



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

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## TUESDAY, 24 MAY 2022

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Mr Speaker (Hon. Curtis Pitt, Mulgrave) read prayers and took the chair.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I respectfully acknowledge that we are sitting today on the land of Aboriginal people and pay my respects to elders past and present. I thank them, as First Australians, for their careful custodianship of the land over countless generations. We are very fortunate in this country to have two of the world's oldest continuing living cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whose lands, winds and waters we all now share.

### ASSENT TO BILLS



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from Her Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain bills. The contents of the letter will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the letter for the information of members.

The Honourable C.W. Pitt MP  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of Assent: 20 May 2022

A bill for an Act to amend the Adoption Act 2009, the Child Protection Act 1999, the Child Protection Regulation 2011, the Disability Services Act 2006, the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes

A bill for an Act to amend the Public Trustee Act 1978 for particular purposes

A bill for an Act to amend the Forestry Act 1959, the Marine Parks Act 2004, the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Regulation 2012, the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the Police Service Administration Regulation 2016, the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes, and to repeal the State Buildings Protective Security Act 1983

These Bills are hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely  
Governor

20 May 2022

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 20 May 2022, from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 20 May 2022 [688].

### PRIVILEGE

#### Speaker's Rulings, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 20 May 2022 I tabled three rulings regarding matters of privilege: a ruling relating to a complaint by the Treasurer alleging that the members for Mudgeeraba and Moggill deliberately misled the House during a motion on 30 March 2022; a ruling relating to a complaint by the Minister for Resources alleging that the member for Condamine deliberately misled the House during matters of public interest on 24 February 2022; and a ruling relating to a complaint by the member for Toowoomba North alleging that the member for Logan deliberately misled the House during debate on a bill on 12 October 2021. I ruled that all three matters did not warrant the further attention of the House via the Ethics Committee. I now refer to all these matters so if any member wishes to exercise their rights in respect of those matters the understanding orders they should do so immediately, identifying the matter.

## ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CALLIDE

### By-Election, Issue of Writ

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, pursuant to section 83(2) of the Electoral Act 1992, yesterday, 23 May 2022, I issued a writ for the election to fill a vacancy in the membership of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Callide. The vacancy results from the resignation of the former member on 29 March 2022, which took immediate effect. I advise that I tabled the relevant correspondence yesterday. I advise that the key dates are: Friday, 27 May 2022 to be the cut-off day for electoral rolls for the election; Tuesday, 31 May 2022 to be the cut-off day for the nomination of candidates for the election; Saturday, 18 June 2022 to be the polling day; and Wednesday, 20 July 2022 for the return of this writ.

## SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

### Absence of Members

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have received advice from the member for Burdekin, Mr Dale Last MP, and the member for Condamine, Mr Pat Weir MP, as to their absences from the sitting of the House this week. The members' notifications comply with standing order 263A.

### School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Narangba Valley State School in the electorate of Kurwongbah; Calamvale Community College in the electorate of Algester; and Mater Dei Catholic Primary School, St John's Wood, in the electorate of Cooper.

## PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following e-petitions, sponsored by the honourable members indicated—

### Crime, Penalties

**Mr Andrew**, from 2,776 petitioners, requesting the House to review and amend legislation to ensure perpetrators of serious crime and recidivist offenders receive more severe penalties [\[689\]](#).

### Spanish Mackerel, Quotas

**Mr Dametto**, from 617 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the current allocation of commercial and recreational Spanish Mackerel quotas remains unchanged [\[690\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following e-petitions, sponsored by the Clerk—

### Chelsea Road Causeway and Lota Creek Boardwalk

355 petitioners, requesting the House to coordinate with Brisbane City Council to upgrade the Chelsea Road causeway and Lota Creek Boardwalk [\[691\]](#).

### Native Forest Timber Production Code of Practice

821 petitioners, requesting the House to undertake a review and revision of the "code of practice for native forest timber production on Queensland State Forest 2020" [\[692\]](#).

### Driving Offences, Fines

1,507 petitioners, requesting the House to reverse the decision to increase driving offence fine amounts and leave them at the current amount prior to 1 July 2022 [\[693\]](#).

Petitions received.

## TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS (SO 31)

The Clerk informed the House that the following papers, received during the recess, were tabled on the dates indicated—

13 May 2022—

[660](#) Transport and Resources Committee: Report No. 17, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 17 November 2021 and 29 March 2022

[661](#) Transport and Resources Committee: Report No. 18, 57th Parliament—Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

[662](#) State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 20, 57th Parliament—Food (Labelling of Seafood) Amendment Bill 2021

17 May 2022—

[663](#) Auditor-General Report 16: 2021-22—Contract management for new infrastructure

18 May 2022—

[664](#) State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 21, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 17 November 2021 and 22 February 2022

[665](#) Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 19, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 17 November 2021 and 15 March 2022

19 May 2022—

[666](#) Auditor-General Report 17: 2021-22—Appointing and renewing government boards

20 May 2022—

[667](#) Auditor-General Report 12: 2021-22—Health 2021: Erratum

[668](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged contempt of Parliament by the member for Mudgeeraba and the member for Moggill

[669](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged contempt of Parliament by the member for Condamine

[670](#) Ruling by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Curtis Pitt—Alleged contempt of Parliament by the member for Logan

[671](#) Queensland Music Festival—Financial report for the 12 months ended 31 December 2021

23 May 2022—

[672](#) Speaker's statement—Issue of Writ for Callide by-election

[673](#) Letter, dated 23 May 2022, from the Speaker, Hon. Curtis Pitt, to the Deputy Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Michael Ries, enclosing a copy of the Writ for an election to fill a vacancy in the Electoral District of Callide

[674](#) Issued Writ for the election of the Electoral District of Callide

#### TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

#### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Duties Act 2001, Land Tax Act 2010, Mineral Resources Act 1989, Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999:

[675](#) Revenue Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 53

[676](#) Revenue Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 53, explanatory notes

[677](#) Revenue Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 53, human rights certificate

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994:

[678](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Rural Agricultural Development Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 54

[679](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Rural Agricultural Development Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 54, explanatory notes

[680](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Rural Agricultural Development Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 54, human rights certificate

Public Health and Other Legislation (Further Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Act 2021:

[681](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 55

[682](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 55, explanatory notes

Gold Coast Waterways Authority Act 2012, Photo Identification Card Act 2008, Tow Truck Act 1973, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995:

[683](#) Transport Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion and Registration Fees) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 56

[684](#) Transport Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion and Registration Fees) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 56, explanatory notes

[685](#) Transport Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion and Registration Fees) Amendment Regulation 2022, No. 56, human rights certificate

## REPORT BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

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

**Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021**

Amendments made to Bill

**Short title and consequential references to short title—**

*Omit—*

'Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021'

*Insert—*

'Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022'

## MEMBER'S PAPER

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

Member for Whitsunday (Ms Camm)—

[687](#) Nonconforming petition regarding fishing regulations

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Influenza, Vaccination; Coronavirus, Update

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.35 am): As of today, free flu vaccinations will be made available to every Queenslander. This is because health officials have warned we are facing a severe outbreak of the more serious strain, influenza A. Measures we have taken to combat COVID have kept the flu at bay, but now it is back earlier and in greater numbers than anticipated. We will always take health advice. I will always put the health and safety of Queenslanders first.

Influenza A affects the very young and the very old. It leads to greater hospitalisations. Cases are doubling every week. Last week cases jumped from 1,848 to 4,282. Our vaccination rates, especially among the young, are very low. That is why I have announced this pre-emptive strike. These vaccinations are free because we know the cost-of-living pressures are impacting so many. They are available only until the end of June because I do not want people to wait. They are available from GPs and pharmacies. I thank the AMA and the Pharmacy Guild for their support. If we need to widen their availability to places like schools we will look at that.

All of the impacts of COVID, including absenteeism, interruptions to supply chains and health services, will be made worse by an outbreak of flu. Free flu vaccines protect our people as well as our economy. Today we have 36,244 active cases of COVID. Some 450 people are in hospital—17 in ICU. Tragically, 18 people have passed away in the last 24 hours. Our condolences go to their loved ones.

We already have 151 people hospitalised with the flu—10 are in intensive care. We have to do all we can to flatten this curve. Queenslanders rallied to get the COVID vaccine. Now I ask Queenslanders to once again roll up their sleeves and protect themselves, their families and our communities.

### Federal Labor Government

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.37 am): It gives me great joy to say that Australia has a new Prime Minister and Queensland has a great friend in Anthony Albanese.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members!

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for McConnel and member for Kawana!

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I would like to think you got that out of your system, but it is clearly not going to be the case.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, you are skating on very thin ice.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Even you're wearing red!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, the ice is also thin on that side.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Albo has a long association with this state. In fact, except for those three nights a year when Origin is played or when his beloved Rabbitohs are in town, Anthony Albanese might as well be an honorary Queenslander. He gets our large decentralised state. I am so looking forward to working with him to get Queensland's fair share.

Our government is here for every Queenslander regardless of how they vote. Having Anthony Albanese as Prime Minister will be a breath of fresh air. I know we can work together to focus on growing jobