community of practice to develop guiding principles for meaningful and culturally appropriate engagement with regional, remote and discrete communities. The Central Queensland network is developing resources and processes to streamline regional, domestic and family violence referrals. The Darling Downs and South-West network has a 12-month dedicated resource funded by the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner to address cross-border issues. This dedicated governance structure is improving cross-agency collaboration and outcomes for regional and rural Queensland communities. As I have said today on a number of occasions, Queensland is a big state. It is very dispersed geographically. We are committed to making sure that no matter where you live in this state you have a voice.

Mr SPEAKER: We will go to opposition members for some questions. I remind you that we have one question on notice to finish up with.

Mr MARTIN: My question is to Director-General Fraine. Can you confirm the total budget for advertising from your department in 2025-26?

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, point of order: I have to raise this again. In relation to these whole-of-government matters, they relate to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Extensive answers have been provided by the director-general from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet at the Premier's estimates session and subsequent testimony by a number of directors-general in relation to their responsibilities as they rest with this government.

Mr SPEAKER: Director-General, I have been allowing directors-general to respond in relation to whatever information they have in their department.

Mr Fraine: The Department of the Premier and Cabinet provides a centralised coordination role in whole-of-government advertising, including overseeing the cap on advertising spend. Oversight for media placement through the whole-of-government media buying agency is DPC's responsibility. Total media placement spend is subject to an independent end-of-financial-year audit, as per the standing offer arrangement with EssenceMediacom managed by DPC. DPC publicly releases media placement spend annually. Any questions regarding media replacement can be provided to DPC.

Mr MARTIN: So you cannot tell me the spend of your own department?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Do you have another question?

Mr KATTER: Minister, one of the big issues facing regional communities is banking and the inaccessibility of capital in regional communities. Has the Special Commissioner for Rural and Regional Queensland reported on this or made recommendations on how to address this issue?

Mr LAST: As a matter of fact, I made a submission to the banking inquiry a couple of years ago because communities in my own electorate are not immune to the exodus of banks from those areas. It has a significant impact. In many of these communities, as the member would appreciate, it is the sole financial institution. It is certainly an issue that is well and truly on my radar. It is something the special commissioner will be able to look at in his travels and report on. Off the back of that question, member, I will certainly give an undertaking that I will be raising that with the special commissioner going forward.

Mr SPEAKER: There was one question outstanding. Are you able to respond to that, Director-General?

Mr Fraine: Member for Bundaberg, you were interested in how much of the $1.2 billion that was going on Fraser Coast SMEs was for rolling stock. The answer to that question is: $690 million has been spent on direct local goods and services in the Fraser Coast LGA in relation to rolling stock.

Member for Woodridge, as part of one of my answers to you I indicated that one of the FTEs provided for the special commissioner came from the Public Sector Commission. It has been drawn to my attention that I misspoke. That is the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, so that was a DPC FTE, not a PSC.

Mr SPEAKER: We have one minute left. There is probably time for one quick question.

Mr DICK: Director-General, can you name the specific campaigns that budgeted amounts have been allocated to and contributed to from your department from 2025-26 and beyond, and did that include the government's Fuel Security Plan?

Mr SPEAKER: Director-General, you have one minute.

Mr Fraine: As I responded to the earlier question from the member for Stretton, campaign spending is a matter for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, would you like to use the remaining time to make a statement?

Mr LAST: I thank the committee today for their work and their ongoing commitment to their committee roles. I also thank my director-general, my chief of staff and all of my ministerial staff, the executive leadership team within the department and all of the staff who contributed to the information and preparation for estimates today. It is certainly much appreciated and I value the work they are doing.

Mr SPEAKER: We have now reached the end of the time allocated for consideration of the proposed expenditure for the areas administered by the minister. The committee will now adjourn until 2 pm, when we will examine the estimates for the portfolio area of the Minister for Primary Industries.

Proceedings suspended from 1.15 pm to 2.00 pm.

ESTIMATES—PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE—PRIMARY RESOURCES

In Attendance

Hon. AJ Perrett, Minister for Primary Industries

Mr Matt Jensen, Chief of Staff

Ms Kathleen Cairns, Senior Policy and Strategy Adviser

Department of Primary Industries

Mr Graeme Bolton, Director-General

Ms Jahna Owen, Executive Director, Office of the Director-General

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Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Good afternoon and welcome back to the Legislative Council Chamber. We will now resume proceedings of this estimates hearing today. For the benefit of those who have just joined us, I am Jon Krause, the member for Scenic Rim and Deputy 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 Primary Industries and Resources Committee are: Mr Stephen Bennett, the member for Burnett and chair; Mr James Martin, the member for Stretton and deputy chair; Mr Nigel Dalton, the member for Mackay; Mr Robbie Katter, the member for Traeger; Mr Glen Kelly, the member for Mirani; and Mr Tom Smith, the member for Bundaberg. 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. The committee has authorised its hearings to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcasters 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 their phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode or turned off if not in use, in particular members. I also remind everyone that food and drink is not permitted in this chamber.

The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2026 for the primary industries portfolio area until 5.45 pm. I remind honourable members that matters relating to this portfolio area 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, which is available throughout the chamber and on the committee's webpage. I note that we are dealing with a single portfolio area in this session. I also remind everyone that these proceedings are subject to the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly. With respect to government owned corporations and statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question the committee determines will assist it 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 minister, the director-general, officials, departmental officers and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials and advisers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or director-general. Please remember to press your microphone on before you start speaking and off when you are finished.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of primary industries open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes for the portfolio area of primary industries.

Mr PERRETT: Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr Deputy Speaker, chair and members of the committee. Our first budget last year laid the foundations for the fresh start Queenslanders voted for. It respected taxpayers' hard-earned money and restored respect for hardworking Queenslanders and the industries that underpin our prosperity. Our first primary industries budget started fixing the mess left by a decade of Labor decline and incompetence. Our second budget builds on last year's foundations while continuing to deliver for primary industries.

After Labor's decade of decline, the $863 million primary industries budget reflects this government's unwavering commitment to the sector and will help us deliver our target of $30 billion of primary production output by 2030. We inherited declining frontline capability, growing biosecurity risk, increasing costs and industries burdened by years of red tape and neglect. We acted quickly to restore the industry's trust by delivering regulation certainty and policy to drive investment. Through Prosper 2050 we are delivering a shared vision to make primary industries more profitable and productive through action plans focused on the next five years. We launched Queensland's first agricultural innovation fund, the Sowing the Seeds of Farming Innovation Fund, to fast-track the development and adoption of ag tech and innovation with $30 million worth of investment.

We are supporting industries to harness new opportunities and adapt to challenging futures, including through a $7.2 million Future Cotton partnership with Cotton Australia and the Mossman Transition Plan. We are delivering a landmark 25-year Queensland Future Timber Plan, giving industry certainty and a plan to provide supply for new homes. We are protecting beachgoers with record investment in Queensland's Shark Control Program, including drone surveillance at more beaches, additional nets and drum lines at six new beaches, and research into shark populations. Following the science, we have reopened select scallop grounds and increased commercial and recreational fishing limits for Spanish mackerel.

We are boosting our biosecurity response and capability to protect against the threat of invasive pests and diseases. Under Labor, fire ants marched on. This LNP government has invested $24 million in the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce to deliver a significant reduction of up to 86 per cent in fire ant numbers across parts of South-East Queensland. Our budget builds on this success with $10.5 million to continue the assault. Today, eradication activities are moving into suppression areas, signifying the tide is turning against fire ants. We committed to hire 100 more biosecurity officers in this term of government; more than 50 have been hired across the state. Three weeks ago I was in Coen unveiling plans for delivering a stronger northern line of defence, which includes re-establishing the Cape York biosecurity facility. We have also delivered $2.3 million to upgrade and maintain the wild dog barrier fence and a $500,000 Community Bee Innovation Fund to help beekeepers defend against varroa mite.

Through our disaster response, we are standing with producers when it matters most by extending eligibility for producers and services under the DRFA. Yesterday, I announced the approval of drought declarations from 1 June this year for the Goondiwindi, Southern Downs and Balonne local government areas and part of the Maranoa Regional Council area. The declaration was based on rainfall data and advice from the department and local drought committees.

I note recent detections of H5 bird flu in native birds in South Australia. As I said last week, Queensland strengthened its preparedness measures well before this discovery. We continue to work with industry to ensure Queensland is ready. We are well prepared. The Crisafulli government will continue to support Beef2027—the largest beef event in the Southern Hemisphere—to showcase the best of our cattle industry to the world. The investments and initiatives outlined in this year's budget, combined with the strategic direction of Prosper 2050, will ensure Queensland's primary industries are profitable, productive and sustainable.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of my department led by the director-general, Graeme Bolton, and some of those who are here today. I look forward to discussing these matters further and welcome the committee's questions.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. We will go to questions and begin with non-government questions today.

Mr PERRETT: Deputy Speaker, before we proceed, can I make a declaration?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr PERRETT: Before I proceed with my answers today, in accordance with my publicly available register of interests I advise the committee that I am a landowner and a primary producer, I have a registered biosecurity entity and I may be eligible for drought and natural disaster assistance. I comply with the advice from the Integrity Commissioner regarding these matters.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. I call the member for Bundaberg for your first question.

Mr SMITH: I begin by tabling a *Courier-Mail* article for the benefit of the committee, the minister and the director-general. Deputy Speaker, I await your guidance before I ask my question.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will distribute that to all members of the committee, the minister and the director-general. You may proceed with your question.

Mr SMITH: My question is for the director-general. The *Courier-Mail* reports the Deputy Premier—

… wanted to fast-track the Beerwah East area as priority development area, which is currently a massive pine plantation under a 99 year lease.

Director-General, was your department consulted prior to this announcement?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: in relation to the question as asked, the article that has been tabled predominantly relates to matters under the portfolio responsibility of the Deputy Premier. I seek your guidance with respect to the question as asked and the tabled information because it does relate to another portfolio area.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: the land in question is currently a plantation with a 99-year lease from government through HQPlantations. It is well within the timber and forestry element of the minister's portfolio and the director-general.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for your points of order. Obviously, I have not had a chance to read every line in the article. I assume somewhere in the article it refers to it as 'forestry plantation area'?

Mr SMITH: Yes, the direct quote is 'which is currently a massive pine plantation under a 99 year lease'.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the House, given it is a question aimed at elucidating information related to a forestry matter, it is within the director-general's area of responsibility.

Mr Bolton: As the member noted, HQPlantations is Queensland's primary plantation grower. HQPlantations holds a 99-year licence issued by the Queensland government to manage, harvest and regrow plantation over approximately 300,000 hectares of state forest. HQPlantations produces approximately 80 per cent of the locally grown log supply used by Queensland's timber processing. The Beerwah East major development area is a part of that plantation licence area. Any decisions, any announcements, any forwarding of that as a major development area absolutely falls under the remit of the Deputy Premier and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and any such questions ought to have been referred to the Deputy Premier.

Mr SMITH: I might resubmit the element, and I appreciate the director-general's outline. My question is: Director-General, was your department consulted about this announcement prior to it being announced?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: that is the same question asked—

Mr SMITH: It is seeking an answer.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, I will hear the point of order in silence, please.

Dr ROWAN: The point of order is: that is the same question as asked and the director-general was directly responsive to the first question as asked. I would submit to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that second question was a repeat of the first question, which has already been answered.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: I was clarifying the initial question of the director-general with respect to his general answer as to whether or not his department was consulted prior to the announcement via either the state development department or the Deputy Premier.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, you are essentially asking the same question again. However, if you wish for the director-general to answer again, I will allow him to.

Mr Bolton: We do work very closely with the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning around the progression of the Beerwah East major development area. If there are any questions relating to the Deputy Premier's announcement I am unable to answer them. You ought to have framed that question to the Deputy Premier in the previous sessions.

Mr SMITH: Minister, given that this will reduce the volume of timber supply and plantation land in Queensland, do you support the Deputy Premier's plan?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: there is an imputation or an inference contained within the question and I would ask also that it be authenticated.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Which part, member for Moggill?

Dr ROWAN: That there is going to be this net reduction of 10 per cent. I ask them to provide some figures to authenticate the basis of the question as to what the overall figures are in Queensland in relation to that and that there is a net reduction of 10 per cent. I ask the member for Bundaberg to authenticate the basis of that.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: if you take away a pine plantation that provides timber supply, then you have reduced the volume of timber supply. I would like to know, as the minister did seem as though he was going to respond, and I thank him for that—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, I have not given you the call again yet because I am still dealing with the point of order.

Mr SMITH: My point of order is: if there is a plan to remove a plantation, therefore you remove supply from the timber supply.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You mentioned there would be a specific figure of reduction, did you not?

Mr SMITH: No, I did not.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: In relation to the point of order regarding authentication, I am satisfied that the member is asking the question on a factual enough basis. Was there a second point of order in your point of order or not, member for Moggill?

Dr ROWAN: It is in relation to the overall—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:—imputation?

Dr ROWAN: There was that point of order in relation to imputation, but if there was a removal there might be an addition to the overall plan when it comes to the timber plantation in Queensland, so I think—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is a further issue.

Dr ROWAN: That is why I would ask for objective authentication in relation to the net reduction of 10 per cent, because there may be increases in other areas. That is my point of order around that, but also there is the inference and imputation point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. Member for Bundaberg, I am satisfied on the authentication point of order in that I understand the point you are making. Could you restate the nuts and bolts at the end of your question, please?

Mr SMITH: Minister, do you support the Deputy Premier's plan?

Mr PERRETT: Of course, I have an interest in this. There is a long history associated with pine plantations in this state, knowing and realising that the state used to control every single bit of it. It was sold off under the Bligh-Fraser government many years ago and there has remained ongoing interest in the future of forestries in Queensland. I am certainly aware that there was discussion broadly, even when I was in opposition, from the then government in and around the potential for sites in this state for future development.

My interest would be—and it would absolutely be part of the discussion—that if there was any suggestion of losing pine plantations there would be a plan to deal with that. Of course, dealing directly with HQPlantations, which I do in discussions that I have with the chief executive, my understanding is that there would be discussions around that with potential alternatives for future sites. It would be right and proper that that would be the case. I absolutely support no net loss in current plantation given the challenge we have around future supply. I am sure any negotiations into the future about any possible loss of timber would include discussions around future areas of supply to replace those areas that would potentially be lost.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, at a public briefing last year, on 10 December 2025, you stated that the plan to expand 25,000 hectares of softwood plantation is based on the need to deliver one million homes at a rate of 1,000 hectares per year over 25 years. What funding has been allocated to identification and purchase of a thousand hectares or more for the purpose of softwood plantation in the 2026-27 budget?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, do you have a copy of that transcript?

Mr SMITH: We can authenticate that with a copy here, yes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can you just point out to me where that is in the transcript please? Maybe Mr Bolton might want a copy of it too so he can refresh his memory.

Mr SMITH: It is on page 3. It says—

Mr SMITH: Is that 1,000 per year?

Mr Bolton: Yes, we need 1,000 hectares per year to meet that future demand to 2044.

2044 is the reference to one million homes by 2044. It is in the bottom part of page 3.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I am sure the director-general appreciates that too.

Mr Bolton: Primary Industries Prosper 2050 is a game-changing, 25-year strategy which has delivered a bold, transformative vision for the future of Queensland's primary industries. Prosper 2050 sets out an ambitious initial target to boost primary industry production to $30 billion by 2030 and seeks to ensure Queensland's primary industries are profitable, productive and sustainable for future generations. This includes the Queensland timber industry. Sitting underneath Prosper 2050 is the Queensland Future Timber Plan, which delivers a significant reform agenda to secure the future of the Queensland forestry and timber industry.

Released in October 2025, the Queensland Future Timber Plan is a noteworthy achievement because it delivers the policy and investment certainty that the industry has been seeking for over 20 years. The plan was delivered alongside DPI maintaining the current supply of valuable state owned native timber resources to the timber sector. DPI is leading the delivery of the Queensland Future Timber Plan and has agreed with industry stakeholders and particularly Timber Queensland on five key initiatives, the first being modernising Queensland government forestry information data management systems, including through an $8.8 million allocation in 2025-26 from the Queensland digital fund; implementing a long-term supply allocation approach for state owned native timber post 2026; establishing a better regulatory framework for forestry activities in Queensland; and working with the timber industry to incentivise plantation investment in Queensland to deliver 25,000 new plantations. Importantly, this year's budget has seen a commitment of $20 million over four years to deliver Prosper 2050, of which the Queensland Future Timber Plan is a part.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, with regard to relevance. The question was how much funding has been allocated to the identification and purchase of a thousand hectares for this financial year.

Mr Bolton: I will refer to—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Had you concluded your response, Director-General?

Mr Bolton: Yes. I was just going to reiterate my last sentence that there has been $20 million in this year's budget over the next four years for the implementation of Prosper 2050, which includes the Queensland Future Timber Plan.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you have a further question, member for Bundaberg?

Mr SMITH: I do, Mr Deputy Speaker, and this one is for the minister given that it takes about 30 years for a tree to be ready for harvest. Minister, can you please confirm that it is your plan to deliver a 2050 timber plan for one million homes by 2044 produced from timber that will not be ready until 2056?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, there are some inferences and arguments within that question. Would you like to restate the question without inferences or arguments?

Mr SMITH: Minister, can you please confirm that it is your plan to deliver a 2050 timber plan for one million homes by 2044 produced from timber that will not be ready for harvest until as early as 2056?

Mr BENNETT: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order, member for Burnett?

Mr BENNETT: The member is making assertions that he understands how long a pine tree takes to grow and I think it is an absurdity that he makes that claim.

Mr SMITH: Absurdity?

Mr BENNETT: You cannot validate how long it takes. Hardwood and softwood timbers are completely different, so I think it is a hypothetical anyway.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, I think the member for Burnett's point is a fair one. I have given you one opportunity to rephrase it without arguments or inferences. I will give you a final chance to do that. I think you are able to do that.

Mr SMITH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I will happily move on. I am confident in my mathematics, so I am happy to seek another question if I may, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sure; go ahead.

Mr SMITH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Director-General, in that same public briefing last year that I just provided a copy of you said—

We do not have any restrictions on any other company coming into Queensland and establishing a softwood plantation.

Director-General, have you or the department engaged with private plantation companies other than HQPlantations as part of the 25,000 hectare plan and, if so, which companies?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Director-General, there are two parts to that question, but I am sure you have them.

Mr Bolton: As I mentioned in the briefing, the Queensland government and the department in particular do not have any policies around the restriction of other entrants moving into softwood plantation and we are actively out there talking to multiple proponents across multiple fronts, including within the timber sector. With regard to whether we have approached specific companies to enter the market, not directly but we have had companies approach the department expressing interest at a very high level and we look forward to working with any party that would like to come forward and invest in Queensland.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, are you in a position where you could state to the committee which companies in particular have shown that interest?

Mr Bolton: Due to a range of reasons, primarily commercial-in-confidence, I am unable to disclose those sorts of conversations or discussions with commercial proponents.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: This will probably be your last question.

Mr SMITH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Director-General, principle 4 of the Queensland Future Timber Plan 2050 notes to 'foster collaboration, partnerships and stakeholder engagement'. Director-General, have any recognised First Nations peoples organisations been involved in governance, input or decision-making such as advisory panels, co-management agreements or joint decision-making structures?

Mr Bolton: We acknowledge that our primary industry production portfolio encompasses a wide range of activities on land, and that ranges from agriculture, horticulture and beef production through to forestry production, fisheries and aquaculture. We work with multiple First Nations communities across Queensland and their economic aspirations and we have a number of representatives on various committees that we have to inform the department. One of those stakeholder groups was a part of the Prosper 2050 development of action plans and we have an action that will be delivered by a First Nations organisation. We have commenced agreements with a First Nations Aboriginal entity in Far North Queensland around biosecurity and how we work more closely with them, so we do absolutely take our role in developing economic opportunity through primary production very seriously. Where we can, we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to further their economic aspirations through our primary industry production.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Director-General. We will move to some government MP questions. I call the member for Mirani.

Mr G KELLY: Minister, could you explain how your department is working with industry to deliver the Crisafulli government's goal of increasing the state's primary industries output to $30 billion by 2030 through Primary Industries Prosper 2050?

Mr PERRETT: I thank the member for this very important question and I also thank the member for his support of Queensland's primary industries—something he knows well. It was a very proud moment for me at the Ekka last year when I stood alongside the Premier and representatives of the Queensland Farmers' Federation, AgForce, the Queensland Seafood Industry Association and Timber Queensland to formally launch Primary Industries Prosper 2050. As many of you know, the development of Primary Industries Prosper 2050 followed six months of collaboration between our government, industry and primary producers from all corners of Queensland. More than 4,300 Queenslanders contributed to the development of Prosper 2050. Prosper 2050 is more than a strategy; it is a shared vision we have built across government with farmers, fishers, foresters, processors, researchers, regional communities and industry bodies.

We did not stop there. The government is about delivering. Prosper was never going to be a document for the sake of a document. Our focus is on delivery. Since its release we have built upon Prosper 2050 by developing a five-year action plan called Prosper 2050, Delivering Now. It is the next phase of our 25-year vision to drive a better future for our primary industries. Delivering Now is an action document that lists every action that will be undertaken over the next five years. A Queensland first, this unified response is an initial five-year commitment to deliver pilot projects and fundamental actions to enable our agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors to grow, advance new technologies, support regional infrastructure and modernise regulatory settings.

Delivering Now was co-designed with industry, the whole of government and other key stakeholders and resulted in 234 actions being identified across regions, sectors and the state to transform and grow Queensland's primary industries. The Crisafulli government is backing these actions through our $20 million commitment to the 2026-27 budget. We are providing $20 million over four years to deliver on Prosper 2050.

Critical to underpinning a strong industry sector is our commitment to a whole-of-government approach including a network of services and programs. Beyond our $20 million commitment, the Crisafulli government is aligning this approach to ensure delivery of the actions. We know that primary producers do not operate in a vacuum. There are many factors that sit outside my portfolio which have a direct and powerful impact on the sector. Access to water, the state of our roads, the skilling of workforce, land use planning, disaster management and energy directly and indirectly impact the sector. That is why we are taking this whole-of-government approach to delivering.

For example, in Toowoomba early this month I announced, through collaboration with my ministerial colleague the Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training, a new initiative to fast-track skills development in the primary industries sector. This is already delivering one of our actions. The $3 million primary industries fund will enable industry to train new workers while offering existing workers opportunities to reskill and upskill to advance their careers. This is a new fund. Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise have been chosen as the first recipient of funding, with the RealTime Ag project aimed at increasing regional workforce participation and improving the long-term retention of agricultural workers in the Darling Downs region. It is also designed to help businesses capitalise on new technologies and position the Darling Downs as the national benchmark for agricultural workforce innovation. This is what delivering looks like.

As I said earlier, everything about this is a collaboration. For the first time in a generation, we have a whole-of-government approach to primary industries. We must not underestimate how important this is. It is through these actions that the rubber will hit the road. Importantly, these actions represent the first wave of ideas to deliver and achieve immediate change after a decade of stagnation. Further work will continue to explore ideas with industry and stakeholders for long-term change to unlock new opportunities, attract investment, expand into new markets and create more high-value jobs. Together we will change the future of Queensland primary industries, supporting current and future businesses and communities. The funding announced in this budget and our proactive support for primary industries across all of government will help grow Queensland's primary production output to $30 billion by 2030. I thank the member again for his interest in this initiative.

Mr BENNETT: Can the minister update the committee on the outcome of the Crisafulli government's review into commercial barramundi net fishing in the Logan and Albert rivers?

Mr PERRETT: Firstly, I am pleased to inform the committee that the days of ideologically-driven fisheries policy are over. The Crisafulli government is delivering for Queensland's fishing industry by ensuring fisheries management decisions are based on science, informed through consultation and focused on long-term sustainability. Before the election, we made a clear commitment to Queenslanders that—unlike the former Labor government—we would only make changes to fisheries legislation and regulations that were backed by science and developed in consultation with affected stakeholders. Today we are delivering on that commitment.

Members of the public raised concerns about commercial gillnet fishing in the Logan and Albert rivers. Those concerns prompted my department to undertake a thorough review of the former Labor government's decision to allow commercial fishers to target barramundi in new areas of South-East Queensland from 1 January 2024. Let me be very clear: the former Labor government opened this area up to commercial fishing. Our review uncovered something that should concern Queenslanders. It found the former Labor government made that decision without any scientific basis and without consulting the Queensland community. Labor changed the rules first and was never interested in justifying them. This is not responsible fisheries management; it is exactly why fishers lost confidence in fisheries management under a decade of Labor.

The Crisafulli government has taken a very different approach. Rather than the Labor approach of making decisions behind closed doors and taking orders from green ideological overlords, we asked Queenslanders what they thought. We released a discussion paper, undertook consultation with stakeholders and invited public submissions. The response was clear. The department received 476 survey responses and 58 written submissions. Overall, 87 per cent of the respondents supported restoring the previous arrangements, while 93 per cent of recreational fishers supported the proposed changes.

The consultation reinforced what the department already knew. There remains insufficient scientific information to determine a sustainable level of commercial harvest for barramundi in this part of South-East Queensland. The available evidence also indicates these barramundi are likely part of what is known as a sink population. In simple terms, they are unlikely to be part of a self-sustaining local population and are instead replenished by fish moving into the region from elsewhere. As a result, they cannot currently be considered capable of supporting ongoing high levels of commercial harvest. That is why the Crisafulli government has made the decision to reverse Labor's unsupported 2024 changes and restore the regulations that existed prior to 1 January 2024.

Unlike Labor, we will not make fisheries management decisions based on ideology or political convenience. We will make decisions based on evidence, science and consultation. We know that this decision will disappoint some commercial fishers—we acknowledge that—but our responsibility is to ensure Queensland's fisheries remain sustainable for future generations while giving both commercial and recreational fishers confidence that decisions are being made for the right reasons. Queenslanders expect governments to make decisions that stand up to scrutiny. They expect decisions to be based on evidence, not guesswork. They expect consultation before changes are made, not after. That is what the Crisafulli government promised before the election and it is exactly what we are delivering.

Mr DALTON: Minister, in relation to the development of the Queensland Future Timber Plan 2050, will the minister explain how the government is working to provide a sustainable timber supply to meet its plan for one million homes by 2044?

Mr PERRETT: I thank the member for his interest in rebuilding Queensland's timber industry after a decade of decline under Labor. I was extremely proud to officially deliver the landmark Queensland Future Timber Plan 2050 on 20 October last year. The Queensland Future Timber Plan ends a decade of uncertainty and lack of direction for the forestry and timber industry under the former Labor government by securing the future and paving a way forward for the sector. This is a bold plan that will help rebuild Queensland's forestry and timber industry and will secure the timber needed to build one million homes for Queenslanders by 2044.

Importantly, we consulted and delivered this landmark plan within our first year of government after years of hollow promises by Labor. The timber industry was frustrated under the former Labor government. Like they did in many areas, Labor talked the talk and made hollow promises but never delivered. In contrast, our plan is more than just setting the agenda; it is about restoring confidence. We are providing confidence so industry can invest under policy settings that are stable and supported. This is about protecting jobs, building regional economies and making sure we have the materials needed for the homes and infrastructure of tomorrow.

Meeting current and future demand for building and other purposes requires clear direction on where and how forestry can occur. This will create certainty around where that demand will come from, how to appropriately balance supply from native and plantation forestry and how to innovate across the supply chain to deliver the timber products we need.

Timber supply requires a long-term planning approach. Through this plan the Crisafulli government delivered in 12 months what Labor failed to deliver for decades. This plan provides certainty to industry, especially to the native hardwood industry which had been forced into poorly designed, underperforming and failed programs under successive former Labor governments. Importantly, our plan was developed in collaboration with key industry leaders from the timber, primary production, building and forestry sectors.

A key part of the plan's development is the formation of the Timber Supply Chain Ministerial Roundtable, which provided practical advice on how to meet growing construction demand while supporting innovation and sustainability across the supply chain. Roundtable representatives included Timber Queensland, AgForce, Queensland Farmers' Federation, the Housing Industry Association, Forestry Australia, HQPlantations, Australian Forest Contractors Association, Regional Economic Solutions—which is a First Nations business—and leading timber companies. I would like to thank all the representatives on the round table for their time and commitment to this process.

Public consultation engaged more than 350 people through meetings, briefings and webinars, through 76 survey responses, 62 unique individual submissions and 9,000 visits to the online engagement hub. More than 550 ideas were gathered. In stark contrast, the former Labor government took an axe to the state's forestry over decades with rushed, ill-conceived, ideologically-driven programs and hollow, unfunded promises. Timber is the ultimate renewable and sustainable resource. It captures and stores carbon. It requires less energy and produces less carbon emissions than materials like concrete and metal. The Queensland Future Timber Plan plays a key role in helping to deliver Primary Industries Prosper 2050, our 25-year strategy to grow Queensland's primary production output to $30 billion by 2030. I thank the member again for his interest in this important industry.

Mr G KELLY: Minister, can you update the committee on what the Crisafulli government is doing to manage cattle tick in this state?

Mr PERRETT: As a fellow grazier, I acknowledge his strong support for Queensland's cattle producers. The Crisafulli government is delivering stronger biosecurity for Queensland's beef sector by improving cattle tick management. We are rolling out more frontline biosecurity staff, increased support for producers and stronger compliance, among other measures, to better protect one of Queensland's important primary industries.

Following a cattle tick outbreak in Taroom earlier this year, I requested my department to commission an internal review of Queensland's cattle tick management framework to identify opportunities to strengthen tick management and rebuild industry confidence. The review found Queensland's cattle tick management framework is operationally effective, but it also identified practical opportunities to strengthen surveillance, compliance, communication and governance. As Minister for Primary Industries I have accepted the recommendations and we are getting on with delivering them.

One of the first recommendations is already being delivered. We are putting more biosecurity boots on the ground. We will recruit three biosecurity inspectors dedicated to cattle tick who will be based in elevated risk areas: one stationed in Kingaroy, one in Dalby and one in Central Queensland. These additional officers will strengthen surveillance, improve compliance and deliver faster investigation and response times, ensuring Biosecurity Queensland has a strong frontline presence where producers need it most.

Effective biosecurity relies on experienced officers working alongside industry to identify risks early and respond quickly when issues arise. We are strengthening the capability of our workforce through dedicated cattle tick training and updating the standard operational procedure so officers have consistent knowledge and expertise across the state. The Crisafulli government is also increasing support for producers in the cattle tick-free zone to manage cattle tick by increasing the subsidy for improved pour-on and injectable treatment products from currently 10 per cent to 25 per cent. This is practical assistance. It will help reduce treatment costs for affected producers while supporting timely relocation in a tick-free zone as well as encouraging continued compliance.

The review also highlighted the importance of greater transparency. We will improve access to vital information on the restricted places register so graziers have better information to understand and manage local cattle tick risks, while continuing to protect the privacy of individuals. Better information means producers are better equipped to make informed decisions about livestock movements and biosecurity on their properties. Alongside these improvements, the department is establishing an industry cattle tick network and developing a targeted communications plan to ensure producers receive timely information on surveillance activities, compliance activities and a seasonal cattle tick outlook report.

The accredited certifier model will also be strengthened to improve its effectiveness, consistency and integrity, including the appropriate management of potential conflicts of interest. Accredited certifiers play an important role in Queensland's cattle tick management system and these improvements will help ensure producers continue to have confidence in certification processes across the state. The Crisafulli government is also delivering a stronger compliance approach. We are finalising a dedicated tick management compliance strategy, clearly setting out the enforcement actions. It will have an increased focus on high-risk livestock movements, greater surveillance, increased presence at saleyards and the use of a full suite of enforcement powers available if producers fail to meet their obligations.

The Crisafulli government is also continuing to invest in research, innovation and new technology to improve cattle tick control. This includes changes to deliver faster diagnostic testing for chemical resistance, developing next-generation diagnostic tools and investing in future vaccination research to ensure Queensland graziers have access to the latest science and technology to strengthen cattle tick management going forward. The department is also developing improved reporting dashboards and examining mobile and digital tools, including field trials, to strengthen cattle tick intelligence gathering and reporting.

Before the election I spoke about the importance of returning the department to being the trusted adviser to industry it once was, not the inhibitor it became over the past decade. At the centre of this is customer service and to that point I am pleased to announce we have increased the number of DPI sites that producers can drop cattle tick dip samples to from two to 16. Timely and accurate dip samples allow producers to ensure dip concentration is right to prevent underdosing or overdosing. The expanded services are in Boonah, Bundaberg, Charters Towers, Cloncurry, Dalby, Emerald, Gayndah, Gympie, Kingaroy, Mackay, Mareeba, Rockhampton, Roma, Toowoomba, Townsville and Warwick. Producers will also benefit from a new quarterly seasonal cattle tick outlook, providing timely information on seasonal cattle tick conditions and chemical resistance trends to better support farm decision-making. Queensland will take the lead on this issue by working with other states and the Commonwealth through the Australian Agriculture Ministers' Meeting where I will seek a review and update of the national standards for management of cattle tick to ensure national arrangements continue to support contemporary cattle tick management.

The Crisafulli government has listened to producers. The Crisafulli government has producers in the cabinet. The integrity of the tick line must be maintained, which is why I have moved to strengthen it. We are delivering practical reform, more boots on the ground, greater transparency, better surveillance and more to strengthen and protect Queensland's cattle industry.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will go to non-government questions and to the member for Bundaberg.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, regarding the Fish-LIGHT program, are you aware of any investigations into Fisheries Queensland or DPI by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority with regard to tunnel net trials and trial shots?

Mr Bolton: I am very pleased to announce that the current government is doing all it can to support commercial fishers, including continuing the Fish-LIGHT trials. The Fish-LIGHT trials involve trialling alternative low-impact fishing gears to gillnet fishing. As members may be aware, gillnet fishing will be phased out of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area commencing 30 June 2027. The Fish-LIGHT program commenced on-water gear trials focusing on a range of candidate gear types including tunnel nets, trap nets, line fishing and fish traps. These trials have been co-designed and delivered in collaboration with local commercial operators.

Permits have been acquired from the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation; my own department, the Department of Primary Industries; the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority; and a Queensland animal ethics committee. The permits support trials within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, with the stipulation that the trials will be executed under a no-take research permit. Over the duration of the trials there has been a high degree of on-ground engagement with the community, including commercial and recreational fishers and also at boat ramps and on water. Overall, community engagement has been very positive.

In terms of some concerns that may have been raised around the gillnet fishing, there is an investigation currently underway, internal to the department and not through the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority as far as I am aware. The trials on the broader equipment are continuing and will continue. I am really keen to express to the committee that no decisions have been made about the alternative gear trials at this point in time and none will be made until such time as the evidence from all trials has been evaluated and the evidence provided to government.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, to confirm, to date no operations of Fisheries Queensland's Fish-LIGHT program have been found to have breached permit conditions by either your department, DETSI or GBRMPA?

Mr Bolton: To clarify, your initial question was whether I am aware if there was an investigation underway by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. To reiterate, I am not aware of any investigation. In terms of the second part of your follow-up question, I am not aware where the program has potentially contravened any of those permit conditions. However, there is an independent investigation being undertaken at this point in time into one element of the Fish-LIGHT trials. Once I am able to make a decision on that, I will.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, are you able to confirm if part of that investigation is to breaches such as unmarked vessels used in trials, no communication with local operators before trials begin, dead fish being returned to the water and Fisheries Queensland recording only three turtle interactions despite video footage presented to GBRMPA clearly displaying 15 separate turtle interactions?

Mr Bolton: As I stated before, there is an internal independent investigation underway, the details of which I have not been briefed on yet and I will not be briefed until such time as that investigation has been completed.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, are you aware of a trial shot undertaken in Bowen on 4 August 2025 where allegations were made of Fisheries Queensland breaching the permit conditions?

Dr ROWAN: I raise a point of order in relation to the ongoing questioning. If I understand, this further question, as put, relates to the independent investigation that the director-general has clearly responded to now on a number of occasions. I would submit to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on that point of order, it is becoming repetitive and I ask you to consider that matter.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Deputy Speaker: the question goes to the specific incident of 4 August 2025 and whether or not the director-general is aware if that is under an independent investigation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for your points of order. Member for Moggill, I hear your point of order. When I initially heard the question, it was not clear to me whether or not the question being asked now was related to the answer previously given. That would need an answer for that fact to become relevant to the knowledge of the committee. In that respect, I cannot uphold your point of order.

Member for Bundaberg, before you put that question or before I call the director-general, I want to seek some further advice from the clerk. Member for Bundaberg, I will allow the question. I want to caution you in that some of your questions do have some lengthy preambles and also are making assertions about facts before putting the question or are asking for an awareness of certain assertions. If there is a way that you can ask questions without doing that but simply ask for a factual answer, that would assist the committee overall. Director-General, I put to you the question as it was stated before.

Mr Bolton: If I may just seek some clarification: I am not aware of the allegation, but I would be interested to see if there was a substantiation about the allegation or evidence and I could look into it further.

Mr SMITH: If the director-general is not aware of it then I am satisfied with that answer and I am happy to move on, Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, we can do that, member for Bundaberg.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order: just to clarify, the member for Bundaberg was not able to authenticate that question; is that correct?

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Deputy Speaker: that is frivolous. I am happy to move on.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I need to seek advice about whether only members of the committee can seek substantiation or whether witnesses can as well. The member for Bundaberg has indicated that he is not putting that question and we can move on to the next question.

Mr SMITH: For clarification, I believe that the question was answered. I am satisfied with the answer and am moving to the next question, if I am so allowed.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Carry on.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, given your previous answer—and I am sorry if this sounds repetitive—could you please confirm that GBRMPA has not suspended or paused the Fish-LIGHT program, specifically tunnel nets, in any of the waters in which they permit?

Mr Bolton: To the best of my knowledge, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has not suspended the Fish-LIGHT trials at all. The department has voluntarily, on my instigation, suspended one element, being tunnel net trials, while the independent investigation is underway.

Mr SMITH: To confirm, the tunnel net trials are currently suspended under your direction?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, again.

Mr SMITH: It is just confirming what he said.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order, Leader of the House?

Dr ROWAN: My point of order is that this is becoming repetitive. The answer provided by the director-general, not only to that question but to the series of questions, has been direct and straightforward. We are being repetitive with respect to the additional questions that are being asked and the matters being canvassed.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Deputy Speaker: it was confirming a clarification. However, I feel as though the director-general has affirmed that, yes, tunnel net trials are currently suspended so I am happy to move on.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I heard that quite clearly, too. I think we will get through more questions if we can move on when an answer has been given.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, as of 30 June 2026, what is the current total breakdown of expenditure on tunnel net trials compared to line trials, as in line fishing, within the Fish-LIGHT program?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Director-General, if you need a moment to seek some information, please take it.

Mr Bolton: I can certainly give you an amount that has been expended on the total trials. I do not know that we are going to be able to break that down into various elements of the trials because often we might have a number of activities happening at the same time with various trial gears. With the permission of the minister, I would like to take that on notice and we can attempt to provide that to the committee before the end of the session.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, are you okay with that?

Mr PERRETT: Yes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can we make a note of the question for the record?

Mr SMITH: As of 30 June 2026, what is the current total breakdown of expenditure on tunnel net trials compared to line-fishing trials within the Fish-LIGHT program?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: For the record, the department and minister will endeavour to come back before the end of the session with that answer.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, your department has stated that, following the phase-out of gillnets in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area, permitted gear must be able to achieve 133 tonne annually of commercial catch for the seafood industry. Is the Department of Primary Industries planning to establish a developmental tunnel net fishery for 2027 as part of the tunnel net trial?

Mr Bolton: I am not familiar with that quote. Where are you quoting that from?

Mr SMITH: Deputy Speaker, we are happy to provide authenticity. It is from the words of the Deputy Director-General, Pauline Jacobs. It is from a transcript which was recorded at a public event hosted by DPI at the Larrikin Hotel. It is on page 2 of what has been put forward as authentication.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Stretton has tabled those documents. Can we send a copy to director-general and minister, please?

Mr SMITH: It is on page 2, highlighted in yellow, second paragraph, with regard to quota for the NX fishery.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Director-General, you may take time to have a look at that.

Mr Bolton: I thank the member for the tabled material. In terms of the Fish-LIGHT trials, the Fish-LIGHT trials were established as a result of a decision by the previous government and the Commonwealth government to phase out gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park area. The Fish-LIGHT trials seek to find alternative gear that enables commercial fishers to continue to catch fish for our community, whether that is mums and dads who cannot or will not go fishing, whether it is our cafes, our seafood restaurants or tourists coming into the wonderful parts of regional Queensland. There is a range of gear, as I have already outlined, that we are investigating, and we will be making some recommendations to government at the end of that period. There are no prerequisites in terms of minimum tonnage, but there is a high level of aspiration to ensure we continue to provide fresh seafood to our Queensland communities to replace the gillnets that will be phased out, commencing 30 June 2027.

In terms of the comments that were ascribed to the deputy director-general, there is no policy decision to open up any particular developmental fishery at this point in time. As I previously stated, no decisions have been made, no decisions will be made and, in fact, no recommendations will be made to government until such time that all trials of all gear have been completed, the analysis done and evidence provided to government.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, does it concern you that your deputy director-general stated that this project is there to look at replacing 133 tonne of fish, given that it is not the direction of the department?

Mr Bolton: I am really pleased in terms of the work that my team is doing to try to find alternative gear to ensure Queensland consumers continue to have fresh seafood on their plates, whether it be mums and dads or grandmothers who cannot or will not go fishing, our tourism sector or our restaurants and cafes.

In terms of the comments that might have been offered, that was at a particular forum for a particular circumstance, and I cannot speculate on why, how or where those comments were made, other than I know the work we are doing is critically important to ensure we have a viable commercial fishery ongoing and that we continue to have fresh seafood for our Queensland communities.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, with regard to the phases of the Fish-LIGHT program, is the Department of Primary Industries set to advise the government of a developmental, that is, commercial tunnel net fishery to take place from 1 July 2027?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, that question has been answered, has it not?

Mr SMITH: It is different in that it provides a particular date and also not if there is a plan to establish but whether or not there is a plan to advise the minister to enact that?

Mr Bolton: As I have previously reiterated multiple times, the Fish-LIGHT trials are critical to ensure we have an ongoing commercial industry, providing fresh seafood to our Queensland consumers. No decisions have been made and none will be made, and no recommendations will be made, until such time that all trials have been completed and the evidence analysed. Importantly, any advice that may or may not be provided will likely be covered by cabinet-in-confidence because it will be, at the end of the day, a policy decision of the government.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, what is the current stock assessment for giant trevally, golden trevally and permit?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Did you hear the last one? I did not hear the last species mentioned.

Mr SMITH: It is called 'permit'. It is very confusing when there are lots of permits being given out.

Mr Bolton: That is something that I do not have advice on right now. With the approval of the minister, I would like to take that one on notice and get back before the end of the session.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: If we make a note of that and, with the minister's consent, we will endeavour to come back at the end of the session.

Mr SMITH: Deputy Speaker, if I may, it was a bit of a leading question. There is no current stock assessment on any of those species. I do have a question for—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, that is out of order. You ask the questions in these sessions. You do not to answer them, okay.

Mr SMITH: Yes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you have a further question?

Mr SMITH: Yes, I do. Minister, given the high value to the recreational fishing and tourism sector of giant trevally, golden trevally and permit, compared to the low seafood value of these fish and the lack of stock assessment data, will you exclude these three species from being permitted for catch and the tunnel net fishery?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would like you to repeat that question, member for Bundaberg, because I think it contains an argument.

Mr SMITH: I will rephrase for you, Deputy Speaker. Minister, will you exclude giant trevally, golden trevally and permit from any future commercial tunnel net fishery?

Mr PERRETT: Member, I will seek advice from my department with respect to that. They are quite technical questions that you ask. I absolutely reiterate my commitment to sustainable fisheries. We have given a long commitment that we will make decisions based on science. Obviously I work closely with my department, through the director-general, to make certain that we continue to have that across the state. However, we are certainly not at a point to be making any decisions based on that. Of course, we receive a lot of suggestions—I do individually; I am sure you do as well, member—about the way fisheries need to be managed. I listen to all of that, but I bring that back to our commitment to ensure we make decisions on fisheries based on science, that we absolutely commit to a sustainable fishery, and I trust that my department would give me the advice that is required should there be an issue.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will go to some government member questions.

Mr SMITH: I was going to ask, Deputy Speaker, I have one more question in this block—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. We are moving to government member questions. I call the member for Mackay.

Mr DALTON: Minister, with regard to the $8.8 million in funding for the Forest Sales Management Information System, can the minister explain the importance of this system and its role in modernising support for the timber supply in Queensland?

Mr PERRETT: The Forest Sales Management Information System is a critical system required to run the state's forestry operations. It is the only way my department can administer and record the sale of state owned timber and products and calculate royalties for these products. Labor's neglect and chronic underinvestment in the forestry department is well established. It meant this vital system had not been upgraded for 30 years. In fact, it was due to be decommissioned and switched off by the provider in May this year. If it were to have been kept on, the department would have incurred a massive increase in annual contract support costs. These ongoing costs would have been exorbitant. Labor's incompetence and failure to deal with industries it was not interested in left Queensland taxpayers significantly exposed.

My office and I were briefed on this issue within weeks of my becoming the minister. I was shocked to see the system my department was using in late 2024. What I saw was a system reminiscent of the 1980s. Details had to be manually typed into the system—that is, there was no drop-down list. Staff could not use a mouse, only a keyboard. Invoices had to be saved as a PDF outside the system. A significant impediment to customer service and efficiency was that there was no ability to adjust invoices; they always had to be re-created.

By comparison, our government acknowledged the importance of the system and worked quickly. In 2025-26 we secured funding of $8.8 million from the Queensland Government Digital Fund to implement the replacement solution. With the support of my ministerial colleague the Minister for Customer Services and Open Data and Minister for Small and Family Business, I am pleased to advise that we successfully replaced the 30-year-old Forest Sales Management Information System on time and, most importantly, under budget. The replacement system was designed, built and implemented by a dedicated project team, supported by several key service providers. The team moved the DPI forestry business off the old system and onto the new platform on 25 May this year.

I thank all who were involved in this work from my department and from Minister Minnikin's department. This was a significant achievement, given the complexity of the system and extremely tight timeframes left to us after years of inaction by the former Labor government. Our forestry team now have a modern, more secure and reliable forestry management system that has a contemporary user interface. Importantly, our team now has a system that enables them to provide a more efficient customer service to Queenslanders. It will help ensure we can support the timber industry well into the future.

Mr DALTON: Minister, can you outline how the 2026-27 budget's investment into biosecurity, including re-establishing Queensland's northern line of defence at Coen, is better protecting our producers, supply chains and regional economies?

Mr PERRETT: I am pleased to update the committee on how the Crisafulli government is reinstating our state's northern line of biosecurity defence. Before I go to the crux of the question, it is important I provide some context to the committee. In 2022 the former Labor government made the unfathomable decision to close the Cape York Biosecurity Centre in Coen—a major checkpoint located on the only road south from the tip of the cape. This centre, closed by Labor, was a visual reminder of the importance of strong, proactive biosecurity on a very busy and high-risk thoroughfare. Its closure by Labor has left Queensland exposed and our industries vulnerable.

I was very critical of the decision at the time. In fact, when I was the shadow minister I had a number of questions to ask the former minister who presided over this closure. AgForce was also highly critical, almost scathing, about the decision. Northern Queensland is a critical pathway to monitor for introduced biosecurity pests, given its proximity to neighbouring countries, high rates of domestic and international travel, adverse weather conditions, tropical climate and vast remote areas and coastline. For that reason, it made no sense that Labor closed this facility.

Strong biosecurity in Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait is a priority for the Crisafulli government to protect not only North Queensland but also the whole country from significant biosecurity threats. The Crisafulli government is enhancing biosecurity capability in Queensland's north to reduce the potential entry and spread of plant and animal pests and disease.

Around 655,000 people visited Queensland's far north region in 2023, and this number is steadily growing. Ongoing communication, engagement and education is critical to raising awareness of good biosecurity practices amongst those travelling in North Queensland. Everyone visiting the region has a role to play in protecting Queensland from biosecurity threats that could threaten our industries, our environment and our way of life.

The Crisafulli government committed to reviewing Labor's decision to close the Cape York Biosecurity Centre in Coen and assess what steps it needed to take to reinstate our northern line of biosecurity defence. This is something that I have been working on for some time.

Earlier this month I announced in Coen, alongside traditional owners, that the Crisafulli government will re-establish the Cape York Biosecurity Centre in Coen. This includes eight new departmental staff for the cape, to be based between Cooktown, Weipa and Karumba. The decision to re-establish the Coen facility will increase surveillance of biosecurity threats in this region and has been very well supported by local traditional owners.

In addition to re-establishing the Coen facility, the department will also establish a new joint Biosecurity Queensland and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol office in Cooktown. This new operation centre will employ two new Biosecurity Queensland officers and two new Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol officers who will support producers in the north and protect the state's supply chains and regional economies. A further two new biosecurity officers will be placed in Weipa and two more in Karumba to complement the five existing Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol officers at these locations.

New biosecurity roadside signage will also be positioned throughout Far North Queensland to ensure travellers are aware of their role in preventing the spread of pests, disease and weeds throughout the region. My department will also establish a new mobile roadside biosecurity set-up to service the north. This is to improve traveller awareness of the importance of biosecurity in key locations and to ensure they are adhering to their obligations under the Biosecurity Act 2014. In addition, Biosecurity Queensland has commenced the systems mapping process to look at community and industry needs in the north for biosecurity preparedness, response and risk management. This is only part of the government's commitment to strong biosecurity measures.

As members know, the Crisafulli government is boosting Queensland's biosecurity front line by providing $60.9 million over five years and $19.2 million ongoing to employ 100 additional frontline biosecurity officers in regional and rural Queensland. As of 10 July we have employed 55 additional biosecurity officers in regional and rural areas. Nineteen of these new biosecurity officers have been appointed across eight different locations in the state's north and are fully mobile, ready to respond to any and all biosecurity threats in the region. I thank the member for his interest. We will keep delivering.

Mr G KELLY: Minister, many parts of Queensland experienced flooding during the summer season. Conversely, you have just declared drought in parts of southern Queensland. Minister, would you be able to update us on the government's response to both the flooding and the drought?

Mr PERRETT: This is a very important question. The member for Mirani certainly understands the challenges that weather events create for a lot of Queenslanders. Queensland is no stranger to unpredictable and severe weather events. The first three months of 2026 were dominated by severe flooding events in North-West Queensland. I was on the ground in North-West Queensland on three separate occasions in January and February to see firsthand the devastation to affected producers and landholders caused by heavy rainfall and flooding through the monsoon trough and ex-Tropical Cyclone Koji.

The Premier also accompanied me on one occasion and we saw the immense toll that flooding had taken: crops were destroyed, surveys indicated that more than 94,000 livestock were lost, roads were cut and infrastructure, like fences, was destroyed. It was absolutely devastating. I know that the member for Traeger was also there for some of that, and I acknowledge the impact it had on his electorate and his region.

In partnership with the federal government, we rapidly mobilised financial assistance support for primary producers. Key components of this support include a $7 million coordinated emergency support package to help feed isolated and stranded stock. To help prevent an explosion of feral pig numbers, we engaged experience aerial shooters to reduce feral pig numbers and other pests across the north-west. The package also included funding for repairing or replacing damaged equipment, farm buildings, livestock, and replanting and re-establishing areas affected by the disaster, along with a primary producer support package that included financial and personal counselling and industry recovery and resilience officers.

I was bitterly disappointed, however, by the federal government's decision to reject Queensland's call for a restocking, replanting and on-farm infrastructure grants program. This funding would have provided matched dollar-for-dollar grants for primary producers to restock their herds, replant lost crops and invest in resilient infrastructure like flood mounds to withstand future events. It was a bitter blow given these small communities were already hurting enough.

In March, I toured flooded regions across the Western Downs, Central Queensland and Wide Bay-Burnett. There were significant impacts to crops such as mung beans, cotton, grains, sugar cane, macadamias, citrus, hay, sorghum and silage, along with losses of fencing, roads and livestock. As we know, we live in a very large state with a diverse range of weather conditions and, while primary producers across large parts of the state have battled floods, their southern inland counterparts are experiencing persistent dry seasonal conditions. This has negatively impacted pasture growth, cropping conditions, water availability for stock and irrigation, and financial returns.

While recent rainfall has provided some short-term relief, the seasonal outlook from the Bureau of Meteorology does not indicate a high probability of drought-breaking rain over the coming months, and we recognise that many producers continue to face difficult decisions as they manage their businesses. Based on the recommendations of the local drought committee, advice from my department and rainfall data, yesterday I announced drought declarations commencing 1 June 2026 for the local government areas of Goondiwindi, Southern Danes, Balonne and the part of the Maranoa Regional Council south of the Warrego Highway. This ends a two-year-period from May 2024 since any area of Queensland has been drought declared.

While preparedness is a key priority for Queensland's drought policy, we also recognise that producers who experience a prolonged drought need practical support now. The Crisafulli government has reinstated the Emergency Drought Assistance Loan Scheme and the Drought Carry-on Finance Loan Scheme with a funding injection of $10 million. These schemes provide interest-free loans of up to $50,000 for essential working capital and concessional loans of up to $250,000 to assist eligible primary producers experiencing financial hardship as a result of drought. Loans can be accessed through the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority.

These measures complement our existing drought preparedness grants. There is $6.3 million available for the 2026-27 financial year to provide eligible primary producers with grants of up to $50,000 to invest in permanent infrastructure that will strengthen the long-term resilience of their businesses. Access to this scheme is available to all primary producers across all industries, regardless of their drought declaration status.

Queensland's primary producers are among the most resilient in the world, and this government stands with them. We will continue to monitor seasonal conditions, listen to industry and respond with practical, evidence-based support while continuing to invest in the long-term resilience of Queensland agriculture.

Mr BENNETT: Minister, the Sowing the Seeds of Farming Innovation Fund was officially opened in April 2026. Can you explain how this fund supports new primary production technologies and practices, and how many expressions of interest have been received to date?

Mr PERRETT: Accelerated innovation, readiness and adoption of agtech is central to achieving the Crisafulli government's target to grow Queensland primary production to an output to $30 billion by 2030 and is a key priority for the Department of Primary Industries.

On 28 April this year, the Crisafulli government launched one of our key election commitments—the $30 million Sowing the Seeds of Farming Innovation Fund to accelerate innovation across Queensland's primary industries. The fund supports the Primary Industries Prosper 2050 and responds directly to what industry told us through consultation—that Queensland needs stronger commercialisation pathways and more targeted investment to help move promising technologies into practical use. This is the first agricultural focused innovation investment fund of its kind in Queensland and it is being managed by the Queensland Investment Corporation.

This fund will make equity investments in innovative businesses that are developing, commercialising or scaling technologies and products for Queensland primary industries. Businesses seeking investment through the fund will need to demonstrate commercial merit, a clear Queensland benefit, credible pathways to adoption and potential productivity improvements for primary industries. This is important because innovation only delivers value when it is practical, fit for purpose and enabled to be adopted in real-world production systems.

The Sowing the Seeds of Farming Innovation Fund will support businesses with the potential to scale, attract private capital and deliver practical benefits across agriculture, fisheries, forestry and their value chains. This includes support for technologies and practices that can help producers respond to real industry challenges including labour availability, input cost, water use efficiency, climate variability, biosecurity pressures, supply chain transparency and the need to remain globally competitive. Potential areas of investment include agri-automation, robotics, sensing technologies, remote monitoring systems, digital agriculture, decision support tools, farm management software, data analytics, traceability systems and technologies that improve supply chain transparency.

Queensland producers are already looking at new technologies to improve the way they operate, whether that is through automation, improved data systems, new biological products, better genetics, water efficiency, environmental performance and value chain innovation. The Sowing the Seeds of Farming Innovation Fund will help accelerate this momentum. It will also help position Queensland as a hub for innovators developing cutting-edge technology for agriculture and primary industries.

The DPI has also established an advisory committee with industry, stakeholder and government representatives to monitor alignment with the investment mandate. As of 8 June 2026, the Queensland Investment Corporation had identified 155 total opportunities, with 61 opportunities progressed into the next stage of diligence or active tracking, 29 active leads and six high-priority leads being prioritised for due diligence. That early pipeline demonstrates a strong appetite for innovators, and I look forward to announcing the businesses that we will be backing to grow the primary industries sector.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will go to non-government questions.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, if the tunnel net trial was suspended, why was there no media release or public notification given from the department?

Mr Bolton: As I outlined before, the Fish-LIGHT trials are ongoing. The tunnel net component was just one component of that. They are general operations that the department undertakes. While we have that particular component of the trials suspended, the other elements of the trials are absolutely continuing.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order: again, given the response by the director-general to the question as asked, we have had that previous response provided on a number of occasions in relation to this line of questioning.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Deputy Speaker, if I may.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will take your point of order but I would like the Leader of the House to finish his first.

Dr ROWAN: In concluding my point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like you to consider that matter in light of the response again by the director-general in relation to the previous line of questioning and now returning to the same line of questioning. It has been repetitive.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, did you want to add to that as a point of order?

Mr SMITH: To the point of order, it was a brand new question about why there was no media release or public notification given from the department.

Dr ROWAN: On a further point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr MARTIN: This is frivolous. You are just wasting time.

Mr SMITH: Deputy Speaker, if it helps, I am satisfied with the answer and I am happy to move to the member for Traeger, who has lots of questions.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Did the director-general answer the question?

Mr SMITH: Not as well as we would like, but we accept his answer and we are happy to move on.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, you do not need to enter into that commentary. The director-general's answer was relevant to the question and that is how it has to be. To the Leader of the House's point of order, there is no point of order. It was a separate question. I thank you all for your contributions to the points of order. Is there a further question? I think we were going to the member for Traeger.

Mr KATTER: Minister, Budget Paper No. 4 provides DPI with $60.7 million over five years for the Reef and Catchment Water Quality Program and only $20 million for four years for Primary Industries Prosper 2050, so does that mean the DPI activities are now more focused on reef regulation than ag production?

Mr PERRETT: No, it does not mean that. That is $20 million of new money. The work that we do with reef catchments is based in cooperation with DETSI. The work that we do in reef catchments, particularly with our highly valued primary producers in those regions, is primarily around best management practice—something that cuts across cane, horticulture and grazing. My understanding is that those programs are generally well valued. In my interactions with the cane industry, when I have meetings with canegrower collectives, best management practice is something the majority of the cane industry has adopted.

I know that in the horticulture industry we have also seen some great work and, ultimately, some benefits to industry around some of the best management practice. It is something I was very strong on when I was in the shadow minister role around encouraging industry, and I again in this role take the lead around best management practice. We want industry to be focused on that. My department has a role to play in supporting those primary producers around best management practice. The Department of Primary Industries has a significant budget that assists across many areas. That is one area where I work collaboratively with my colleague the Minister for the Environment to make certain we can continue to support those frontline people and particularly work with industry. What I hear from the majority of them is that they value that work.

Mr KATTER: That rolls into my next question. Minister, you have expressed sentiment fairly similar to my own on the compliance and production costs and risks that are placed on agriculture from the reef regulations that were applied. What steps is the government taking to ensure those do not continue? I know that you are not in favour of repealing. Given they present restrictions, what is being done to ensure they are not as onerous as you stated back in a former term and those impacts are not hitting?

Mr PERRETT: Absolutely there are challenges around costs and compliance. My observation, particularly from feedback from industry groups and directly from farmers themselves, is that there has been some gain with respect to it. Obviously, we do not want increased regulatory compliance that creates further cost on production; however, I am also cognisant of some of the work we do through my department directly with the federal government in and around the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park to assist those primary producers. I acknowledge that I do hear from time to time about some producers who would love all regulation to be removed. What I am hearing from industry generally is that, particularly when it is industry-led best management practice, there are some positive outcomes. I again acknowledge that my department will work collaboratively with those farmers and producers to make sure we can potentially get the best outcomes with the advice we can provide as a department.

Mr KATTER: Minister, in relation to biosecurity, I understand that your office is aware of incorrectly filled out NVDs reported to the office associated with alleged cattle theft. The reports back are that the resources are not there to follow this up correctly. What direct action has your office taken or does it intend to take to make sure that any such allegations of breaches of NVDs do not occur again?

Mr PERRETT: I am aware that the member has raised some issues with my office that relate to a property in the north. I suspect that is what it may be in relation to. Obviously, we will be cautious around the legal matters and investigative processes involved with that. Being a primary producer and cattle producer, I do know a little bit about National Vender Declaration forms. They are a statutory declaration that is administered through the federal government. Obviously, we take an interest in those to make sure they are filled out correctly and there is no misleading information, given that when you sign statutory declarations it must be done lawfully and correctly.

If there is information that statutory declarations have been provided for the movement of cattle—generally that is when statutory declarations are provided from the point of property—you have the NLIS that provides traceability and our regulations under the Brands Act which prove ownership of stock. We expect all primary producers in this state to adhere to both the state and the federal law that relates to it. As I mentioned earlier, with regard to some of the work we are doing that is not related to this issue—but certainly around cattle ticks and the compliance activity that we are going to ramp up in that space—I am taking an active interest to make certain that what is included in paperwork that travels with stock of any description is accurate and meets both state and federal law.

Mr KATTER: Staying on that same subject, there are allegations that there are deficiencies in resources for stock theft which manifests in tragedies like at Bogie River where this stuff is not clamped down on. Can the minister confirm whether he has had any interaction with his counterparts to address this as it applies to the agriculture industry?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stock theft is obviously in the police portfolio. Are you asking whether—

Mr SMITH: Mr Deputy Speaker, point of order.

Mr KATTER: I fully acknowledge it belongs in the police portfolio, but has the minister had discussions as it applies to the ag industry? My assertion is that it is impacting on the ag industry quite significantly now.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you mean discussions with ministerial counterparts? Is that what you are asking?

Mr KATTER: Yes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you have a point of order, member for Bundaberg?

Mr SMITH: My point of order was a precedent last year where this line of questioning was accepted by the Speaker, that is all.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thanks for pointing that out, member for Bundaberg. Minister, I wanted to clarify what the question was. You heard it and you have the call.

Mr PERRETT: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I thank the member for the question. I will not go into specifics of a case because I simply cannot. Rural theft—whether it be livestock or property equipment—is something that is completely unacceptable to me and the Minister for Police. He knows my interest in this particular matter just broadly in making certain that the rural crime investigation squad—which used to be known as the stock squad and has had various names over the years—continues to be supported by the Police Service to make certain we can give that confidence.

It is important that advice is provided to property owners about on-farm security. We have done some work on our place to make certain we can prevent that theft because it is becoming more prevalent, particularly with the value of stock. As you would know, member for Traeger, cattle has significant value and the loss of stock affects any business. I am also aware that there are a lot of issues that link into this. It is unfortunate that we have some Queenslanders, some individuals, who take it upon themselves to take from others. I back in the police minister and the work that the rural crime investigation squad continues to do.

Mr KATTER: Referring to pages 1 and 5 of the SDS, it commits the department to develop regionally focused actions to manage feral pigs and wild dogs and states that Biosecurity Queensland works across the Queensland government. Did the Department of Primary Industries or Biosecurity Queensland provide advice to DETSI in preparing the environment minister's response on 2 July 2026 to petition No. 4329-25? You can take that on notice, if you like.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the question was around advice provided in relation to a question on notice to another minister.

Mr KATTER: There was advice given by DETSI on hunting in national parks saying they had cleared Biosecurity. My question is: was that advice given from your department to DETSI, or did they do that in isolation of departmental advice?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the minister.

Mr KATTER: It is probably better directed to the director-general, sorry.

Mr PERRETT: I can answer part of it, but I will hand it to the director-general.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order: could we get the question restated to the relevant individual who is going to answer it?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Traeger, could you ask it again, and maybe speak a bit louder into the microphone as well?

Mr KATTER: I can do that. Director-General, did the Department of Primary Industries or Biosecurity Queensland provide advice to DETSI in preparing the environment minister's response on 2 July 2026 to petition No. 4329-25, which was around hunting in national parks?

Mr Bolton: I thank the member for the question. Can I just confirm that it was petition No. 4329-25?

Mr KATTER: Yes.

Mr Bolton: Thanks for the clarification. I do not have that information at hand. If it is okay with the minister, we will seek to get that information to you before the end of the session.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, do you agree to that?

Mr PERRETT: Yes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have details of the question so we will endeavour to get the minister's response before the end of the session. Member for Traeger, do you have a further question?

Mr KATTER: Director-General, what DPI funded or delivered cross-departmental programs, if any, operate in 2026-27 to prevent or minimise feral pigs, wild dogs and other pest animals moving between DETSI managed land and adjoining agricultural land, and what DPI funding is allocated to each program?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Director-General, there are a couple of parts to that question.

Mr KATTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, sorry to interrupt: I have a copy of that letter from the environment minister which I am happy to table or if the director-general would like it. It relates to the previous question.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it the response to the petition?

Mr KATTER: Yes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Traeger, are you a member of this committee?

Mr KATTER: Yes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: If you would like to table that in relation to the previous question, that would be no dramas.

Mr KATTER: I table that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry that I had to ask if you were a member of the committee. I have seen a lot of members in the last 10 days. Director-General, we have actually reached 3.45 pm. Do you want to answer that question quickly, or do you want to come back to it after the break or ask the minister to take it on notice?

Mr Bolton: I am very happy to answer it right now and I will keep it very succinct. Feral pigs are a major issue across Queensland. In 2023, which is our most recent estimation, they contributed to about $156 million per year of damage across the primary industries sector. It is a significant issue that we are very much aware of and taking very seriously. In March 2025 the Queensland government committed a further $1 million for regional feral pig action plans to be developed. While that is sitting there, we released on 16 April 2026 a draft Queensland Feral Pig Management Action Plan which sets the overarching strategy. Moving forward, that $1 million will be used to work with regional organisations of councils and local government landholders and state government landholders to develop specific action plans for those regions targeting feral pigs within that region. That will be using the $1 million that I just spoke about.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for the answer. Members and people watching the broadcast live, we will now suspend the proceedings for a short break and resume at 4 pm.

Proceedings suspended from 3.46 pm to 4.00 pm.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Welcome back to the Legislative Council chamber. We will resume our estimates hearing for the portfolio area of primary industries with government members' questions.

Mr DALTON: Minister, as you know, I am a keen open water swimmer. Can you update the committee on the expanded SharkSmart drone program and how it is helping Surf Life Saving Queensland keep beachgoers safe while collecting better data on shark movements?

Mr PERRETT: I thank the member for the question. I am certainly aware that he loves swimming, even in the ocean, at great distances. Great work! I know that the member, like every Queenslander, loves our pristine beaches, of which he has a few in his region. As the member's electorate has some pretty special beaches in it, it is important to highlight that the member's electorate is also the gateway to the world acclaimed Whitsundays. The Crisafulli government has prioritised beachgoers' safety and is protecting our state's reputation as a safe place to enjoy some of the best beaches in the world.

Through presiding over the largest investment in Queensland's Shark Control Program in its history, the Crisafulli government is continuing to protect beachgoers. The new Queensland Shark Management Plan 2025 to 2029 combines proven safety measures like nets and drum lines at more Queensland beaches whilst prioritising innovative technologies like drones and, importantly, research into the science underpinning new and emerging technologies.

The member specifically mentioned SharkSmart drones. Under this government, shark-spotting drones are being rolled out to more beaches, becoming a permanent fixture of the program's operations and complementing traditional net and drum line measures. Under the former Labor government, drones had only been funded as a trial. We have not only made drones permanent and are funding them permanently; we are also doubling the number of beaches they will service. The six new locations where drone surveillance has already commenced are: Rainbow Bay on the Gold Coast, Cylinder Beach on North Stradbroke Island, Tangalooma Wrecks on Moreton Island, Caloundra, Bargara and Agnes Water. I note the latter two are both in the member for Burnett's electorate.

In collaboration with Surf Life Saving Queensland, the use of drones will further expand the program to 21 beaches from 2026-27 onwards, with an ongoing commitment to explore innovative solutions to improve the effectiveness of the drone program. The new beaches that are being included are: Mooloolaba and Maroochydore on the Sunshine Coast, Coolangatta and Northcliffe on the Gold Coast and Nielson Park Beach, which is also in the member for Burnett's electorate.

The Crisafulli government is proud to partner with Surf Life Saving Queensland in expanding drone coverage to enhance beach safety. The drone program will support safer beaches by monitoring marine threats and assisting with rescues. Real-time monitoring means lifesavers and lifeguards can respond rapidly if a shark or other marine risk is spotted, but the good news does not stop there. Placement of launch or retrieval zones allows drone coverage for neighbouring beaches, which will bring the total number of beaches in the program to more than 30. It is important to acknowledge that drones do have some limitations in the marine environment, particularly when water clarity is poor or in strong wind or rain. That is why we are investing in drones to complement nets and drum lines in the Shark Control Program and not as a replacement.

The Crisafulli government is committed to exploring innovative solutions to continue improving the drone program. In 2025-26, Surf Life Saving Queensland obtained the required Civil Aviation Safety Authority, CASA, and council permissions to allow the program to operate in restricted airspace in the southern Gold Coast region. This is a win for the beachgoers on the southern part of the Gold Coast, which is obviously situated very close to the Gold Coast Airport. This milestone enables the program to expand to beaches previously excluded from operations, enhancing safety in these areas. Investigations into advanced camera technologies and artificial intelligence applications demonstrated a lot of potential, but more work is needed to ensure they are practical for use in the program. However, I can put on the record that this work is underway.

Trials of extended visual line-of-sight operations are also underway. This will allow the program to provide coverage beyond the red and yellow flags on our beaches, surveying neighbouring areas to better protect swimmers. Surf Life Saving Queensland is also undertaking preparatory work including the necessary CASA approvals to trial beyond visual line-of-sight operations. This program is well positioned to keep improving and to deliver real safety benefits for Queenslanders and visitors to our fabulous beaches. This is what delivery looks like from a government which puts the safety of beachgoers first. I thank the member for his interest and for the question.

Mr G KELLY: Minister, as a cattle producer, I could not be more proud of my region and industry than during the internationally renowned Beef Week. Can you outline the importance of Beef Week for the Central Queensland region and how it showcases and promotes Queensland's cattle industry?

Mr PERRETT: I thank the member for Mirani for the excellent question. I know that the member is passionate about the cattle industry and about Beef Week. Beef Week is also close to my heart. As a fellow grazier, Beef Week has been a highlight for my family. My wife, Michele, and I have been attending Beef Week since 1991 and I am enormously proud of the event that it has become.

I am excited that Beef2027 is being supported by the Crisafulli government, delivering on its election commitment with a record $4.5 million partnership with Beef Australia, helping make Beef2027 the biggest and best yet. By supporting the biggest industry event for beef producers, the Crisafulli government is backing the beef sector to help drive the ambitious goal to increase the value of primary production to $30 billion by 2030. I would like to acknowledge Beef Australia CEO Simon Irwin and his team for the hard work they are undertaking to make the Beef2027 event the best one ever. The countdown is now on for Beef2027, with gates due to open in Rockhampton in less than 12 months. I was pleased to attend the launch event in Rockhampton in May this year where we heard about the exciting new elements coming to the 2027 event.

Beef is big business in Queensland. Our beef industry is the state's largest primary production sector, supporting more than 20,000 rural and regional businesses and contributing $11.68 billion, or 45 per cent, of Queensland's gross value of agricultural production in 2024-25. Queensland is home to almost half of Australia's cattle herd, or around 13.5 million head of cattle, and has the largest feedlot sector in Australia, with approximately 57 per cent of national feedlot capacity.

Beef Week is Australia's premier beef industry event and one of the largest agricultural events in the Southern Hemisphere, providing a global platform to showcase Queensland's cattle industry, innovation, genetics technology and supply chain capability. The event brings together producers, agribusinesses, researchers, exporters, investors and international buyers, reinforcing Queensland's reputation as a global leader in beef production and exports.

Beef Week is also a major economic and community event for Central Queensland, reinforcing Rockhampton's reputation as Australia's beef capital. Beef2024 attracted almost 120,000 attendees, representatives from 35 countries and more than 600 international guests, highlighting its importance in promoting the Queensland beef industry to domestic and international markets. The economic injection to the Central Queensland region more broadly cannot be understated. As the member knows, you would be flat out finding a spare motel bed or a seat at a local restaurant during Beef Week.

An independent report commissioned by Beef Australia found that Beef2024 generated a record $102 million in direct and incremental expenditure for the Rockhampton region and supported 721 full-time-equivalent jobs, demonstrating the significant economic value the event delivers to Central Queensland. The economic benefits extend beyond Rockhampton, generating an additional $69.9 million across other parts of Queensland and supporting business activity throughout the state. Beef Week provides Queensland producers and agribusinesses with opportunity to showcase world-leading cattle genetics, innovations and technology while strengthening trade, investment and export relations. The event also supports the future of the industry, with more than 3,800 students participating in the school program and a further 1,200 students attending the event in 2024.

Beef2027 will build on Queensland's reputation as a global leader in beef production by providing a world-class platform to showcase the quality, scale and innovation of the state's cattle industry to international visitors, investors and trading partners. The event will continue to generate economic activity, support jobs, attract visitors and promote Queensland's beef industry to the world while delivering lasting benefits to Rockhampton, Central Queensland and regional communities across the state. I thank the member for the question and I am really looking forward to attending alongside you, member for Mirani, next year.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, this is a very important question for my constituents in the electorate of Moggill. How is the Crisafulli LNP state government continuing the fight against fire ants, including through suppression, surveillance, treatment and compliance activities, across South-East Queensland?

Mr PERRETT: I thank the member for the question, and I know a lot of members have a specific interest in this matter. I also thank the member for his interest in our government's fight against fire ants where we are working hard to tackle this threat, safeguarding Queensland's primary industries, environment, public health and way of life. Labor's decade of decline saw the infestations rise, opportunities missed and key recommendations from independent reviews overlooked. Since coming to government, I have taken a close interest in the governance of the program and overseen some major changes and delivered more funding. I am looking forward to sharing with the committee the progress the Crisafulli government has achieved in under two years.

The threat fire ants pose to Australia is well established. The Crisafulli government remains committed to protecting Queenslanders and Queensland businesses from this highly destructive and invasive pest. We are playing our part in addition to our obligations through the nationally cost-shared program. We are delivering the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce, which is solely funded by the Crisafulli government. It is an initiative that works with all levels of government and landholders within the suppression area to reduce fire ant densities through free treatment, training and support.

The Crisafulli government committed a record $24 million in funding in March 2025 to be spread over two years to supercharge aerial treatment in the suppression area. The results speak for themselves. In 2025-26 the taskforce treated more than 173,000 hectares in the suppression zone. This has resulted in an average of an 86 per cent reduction in fire ant densities on treated properties sampled. The Crisafulli government committed an additional $10.5 million over the 2026-27 financial year to continue the critical work of the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce following the year of the current national response plan. Both aerial and ground treatment assets continue to deliver against the National Fire Ant Eradication Program's annual targets.

Between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026 the eradication program delivered treatments across 572,123 hectares, representing approximately 88 per cent of the planned treatment area for that period. This strong treatment outcome was complemented by nearly 15,000 hectares of surveillance. The success of the eradication program achieved a victory never seen before. The eradication program delivered a significant milestone by transitioning locations previously in the suppression area to eradication treatment and other areas from treatment into clearance surveillance. As at 30 June this year, more than 3,000 hectares of the eradication treatment area were approved for transition from treatment to clearance surveillance and approximately 190,000 hectares are undergoing assessment to transition from treatment to clearance surveillance. We must not understate how significant this progress is. I thank the hardworking staff in the program who have worked diligently to achieve this. I would like to put on the record my thanks for the Leader of the Opposition's endorsement on 15 July of the work we are doing. The Leader of the Opposition said, 'It's good to see progress, but we can't ever rest on our laurels. We need to keep at it.' It is just a shame that the Leader of the Opposition did not have this attitude when he was premier, but nevertheless I appreciate his kind words.

The eradication program enforces movement controls within the fire ant biosecurity zone, regulating high-risk materials such as soil, mulch, turf and machinery and expanding to non-traditional carriers like palletised bricks and shipping containers. A tiered risk-based compliance model prioritises activities using intelligence, data and scientific advice combining education, voluntary compliance and enforcement, with high-risk businesses subject to more frequent audits. Tracing investigations and compliance efforts are critical to preventing fire ant spread, with modelling showing that without these measures fire ants could reach as far as Townsville, Longreach and Albury.

The current fire ant response plan will conclude on 30 June 2027. I would like to place on record my call for other cost-share partners and the Commonwealth to back us in. Our results speak for themselves. The current plan, underpinned by expert scientific and technical advice and eradication experience, has delivered unprecedented outcomes for Queensland and the rest of Australia over the past two years. The eradication program has not only successfully contained fire ants; it has also progressed inwards after successfully treating approximately 1.5 million hectares of land under the current response plan.

The eradication program has developed a draft response plan for 2027-2032. The next response plan heralds a major shift for fire ant eradication, moving efforts inwards from predominantly rural areas to urban environments. As a result, the new response plan embeds flexibility to adopt tailored and innovative approaches to meet the treatment and surveillance requirements for urban areas. The next response plan continues to rely on cost-share partnerships with all state and territory governments and the Australian government. The next plan also acknowledges how important eradication partners are for the complete removal of fire ants. This plan is designed to finalise fire ant eradication treatment across South-East Queensland by 2032. I know the member supports our efforts here. However, I implore all members of the committee, particularly those members of the opposition, to join my calls for the Commonwealth and other cost-share jurisdictions to back us in with the funding we need to continue this work.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will move now to some non-government questions.

Mr SMITH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I table a travel report and itinerary excerpts in relation to the minister's visit to JJAA feedlot.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for tabling the documents. We will have them distributed. So you tabled both of those documents—the report and the itinerary?

Mr SMITH: Yes, that is correct.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr SMITH: If I can, Mr Deputy Speaker, I am tabling them for a future question, not this question exactly right now but just as a reference point at this point, so if I may ask my question whilst others are—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Mr SMITH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Minister, as per your travel report, which has now been tabled, you visited JJAA feedlot in Indonesia on 22 October 2025. Was that helicopter travel previously planned by the department?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I put the question, member for Bundaberg, is the last part of your question authenticated by the travel document you have just tabled?

Mr SMITH: The question is not related to what I have tabled. I have tabled that pre-emptively so that we can move through questions and then I will come to the tabled document.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am unclear: is the helicopter travel related to this trip?

Mr SMITH: Yes. The minister caught a helicopter ride to the JJAA feedlot.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have asked a question, member for Bundaberg, in relation to a mode of transport—

Mr SMITH: And as to whether it was planned by the department prior to departure. I can move on with another question, if that is easier, or if the minister would like to answer.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I was going to ask whether you could authenticate that assertion of fact in your question.

Mr SMITH: It is authenticated in a later document we have tabled which is, in fact, the member's own register of interests.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you going to table that document?

Mr SMITH: I intend to table that document later. As for authentication, the minister has put it in his register of interests and he has just agreed that that is, in fact, the case.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I do not think he was agreeing to that. I am going to pre-empt—are you making a point of order, Leader of the House?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: I am trying to clarify if the helicopter travel is contained within this document or a separate document?

Mr SMITH: For his benefit, I am happy to table a register of interests update from February of this year that outlines sponsored travel to JJAA feedlot.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Bundaberg. We will see that as well. Please proceed, member for Bundaberg.

Mr SMITH: Minister, do you need the question repeated?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thought you were moving on, member for Bundaberg.

Mr SMITH: Okay. Minister, I know that the helicopter flight was sponsored by a consolidated pastoral company, a registered LNP donor. Can you confirm who organised this flight—your ministerial office or the department?

Mr PERRETT: I have made the appropriate declarations. Trade and Investment Queensland arranged the trip but, with respect to sponsored travel, I believe I made the declaration in accordance with my requirements.

Mr SMITH: Minister, you updated your register of interests on 13 February 2026—which is the tabled document we have now—to include your sponsored helicopter ride for the first time. Why did it take you 79 days to update your register?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: One moment, member for Bundaberg. I am seeking some advice in relation to your question.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: in relation to registers of interests, normally those processes are handled by the Clerk of the Parliament, so questions about an individual member's register of interests should be directed to those sessions. I seek your guidance on that particular aspect.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: this question is relevant because the minister undertook this travel directly in relation to his own portfolio and it was sponsored travel by a pastoral company. Why did the minister wait longer than the rules allow, under schedule 2 of the standing orders, to update his register, and what does this mean for the integrity of his portfolio?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, I understand, member for Bundaberg; that is why I was seeking some advice from the clerk in relation to this. There is a process in relation to registers of interests and I want to make sure that in this committee we are dealing with matters like this in an appropriate manner. Member for Bundaberg, I have sought advice from the clerk. Granted this is a novel situation, but the advice I have received is that matters relating to registers of interests and any issues that need to be raised in relation to them would be considered a matter of privilege and would need to be dealt with in accordance with the established procedure, which is to write to the Clerk of the Parliament as the registrar in relation to it.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: my question to the minister is why it took him 79 days to update his register. I am not questioning the authenticity of the February document but why it took him that long.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I understand the question.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: in relation to the individual obligations of members of parliament in relation to the register of interests, they are matters for the Clerk of the Parliament. Those issues could have been submitted either to the Clerk of the Parliament during his estimates hearings process or, alternatively—as you have indicated—in written correspondence about those issues to the Clerk of the Parliament, who manages the processes around individual members' registers of interests.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, I have given my ruling, which is based on advice from the clerk which, while the member for Moggill was making a point of order, was further galvanised. I would invite you to move on, please.

Mr SMITH: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Minister, did you forget your sponsored helicopter ride when updating your register of interests in January—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg—

Mr SMITH:—or did you deliberately mislead parliament?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, I call you to order. You are clearly asking a question about the same matter that I had just ruled you should move on from.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: with the greatest respect, this is about the minister's January register of interests, in which he has not put in the helicopter ride. I seek your ruling.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no separate issue raised. Could you move on to another question, please?

Mr SMITH: I thought for a second there the minister wanted to answer. We will move on to the member for Stretton.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: we cannot have reflective comments for the record which are not in compliance with the standing orders. That was a second—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the House. I understand what you are saying. I heard the member for Bundaberg. I am sorry to cut you off, Leader of the House; however, I do manage the order of the committee. I consider that I am not doing too bad a job in this session. Thank you, member for Bundaberg, for your affirmation in that respect. I would ask you to move on, in accordance with the guidance I have given you. In that respect, I will go to the member for Stretton.

Mr MARTIN: I would like to table from the department's website a shark control equipment locations map. My question is to the director-general.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have that tabled document. Let's circulate it to the committee and the director-general and minister, please.

Mr MARTIN: I tabled the department's equipment map website which was last updated in May 2026 with screenshots over each of the new locations that were mentioned by the minister, but is the website correct that there are no drones permanently located at any of the six new locations?

Mr Bolton: To the best of my ability, in a very short time looking at a low-resolution printout of the website, it is a bit hard to verify that, but I can confirm that the shark program has been operating at six new locations. These beaches are Rainbow Bay on the Gold Coast, Cylinder Beach on North Stradbroke Island, Tangalooma Wrecks on Moreton Island, Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast, Bargara Beach at Bundaberg and Agnes Water. Planning is now underway to identify a further five additional beaches for further expansion of the drone program this summer.

Mr MARTIN: In relation to those new locations, has the department purchased six new drones or were the drones used at those locations effectively borrowed from other locations?

Mr Bolton: In terms of the six new locations, they have full service, as do the existing locations as well. Where the equipment has come from I do not have that information to hand, other than to say that services at all the existing locations and the six new locations are operating as planned.

Mr MARTIN: The department has not moved drones from one location to another location? Someone went out and either bought six new drones or they did not? It is just to clarify that the department has not moved drones from one beach to another beach.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you may seek clarification. Please try not to make arguments in your question. Director-General, you have the call.

Mr Bolton: As I stated in my previous answer, I am not absolutely certain where the equipment has come from. We have been funded to run services at those beaches in conjunction with Surf Life Saving Queensland. All I do know for certain is that existing locations are currently being met along with the six locations.

Mr MARTIN: Is it possible you could come back to us by the end of the session confirming that the department has purchased additional drones?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Director-General, that is a question for you.

Mr Bolton: With the permission of the minister I would certainly like to try to get that information back to the committee.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, are you okay to take that on notice and come back with more information before the end of the session?

Mr PERRETT: I am happy to do that, considering the specific nature of it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will make a note of it.

Mr MARTIN: Director-General, with reference to question on notice 13, will all 21 beaches be serviced by their own purchased new drone allocated for that beach to ensure community safety?

Mr Bolton: I am just seeking some advice with regard to how we answer that particular question on notice. If it is not to hand right now, with your permission I am happy to add that to the information we will come back with. It relates very closely to the previous question.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you need a moment to confer?

Mr Bolton: With the permission of the minister we will get back to the committee by the end of the session.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is that okay, minister?

Mr PERRETT: Yes, Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will make a note of that one as well.

Mr MARTIN: How many drone assets does the department have? Maybe you could include that with what you are coming back with in answering the other questions.

Mr Bolton: Again, I do not have that particular information to hand and with the minister's agreement we will take that on notice and provide that by the end of the session as well.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you satisfied with that, Minister?

Mr PERRETT: I am satisfied.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will make a note of that one as well. Thank you, member for Stretton. We will go to some government member questions.

Mr G KELLY: The amount of $1.9 million has been secured over three years for Queensland's Food Farmers' Commissioner. Could you please explain how the commissioner is helping to improve security in food supply and transparency across the food supply chain in Queensland?

Mr PERRETT: I am extremely pleased to provide certainty to the role of the Queensland Food Farmers' Commissioner with $1.9 million secured over the next three years for the role. The former Labor government failed to fund the Queensland Food Farmers' Commissioner role beyond 12 months—it only made it an interim position—whereas the Crisafulli government is providing certainty for the sector with a three-year, fully-funded appointment. In addition to this, the Crisafulli government is expanding the responsibilities of the Food Farmers' Commissioner to ensure Queensland farmers are supported and empowered so they can thrive in a competitive market. This includes working with the federal government on the National Food Security Strategy and supporting the priorities of our Primary Industries Prosper 2050 blueprint which sets the ambitious target of growing Queensland's primary industries output to $30 billion by 2030.

In September last year our government appointed respected leader and strong horticultural advocate, Rachel Chambers, as Queensland's new Food Farmers' Commissioner. Ms Chambers was formerly the CEO of the Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers which gave her a unique insight into and understanding of stakeholder challenges across primary industries. Prior to her time with the Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers, Rachel was mayor of the North Burnett Regional Council, one of our state's most productive horticultural regions. She has a demonstrated ability to advocate for outcomes for primary producers and brings extensive rural leadership experience in the horticultural industry and local government. Central to this role is being a point of contact for matters affecting Queensland farmers and providing relevant advice to support their relationship with supermarkets in an increasingly complex and concentrated food supply chain.

The success of the commissioner depends on trust, maintaining confidentiality and a deliberate degree of independence. A key outcome has been the establishment of a secure, independent and anonymous online portal which enables producers to provide information in confidence. This enables the free flow of information and protection from retaliatory behaviour towards a complainant. Information provided through the anonymous portal will inform direct discussions with supermarket executives regarding lack of transparency in supply agreements and encourage greater transparency and accountability in retail practices.

The commissioner also undertakes wideranging engagement with industry, identifying several themes, including the importance of food security. This led to a detailed submission to the National Food Security Strategy discussion paper, highlighting the need for profitable producers, improved transparency along the supply chain and reduced compliance costs. Furthermore, in relation to compliance costs, work has also been undertaken to address the regulatory burden for farmers such as overlapping quality assurance or regulatory schemes. This has led to the Food Farmers' Commissioner becoming a key member of the advisory committee informing the review of the Food Production (Safety) Act 2000. I look forward to the outcomes of this review as we develop modernised, fit-for-purpose legislation that not only ensures our product is safe but also eases the burden on agribusinesses.

Before I close, may I also extend my appreciation to the interim Queensland food farmers' commissioner, Mr Charles Burke, for his work in this role. He laid the foundations for this role and I thank him for his efforts.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, this next question and your answer is one that my youngest son, Angus Rowan, is going to be very interested in. Can you provide an update to the committee on support being provided to Queensland beekeepers and pollination industries to manage varroa mite and strengthen biosecurity preparedness in our state?

Mr PERRETT: I thank the member for his important question. I also thank the member for allowing me to share with the committee what the Crisafulli government is doing to support our vital honeybee industry at a time when it faces a national challenge. The Queensland honeybee industry contributes more than $2.89 billion to the Queensland economy each year. Much of the economic contribution is through the increasing demand for honeybee hives that provide critical pollination to Queensland's agricultural sector, especially in horticulture.

I speak a lot about biosecurity and how important it is to Queensland's primary industries. We cannot underestimate its importance in keeping our industries viable. Biosecurity preparedness is vital. That is why this government is taking strong action to rebuild Queensland's biosecurity front line after a reduction over the past decade. Varroa mite is one of many risks posed to Queensland. Many Queenslanders I speak to underestimate the link between pollination and horticulture. Pollination enables the production of most flowering crops through transferring pollen between flowers, insects and animals, facilitating fertilisation and driving up the yield, size, shape and shelf life of fruits, nuts and vegetables. That is why we must treat this threat seriously.

Varroa mite was first detected in Queensland in March 2025, in the Lockyer Valley. It is now present on more than 2,200 properties, extending as far north as Miriam Vale. In February 2026, resistance to key synthetic treatments was confirmed across multiple Queensland regions including the south-east, Wide Bay and western Queensland. This is a national issue and requires a national coordination response involving continued action from the Commonwealth, industry and other jurisdictions.

The Crisafulli government is playing its part. We have provided $5.36 million to support bee- and pollination-relying industries, in addition to financial commitments under the national response, which concluded on 6 February 2026. Supporting industry through the first wave of varroa, the Crisafulli government worked closely with industry to improve preparedness and strengthen beekeeper capability following the arrival of varroa. Through the collective action to manage varroa mite program, the department established a biosecurity champions network of 37 champions across 21 recreational beekeeping clubs and a roundtable action group. Together, these initiatives strengthen beekeeper capability through workshops, field demonstrations, practical business and pollinating planning tools, integrated pest management resources and improved information sharing between industry, scientists and government.

The Crisafulli government has provided some immediate support for industry with the new resistant varroa mite. Some resistance was confirmed in February 2026. The department has extended surveillance and free laboratory testing to understand the distribution, genetics and associated viruses of resistant varroa, while strengthening Queensland's diagnostic capability. The department has supported industry, ensuring they have the latest up-to-date information through conferences, online recorded webinars, workshops, field days, monthly bee alerts, communications and practical guidance on resistant varroa management, integrated pest management and beekeeper wellbeing.

Supporting Queensland's know-how, the Crisafulli government recognises that innovation lies with Queensland industry, and our institutions are unearthing this often-hidden innovation through investing $500,000 into the Community Bee Innovation Fund. Examples of this Queensland innovation include the Sunshine Coast University trialling spider venom peptides as an alternative treatment to manage chemical-resistant varroa mite, Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers delivering varroa mite workshops to pollination industries and supporting the Queensland Beekeepers' Association to sponsor overseas experts sharing their experiences of managing varroa in subtropical environments.

The Crisafulli government recognises chemical-resistant varroa is a national issue that cuts across Commonwealth and state responsibilities and requires coordinated action with industry. In 2026-27, the Crisafulli government invested $50,000 in partnership with the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, and supported by the Queensland Beekeepers' Association, to convene an emergency round table on chemical resistance. Held on 30 June 2026, the round table drew on technical, policy and industry expertise from across Australia to identify collective actions to support the beekeeping industry and the vital pollination services it provides. The round table examined priorities including immediate industry support, treatment access, pollination security, honey marketing integrity, and research and development needs. Building on this work, a further forum was held just yesterday, bringing together senior representatives from states and territories to work with industry to form priority actions into practical support.

Mr BENNETT: Minister, can you provide an update to the committee on how the government is backing Queensland's commercial fishing industry?

Mr PERRETT: I thank the member for his support for Queensland's commercial fishing industry. The member for Burnett represents a number of commercial fishing representatives as well as even more small and family businesses that are underpinned by the supply of high-quality local seafood. I know that the member supports our commercial fishing sector and loves Queensland seafood. That is why I am pleased that the Crisafulli government is backing the commercial fishing industry by putting it at the centre of our long-term plan to ensure profitability and a productive and sustainable commercial fishing sector for generations to come.

In the lead-up to the 2024 election we made a significant commitment to make decisions based on science, unlike the ideologically-driven approach overseen by the former government. We also made a commitment for open consultation if any changes were to be proposed. We cannot overstate the significance of this commitment. This is all about providing confidence to an industry that has suffered under kneejerk decisions that were made in the absolute absence of fact. The commercial fishing industry was particularly frustrated with the former government, and I am really proud of the work that has been undertaken to begin to rebuild the trust in my department.

Under Prosper 2050, which I have already spoken about today, the Crisafulli government has taken a 25-year vision to both safeguard and grow Queensland's primary industries. Fisheries plays a vital part in this. For Queensland's commercial fishing industry, a set of five-year co-designed actions translates that vision into immediate, targeted and meaningful work that is a complete contrast to what the industry saw under the previous Labor government. These actions will be co-delivered in partnership with industry and are focused on strengthening the foundations of the sector; supporting long-term resilience, regional jobs and food security; providing certainty and security to invest; and further building consumer education, trust and community support. The actions have been shaped through extensive engagement with more than 350 fishing and seafood stakeholders across Queensland. This includes commercial fishers, aquaculture operators, recreational fishers, seafood supply chain businesses, peak bodies, researchers, local government and regional communities.

The Crisafulli government is working directly with commercial fishers and seafood businesses across the broader supply chain to deliver practical and impactful actions that make it easier to do business and invest with confidence in order to support growth. This includes reviewing and streamlining fisheries regulation, reducing unnecessary regulatory burden, improving quota management so businesses can trade quota more easily and operate more flexibly, and strengthening coordination across government and engagement with our fishers. The Crisafulli government is also supporting a stronger partnership approach with industry through improved sector representation and enhanced governance to support coordinated decision-making and shared responsibility for Queensland fisheries resources. This partnership approach recognises that the future of the sector depends on collective action and shared responsibility between industry, communities and government.

Importantly, we are not waiting and are already taking action. This includes reopening the central and southern offshore scallop fisheries following community feedback, an independent scallop survey co-delivered with industry and the development of a five-year scallop rebuilding strategy. The Crisafulli government has also put Spanish mackerel back on the menu through increases to allowable limits for both recreational and commercial fishers. Importantly, the annual commercial catch limit has been lifted from 165 tonnes to 250 tonnes, all backed by science. The Crisafulli government has also provided a $600,000 grant to the Queensland Seafood Industry Association to support stronger industry capacity and representation. Investment warnings have been removed for the first time in a generation. This is a huge vote of confidence that will encourage investment in a sector that has lacked regulatory confidence.

Business resilience support has been and will continue to be provided to aquaculture, commercial fishing and charter industries following adverse weather events. Looking ahead, the five-year actions will help industry explore new market opportunities, seafood provenance, by-product utilisation, developmental fisheries, value-added seafood and targeted campaigns to promote Queensland seafood. These actions are about backing commercial fishers not just to keep them operating but to build a more competitive, innovative and trusted fishing and seafood sector that continues to support regional communities, Queensland consumers and future generations. I thank the member again for his support of this important industry and I look forward to continuing to work with him as we deliver for Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will go to non-government questions now.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, of the $88 million allocated to the government's shark control management program, how much has been allocated to financial year 2026-27 exclusively?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Director-General, if you need to take a moment to find that, that is okay.

Mr Bolton: We are just waiting to get the breakdown on the figures for the years that the member has asked for, but, in the lead-up to that, I would like to outline some of the complexities of the program that we are looking at. That includes looking at expanding the drone program, as we previously discussed. We are also looking at undertaking a number of scientific research pieces into key shark species and particularly looking to try to ascertain the size of some of the populations of not only the seven key target species which the program seeks to manage but also a range of other key species that are of concern.

In terms of the figure, for the 2025-26 period we are looking at $14,331,000. For 2026-27, it is $14,910,000. Those are the base allocations, my apologies, and, on top of that, the total funding for those for 2026-27 is $18,096,000.

Mr SMITH: Thank you, Director-General and your team, for being able to source that. With reference to question on notice 14, Director-General, on page 2 of the SDS, there are seven new locations that were announced by the minister with regard to shark nets and drum lines. Director-General, can you confirm that no shark nets or drum lines have been installed since 1 July 2025?

Mr Bolton: The expansion of the program, particularly with regard to additional shark nets and drum lines, requires assessment under the Commonwealth EPBC Act—the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. We are currently working through those approval processes, but we are subject to assessment by the Commonwealth.

Mr SMITH: Minister, given the confirmation that no shark nets or drum lines have been installed since 1 July 2025, are Queenslanders less safe today as a result of these shark nets and drum lines not having been installed?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, your question is seeking an opinion and, further, I note that your question contains an inference. Could you rephrase the question, please, without that inference and also without seeking an opinion?

Mr SMITH: Deputy Speaker, I will take your advice and move to another question.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, when providing advice to install additional shark net and drum line locations, did you or your department advise the minister of Commonwealth legislation that would prevent such instalment?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Director-General, I will allow the question, noting that there is an argument contained within the question.

Mr Bolton: The department provided a range of advice to government in making a decision about the expansion of the program. That advice included potential applications that might be required, whether it was under the EPBC Act or CASA approvals or other types of approvals, and what that advice said I cannot disclose as that is cabinet-in-confidence.

Mr SMITH: With regard to timing, Director-General, and advice to the minister on Commonwealth legislation regarding the EPBC Act, was that advice provided before the shark control management program policy was finalised?

Mr Bolton: In making the decision on the new Shark Control Program or Shark Management Plan, the advice was provided to government at the time.

Mr SMITH: Minister, when were you aware of Commonwealth legislation under section 43B of the EPBC Act preventing the installation and expansion of shark nets and drum lines in Queensland?

Mr PERRETT: I reiterate the importance of this program. Everything that we need to do to protect Queensland swimmers will be done. That is something that has been done across governments, as the member would be aware—under previous administrations and particularly Labor governments. They have worked within the parameters of the requirements. Of course, we will do that, but, nonetheless that, I will absolutely back in the safety of Queensland swimmers and the program. We will not step away from that commitment, but, equally, if there needs to be further representation to the federal government, we will undertake that. I understand that my department works very closely with the federal government to make certain that any potential changes or impact can be mitigated on the basis that human life must be protected in our oceans and, as minister, I will do whatever it takes.

Mr SMITH: Minister, did you know before or after your commitment to expand shark nets and drum lines that it was not legal under Commonwealth law?

Mr PERRETT: Again to the member, I make the commitment that we are going to work within the law. Of course we will work with the federal government. I am not sure what this line of questioning is about. We made a commitment to roll out protection for Queenslanders and Queensland swimmers to further beaches. Yes, there are some variabilities there and they can be down to the positioning and obviously some of the advice that we receive as to the location of shark control equipment based on even ocean currents and the like. Again, whatever I need to do as minister to back in Queensland swimmers, I will do. Again, this is not new policy. This is policy that has carried on from the previous Labor government with respect to the Shark Control Program. Yes, we have committed to enhance it, and that is my ongoing commitment. I will, as minister, make those representations where necessary to the federal government, but I am again confident that my department can continue to work to find solutions should there be some challenges.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Go ahead, member for Bundaberg.

Mr SMITH: Minister, I listened to your answer then where you said that you are going to work within the law. Why, then, is your plan against the law?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, I am going to ask you to authenticate, if you would, the statement that the Shark Control Program is against the Commonwealth law, which is what I think you are asserting.

Mr SMITH: Absolutely. Section 43B of the EPBC Act states very clearly that there cannot be any future expansion of shark nets or drum lines. Both the director-general and the minister have referred to that in their answers. My question is: why is there a plan in place that is not legal under Commonwealth legislation?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, thank you for that statement. It could be argued that you are offering a legal opinion about the EPBC Act which is contrary to standing order 112. I believe that you could put these questions without referring to that, but I will go to the minister for his answer.

Mr PERRETT: I reiterate to the member and this committee that I stand to protect Queensland swimmers. What I am hearing from the opposition is that they are prepared to step away—

Mr SMITH: Point of order—

Mr PERRETT:—from protecting Queensland swimmers. I will do everything in my jurisdiction and power—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just one moment, Minister. What is your point of order, member for Bundaberg?

Mr SMITH: The minister is debating the question. Also, I take offence and ask that the member withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, that is not a point of order. I was listening to the minister's response and he did not refer to you personally. There is no point of order. Member, given the line of questioning, that is not a point of order at all and borders on the frivolous. Minister, please continue your answer.

Mr PERRETT: Again, I recommit to the state of Queensland that we back the Shark Control Program. It is something that I was keenly aware of in my role prior to being in government, and I will not step away from it. Effectively, there has been bipartisan support for the Shark Control Program in this state for a long time. I acknowledge that it was there under the previous government. It is something that we have continued. We have committed to enhancing the program.

As I indicated earlier, we work closely with Surf Life Saving Queensland and local governments across this state. I completely reject those opposite suggesting that I am not going to work hard to ensure our Shark Control Program protects Queenslanders and our vital tourism industry.

More importantly, I would hope that with their commitment, particularly with their close relationship with the federal government, we could be on a unity ticket to deal with any issue. Again, the purpose of this program under multiple governments has been to protect human life. I as the minister will do what I can to ensure we roll this out as planned and we do not have a federal government that could be persuaded by others who perhaps do not see the importance of this in the state of Queensland.

Mr SMITH: Minister, can you confirm that under current Commonwealth legislation your plan to roll out new shark nets and drum lines is considered not legal?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, pause for a moment. Member for Bundaberg, that question is seeking an opinion—a legal opinion at that—and is not in order.

Mr SMITH: Minister, is the department currently able to roll out new shark nets and drum lines?

Mr PERRETT: I will not concede that we cannot roll them out. I will not concede that. You may make that suggestion, member, but I do not concede that. I will never concede that, because human life and protecting human life mean a lot to me. To suggest that I would concede that we cannot protect more Queenslanders or more beaches, as we have planned to do, is surprising. I will never concede that.

I will fight for Queensland. I will fight for what we need to do. As I indicated, if representations have to be made to the federal minister I will absolutely make them. I would like to think I would have support from the opposition, given this program has been in place across governments for a long time.

I will not concede—absolutely will not concede. I have confidence in my department that they can work with the federal department to ensure we can roll these out. I will certainly make it known to Queenslanders should the federal government not be willing to work with us to ensure we do roll them out. In the main, Queenslanders would be most interested to know that protecting human life could be prohibited by the federal government, particularly when there has been a bipartisan approach to this Shark Control Program over a long period of time. Member, I will not concede. That is a fact. I will fight it and my department will continue to work collectively.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, is it the intention of the department to take unused funds for shark net and drum line instalments and reinvest them into greater nonlethal technologies to prevent fatal shark encounters?

Mr Bolton: Could you repeat the question, please? I want to ensure I get that absolutely correct in my mind before answering.

Mr SMITH: Director-General, with the proposed funding to install shark nets and drum lines within the shark control management program, will the department reallocate any year's unused funds into nonlethal shark technologies to keep Queenslanders safe?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Director-General, before you answer that—one second. Member for Bundaberg, that question contains a hypothetical. It presupposes that the allocated funding will not be spent. You may ask a factual question about unspent funds. Before they are not spent, it is hypothetical.

Mr SMITH: Point of order, if I may: as has just been outlined, Commonwealth legislation says that putting money towards installing shark nets and drum lines cannot happen. I want to know: will there be a reallocation of funds while that money cannot be spent?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are making a statement in doing that. The question you asked of the director-general is a hypothetical question.

Mr SMITH: If that is your ruling, Deputy Speaker, the member for Traeger has questions. It is disappointing.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, you are warned for reflecting on the chair's ruling. You are warned under the standing orders. Consider yourself lucky not to be removed from this hearing. The member for Traeger has the call.

Mr KATTER: With reference to page 2 of the SDS about delivering a world-class fishery and the minister's promise in 2024 to base decisions on science and data, what science and data has the minister commissioned regarding gillnetting in the Gulf of Carpentaria to continue Labor's UNESCO-driven ban?

Mr Bolton: If I have your question correct, you are talking about the science for gillnet fishing within the gulf as it relates to the UNESCO ban?

Mr KATTER: Yes.

Mr Bolton: The decision by the former Queensland government and the Australian government was to phase out gillnet fishing on the east coast within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park World Heritage area, which is north of Hervey Bay through to the tip of Cape York. That phase-out completion happens on 30 June 2027. There has been no such decision made in terms of the Gulf of Carpentaria gillnet fishery. We are currently working with the Carpentaria gillnet fishery around key elements including independent onboard monitoring to ensure they are fulfilling their requirements for reporting under the EPBC Act. We are also working with them to complete a harvest strategy, which will ensure the long-term sustainability and how to prevent concerns raised about their ongoing operations within that part of the ocean.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Traeger, do you have a further question?

Mr KATTER: I do and this one should be one that the minister will enjoy. In growing Queensland's primary production to $30 billion, the value of Queensland's peanuts has been slashed from $42 million in 2020-21 to $21.6 million in 2024-25. With only one processor left, are peanuts part of the government's goal to increase primary production?

Mr PERRETT: I do thank the member for that question. I do know a bit about growing peanuts. I spent many a year in my younger days in Kingaroy growing up growing peanuts, so I do know quite a deal about that. I will be very specific with respect to this, because I know the member was there in Kingaroy and he knows the issues that are confronting the peanut industry.

At a recent community cabinet held in Kingaroy I met with representatives from the organisations of Ag Horizons Forum including Peter Howlett, Ian Crosthwaite and Keith Campbell, who raised issues around the peanut industry and the breeding program. I think they were the ones you may have met when you were there, member. I also met with grower and processor Mr Sonie Crumpton. I know my colleague the member for Burnett has also had meetings with peanut growers in the region. We are also interested in the issue of peanut breeding. I would also like to acknowledge the growers who are highlighting this issue and the work they are doing to form new advocacy groups to support peanut and bean growers.

In relation to some history of peanut breeding, DPI and the Peanut Marketing Board, known as the Peanut Company of Australia, established the Peanut Breeding Program in 1977. Between 1997 and 2007, DPI delivered the program with support from the Grains Research and Development Corporation, the GRDC. In 2007 the Peanut Breeding Program was transitioned to the Peanut Company of Australia with a three-way agreement between the PCA, the GRDC and the DPI. DPI continued to support the program across the years through to the provision of technical services, field trial support and access to research facilities at Kingaroy, Kairi and Bundaberg. DPI provided the PCA access to peanut genetics developed by the DPI to further research and commercialise for the benefit of Queensland growers.

In 2017 the PCA was acquired by the Bega Group. In 2020 the PCA and GRDC entered into an agreement to conduct further breeding research under a new project Future Peanut Breeding. Under this agreement, the DPI was committed to disease assessment of new germplasm, dual purpose peanuts as a normal crop, and the modelling and use of peanuts as an organic nitrogen source for reef catchments.

Member, that industry has some challenges, and you would have seen that. A lot of the country and the land that used to grow peanuts, particularly in the Kingaroy region, has not been lost to agriculture. When I drove in there not so long back, a lot of those beautiful red soil farms that used to grow peanuts no longer grow them. As a decision of those property owners, they are growing other agriculture crops or grazing. They are not lost to agricultural production but it is challenging.

Member, when I grew up there growing peanuts, there were two private processors and then the Peanut Company of Australia. It was a thriving industry. Bit by bit we have seen fewer and fewer producers in that region growing peanuts. I am committed to keep working with that community to assist where we can. Obviously commercial decisions are being made and it is a great challenge. Where we can assist, particularly through my department—that was a commitment. That is what I heard when I was in Kingaroy at subsequent discussions.

We have made representations to the federal government in and around peanuts that are imported into this nation. I have raised that directly with federal Minister Collins about the concerns that have been raised directly with me, and I know they were raised with you as well. I continue that advocacy to make certain that the peanut growers that we have left in this state are at least not disadvantaged.

Mr KATTER: To tag on to the last point about imports, that seems to be a significant issue. I appreciate you have been down Canberra. Do you see a role for DAF to play because it seems to cross a few boundaries with biosecurity and breaching agreements? Is there a role for DAF to play in snuffing out illegal imports?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Traeger, are you referring to DPI Queensland or DAF federal?

Mr KATTER: Sorry, I used the wrong terminology—DPI Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, I will give you the call.

Mr PERRETT: Obviously trade relations are put in place by the federal government around certain things. The issue that is raised by the member relates to raw peanuts being imported into this nation and the potential disease risk that then comes with it. There are requirements that those peanuts that come in must not germinate, so they have to be blanched or cooked before they come in. There is some suggestion that that is not the case—that there is still a disease risk. That is what I have raised directly with the federal minister. Obviously it is a responsibility that DAF also has.

Member for Traeger, I think at the meeting you attended in Kingaroy the Food Farmers' Commissioner may have been there. I know that the Food Farmers' Commissioner is fully engaged with the industry to ensure that whatever we can do as a state, particularly through the department, and through the advocacy role that she has, that particular matter is certainly one that is in the forefront of our federal authorities.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will go to government questions.

Mr BENNETT: Minister, can you please outline how the government is supporting Queensland's recreational fishing lifestyle like in my electorate of the Burnett through community fishing grants, fish stocking, fishing events and strong compliance outcomes?

Mr PERRETT: Again, I thank the member for the question. I know the member for Burnett is a keen angler and, like a lot of Queenslanders, loves nothing more than reeling in a fish with his family and friends. That is why I am pleased to update the committee that the Crisafulli government is delivering for the recreational sector and for the many Queenslanders who love getting on the water and dropping in a line.

Approximately one million Queenslanders participate in recreational fishing every year, representing approximately 26 per cent of Queenslanders who are 18 or older. That is more than one in four adults in Queensland. Recreational fishing contributed approximately $2.5 billion to the Queensland economy in 2019-20. No doubt it has grown since then.

The Crisafulli government continues to support Queensland's recreational fishing lifestyle through the delivery of community fishing grants, fish restocking, fishing events and strong compliance outcomes. Recreational fishery stakeholders have contributed to the development of the Primary Industries Prosper 2050 blueprint and fishing and seafood actions. Over the next five years, stakeholders from across government and the community will work together to implement the blueprint and actions to deliver real outcomes.

A key opportunity for growth is in our stock impoundments, where volunteer groups have been adding value to regional Queensland communities for more than 25 years. I take this opportunity to put on record my thanks to those hardworking groups. Fish stocking is going from strength to strength under the Crisafulli government with the addition of three new impoundments to the Stock Impoundment Permit Scheme, SIPS, in 2026. These three new dams include Enoggera Reservoir, Mount Morgan No. 7 Dam and Paradise Dam. The Crisafulli government is currently seeking feedback on the addition of two further impoundments to further boost revenue for fish stocking and ensure that more impoundments are stocked today and for the future. Stocked impoundments are a real lure for our state, attracting visitors and improving livability across regional Queensland.

The Crisafulli government promoted this through a statewide fishing competition across SIPS impoundments in 2025 which was successful. I am pleased to announce that planning is currently underway for the Fish 'n SIP$ 2026 competition over the Christmas holiday period this year. We have also increased sponsorship of the Australian Fishing Trade Association's trade show, from $35,000 to $40,000. This matches the success and growth of AFTA's premier national trade event. This year the AFTA trade show will move from the Gold Coast to the Brisbane Convention Centre, where it will have 50 per cent more floor space. I am looking forward to attending AFTA's public day in August. The event is a great opportunity to connect retailers and wholesalers, both old and new, with all of the latest products. Seeing the latest in technology and improvements to the items that fishers use every day will continue to drive and grow fishing in Queensland.

I am also delighted to announce that the Queensland Community Fishing Grants Program will recommence in the 2026-27 financial year, with a total funding allocation of $100,000. Eligible applicants include not-for-profit entities, schools, local councils, universities and angling clubs. This program promotes recreational and traditional fishing, specifically with education on a sustainable fishing focus.

Compliance monitoring in Queensland is conducted by the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, QBFP, along 7,000 kilometres of coastline and hundreds of freshwater rivers and impoundments. I thank the many QBFP officers for the important work they do each and every day. QBFP currently operates 69 commercially registered vessels including rigid-hull inflatable boats, personal watercraft, aluminium dinghies and large offshore vessels. To enable strong compliance outcomes, the Crisafulli government will continue to invest in upgrading the QBFP fleet. Mr Deputy Speaker, $11.220 million will be spent over the next three years to build a new 21-metre offshore fisheries patrol vessel to enhance fisheries compliance operations in Far North Queensland, the Torres Strait and the Gulf of Carpentaria. We have delivered for the recreational sector. The Crisafulli government will continue to deliver.

Mr DALTON: Minister, would you outline how the government is working to provide security for local governments, particularly those in Western Queensland, in relation to access to essential quarry materials?

Mr PERRETT: This is a very important question. Access to quarry materials is paramount to local governments in particular, especially those in Western Queensland and rural and regional Queensland, as the member noted. The Crisafulli government understands the importance of quarry materials to build essential infrastructure like our roads, schools, hospitals, railways, ports, housing and much more across the state.

Through my department the Queensland government administers the allocation and sale of state owned quarry materials under the Forestry Act 1959. This supply accounts for around 20 per cent of Queensland's total quarry materials needs of around 50 million tonnes per year. Unlike the former Labor government, we have been actively addressing the issue of secure access to state owned quarry materials, particularly in Western Queensland, where state owned quarries are the only resources available for local governments. This material is critical for road maintenance and construction activities. It is relied upon by many local governments to keep roads safe.

The major flooding event earlier this year in Northern and Western Queensland highlighted the importance of a reliable supply of quarry materials for disaster recovery. The Crisafulli government worked quickly to provide confidence to not only local governments but also industry. My department has been able to secure approximately 84 per cent of the required supply of state owned quarry materials for local governments through sales permits issued by DPI under the authority of the Forest Act 1959. However, DPI must comply with the requirements of the Australian government's Native Title Act 1993 and other relevant legislation before granting or renewing a quarry material sales permit. In many cases, consent from the relevant native title parties through an Indigenous land use agreement, ILUA, is required to comply with the Native Title Act. Given the negotiation of the ILUA takes considerable time, where possible DPI has worked diligently to negotiate interim agreements with native title parties to maintain access to state owned quarry material.

As of 19 June 2026 DPI has: issued 15 existing local government ILUAs for 148 quarries; maintained access during negotiations to 190 quarries under 16 active interim agreements; and renewed 689 quarries' requirements by local governments. ILUA negotiations have been proposed or are currently underway with 36 native title parties relating to 13 local government permits and 12 commercial permits. We will continue to do this important work. We will also continue to work closely with local governments to ensure they have access to quarry materials to support disaster response activities and maintain scheduled road maintenance activities.

I thank my colleague the Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers for the spirit in which she has worked with me as we respond to this very important issue. I also thank Alison Smith and her team at the Local Government Association of Queensland, whom my team and I continue to work with closely.

Mr G KELLY: Minister, can you update the committee on the Queensland Feral Pig Management Action Plan and how it will support practical, locally-led control of one of Queensland's most destructive pests?

Mr PERRETT: I know that the member for Mirani is a primary producer like I am and knows exactly how destructive these pests are. Unlike the former Labor government, we take this issue seriously and we are taking action to address it.

Feral pigs are one of Queensland's most destructive invasive pest animals. Feral pigs have significant impacts on agricultural production, our environment, waterways and biosecurity. Under the Biosecurity Act 2014, the primary responsibility of managing feral pigs rests with individual landholders and local governments responsible for ensuring compliance with local biosecurity obligations. Effective feral pig management requires a coordinated, cross-tenure approach involving landholders, local governments, natural resource management groups, traditional owners, industry and government partners. Our government supports these efforts through research, technical advice, training resources, best practice management, information and targeted investment programs that promote effective and humane control methods.

In the 2025-26 financial year the Crisafulli government invested $2.163 million under the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative to continue to support regional feral pig management coordinators, enabling the delivery of landscape-scale and cross-tenure control activities. These coordinators are supporting feral pig management activities across 1.6 million square kilometres, representing approximately 92 per cent of Queensland. The Crisafulli government's allocation of $436,160 through round 8B of the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative continues to support innovation and diversification of effective feral pig control tools.

The Crisafulli government also undertook targeted flood recovery feral animal control activities in North Queensland during 2025-26 to reduce the risk of feral pig population increases following flood events. In March 2025 the Crisafulli government committed a further $1 million to support the development of regional feral pig action plans and priority on-ground activities identified by local stakeholders. Public consultation on a draft Queensland Feral Pig Management Action Plan closed on 16 April 2026. A total of 412 submissions were received from a diverse range of stakeholders including landholders, local governments, recreational hunters, primary industry peak bodies, conservation organisations and government agencies. The feedback received through consultation is currently being finalised and will be utilised to build regional action plans.

The department will finalise the Queensland Feral Pig Management Action Plan following consideration of stakeholder feedback received during public consultation. The action plan will provide a statewide framework for coordinated regional feral pig management plans while supporting practical, locally-led solutions that address regional challenges and priorities. It will strengthen collaboration across landholders, local governments, natural resource management groups and industry to support long-term effective feral pig control outcomes. Regional plans will identify local management priorities, support targeted on-ground action, build on existing partnerships, encourage coordinated management across property and tenure boundaries, and support the adoption of best practice and control techniques.

The Crisafulli government will continue working with stakeholders across Queensland to support planning, coordination, research and implementation activities that reduce the impact of feral pigs on agricultural productivity, environmental values and regional communities. Through a combination of best practice approaches, statewide strategic direction and regional tailored action, the Queensland Feral Pig Management Action Plan will support the delivery of sustainable, practical and locally-led management of one of Queensland’s most destructive invasive pest species.

Mr DALTON: Minister, the federal government rushed through changes to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act in November last year. Can you please explain how these EPBC laws will affect Queensland primary producers, foresters and fishers, and what are our key industry groups saying about these changes?

Mr PERRETT: I thank the member for the question. This is an issue the Crisafulli government is deeply concerned about, particularly given, as you mentioned, this rushed legislation and the Labor-Green coalition that managed to deliver that in Canberra. In fact, it is so concerning that the Treasurer has directed the Queensland Productivity Commission to conduct a public inquiry into how the 2025 changes to federal environment laws are affecting Queenslanders now and into the future. I welcome the Treasurer’s decision to conduct this inquiry, and I look forward to closely following the inquiry’s work.

The changes to the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act were made by the Labor-Green coalition in November last year. They will have significant implications for our highly productive and valued agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors. These changes to the EPBC Act were made at the last minute without consulting industry. I immediately wrote to the federal minister, Murray Watt, a Queensland senator, to discuss the implications. There was no response so I wrote again in February. I finally received a response four months later in March. It is obvious that Senator Watt has no regard for the major impacts this legislation will have on our primary producers and the state that he claims he represents. It is a disgracefully calculated political decision which has sold out our farmers and regional communities. During Senate estimates last year, we learned that the federal government did not even seek formal advice from its own department of agriculture about the massive implications this has for primary production. This is very concerning.

In relation to the impact of these changes on our graziers and farmers, the new EPBC laws will increase regulatory burdens for low-risk routine farm activities. The changes ignore the reality of family farms. They impose red tape on mum-and-dad farmers by forcing them to go through the same bureaucratic process as trillion dollar international mining companies. It makes no sense, as Queensland’s primary producers already operate under world-leading environmental regulations. Labor’s rush to complete the EPBC deal undermines years of work by Queensland farmers, scientists, foresters, industry bodies and other levels of government to adopt and operate under world-leading environmental standards. It places onerous conditions on landholders managing regrowth on their properties, with landholders now having to consider multiple factors before undertaking routine land management activities.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. I am going to move to non-government questions for the remainder of our session. I understand we will need some minutes at the end for some questions on notice to come back.

Mr PERRETT: Yes.

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

Mr BERKMAN: I do. I want to return to the issue of the Shark Control Program. Minister, you have said that the objective of that program is swimmer safety. Why then did the department itself apply to remove conditions from marine park permits that required a transition to SMART drum lines, which themselves allow for a faster removal of caught animals that can actually attract sharks to beaches?

Mr PERRETT: I thank the member for the question. I reiterate that the purpose of this program is to protect human life. This program has operated for many decades. I know the member was not here earlier when I went into some detail about the importance of that program.

Mr BERKMAN: For your benefit, Minister, I saw the earlier session so I am aware of the previous answers that have been given.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar, thank you. Minister, you have the call.

Mr PERRETT: I reiterate the purpose of this program. We have invested a record amount of funding into this program, including into nonlethal methods. Those SMART drum lines that you mention are operated where we are required to operate them, and we do that. We have not stepped back from that. Yes, there is some data that suggests that perhaps they are not as effective as the traditional drum lines, but our commitment to servicing the equipment more regularly has not only enhanced the ability to be able to deal with encounters with any non-target species; it has given us the ability to further look at other opportunities, particularly in and around some of the nets. I know the interaction with non-target species—particularly whales at this time of year—is raised from time to time. We have given that commitment to look at new technologies that will deal with that.

Again, we work within the parameters and the requirements. That was a question that was mentioned earlier by another member of the committee around the program and how it operates. We operate within those requirements. Should there be an issue that we need to take up with the federal government, I will absolutely do that, as I committed to the member for Bundaberg earlier. Again, I do not step away from the fact that the primary purpose of this program is to protect human life. Yes, 60 per cent of the funding is for nonlethal methods and we talked about drones earlier. We will work to protect Queensland swimmers.

Mr BERKMAN: Thank you, Minister. You made some claims in there about the efficacy of nonlethal SMART drum lines compared to traditional drum lines. As I understand it, that is a reference to the fact that they simply catch more sharks because they are in the water all the time. Is it ultimately the case that your measure of swimmer safety is simply how many sharks are killed in Queensland waters? If not, what is the actual measurable reduction in shark bite or other measure that you use to determine improvements in swimmer safety?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar, I think there were some arguments within that question. The last part of your statement leading to a question was a question about what are the measures. Minister, could you answer that question, please?

Mr PERRETT: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. There were a lot of components to it. I get a lot of opinions and views about how we should manage sharks in this state and they vary widely, as you could appreciate, and they come from all corners of the state. We have committed, particularly as part of this program, to do stock assessments. There are seven target species that are key to the Shark Control Program in Queensland. We have committed to stock assessments and that is something that has never been done before and it is something I am proud of. We will now be assessing some of the species, and that is critical to understanding the impact of the program and, more importantly, the prevalence or otherwise of sharks in Queensland waters. As I said earlier, there are lots of suggestions around that. We are going to quantify, through this new program, the work that is being undertaken. The measure for me is preventing loss of life in this state. That is the purpose of this program, and has been across governments, and I will not step away from it.

Mr BERKMAN: I will have one final attempt. Your answer did not actually, as I heard it, offer any measure, as far as the reduction of shark bite or risk goes, to assess the efficacy of the program. Is that simply because the real objective of this program is public perception and politics, not safety?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. Member for Maiwar, like your last question, there was some argument contained in that question. I am not going to rule it out of order. You are an experienced member here. It would help the committee if we all asked questions not containing arguments as preambles. Minister?

Mr PERRETT: I completely reject that. I will direct the member to the KPMG report in respect of the Shark Control Program and existing measures that are there. Again, I reiterate to the member that human life takes precedence. It will continue to do so under this government. We will continue to invest, as we have, into new technologies. Until those new technologies are proven, the existing program will remain.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: It being the time that it is, I would like to inquire about the questions that the minister and the director-general were going to come back to the committee on with more information. Minister, do you have information to hand about those matters?

Mr PERRETT: I will go to the director-general in a moment, but I want to provide clarity and an update on the matter the member for Bundaberg raised earlier. This is a clarification.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is a clarifying statement, not a response to a question on notice?

Mr PERRETT: No, this is a clarifying statement. The declaration was not submitted in February, as the member for Bundaberg suggested. I received confirmation from the Clerk's office that they received the update about my travel in Indonesia on 15 January 2026. This travel arrangement was arranged by TIQ; TIQ organised the entire itinerary for my mission. The delay was due to waiting for information and invoices to be provided. There was a delay in receiving those invoices from companies in Indonesia.

The member would also be aware that a lot of businesses close over the Christmas break. Many of our hardworking public servants also have time off over the Christmas closure. The only reason the member could ask the question is that I have been open and transparent in making the declaration, as I always am. I will continue to work alongside key trading partners like those in Indonesia as the Crisafulli government looks to unlock new and more profitable opportunities for Queensland businesses.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I turn to the questions on notice.

Mr Bolton: In respect of the question on notice regarding the expenditure on tunnel net trials compared to line-fishing trials in the Fish-LIGHT program, as at 30 June 2026 the Fish-LIGHT program has expended $2,929,254 for all forms of trials with the exception of line-fishing trials. There have been no payments associated with line-fishing trials.

With regard to question on notice No. 2 and the member for Traeger's question as to whether DPI or BQ provided advice to DETSI regarding the response to petition No. 4329-25 about hunting in national parks, the Department of Primary Industries was not consulted and did not provide advice to the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation in preparing the response to that particular petition.

The question on notice about the department's purchase of additional drones was: were the new drones purchased or removed from other locations and how many drones does the department own? The department owns and operates 77 drones which support a range of operational activities including Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol operations, fire operations and various research activities across the whole department. For clarity, none of the department's 77 drones are used to deliver the Shark Control Program. The Shark Control Program drone surveillance, including both existing and new locations, is delivered in partnership with Surf Life Saving Queensland, as previously advised. Under this arrangement, Surf Life Saving Queensland receives grant funding to deliver the drone surveillance service, which includes their own purchase, ownership, operation and maintenance of drones and all other equipment required to support the program.

Finally, with the permission of the Deputy Speaker, I am wanting to make a small correction to a part of the minister's response to the question regarding the Queensland government's involvement and support for primary industries impacted by natural disasters and drought. The minister referred to funding available in the Drought Preparedness Grants of $6.3 million. To provide absolute clarity for the committee, those Drought Preparedness Grant allocations include $5 million for 2026-27 and an additional $1.351 million currently subject to further approval processes.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Director-General. We have now reached the end of the time allocated to examine the proposed expenditure for the primary industries portfolio area. I note there were no questions taken on notice. Thank you, Minister, Director-General, officials and departmental officers for your attendance. This concludes the estimates hearing today for the Primary Industries and Resources Committee. Thank you to all committee members, to staff, to Hansard and to everyone watching online. I declare the hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 5.45 pm.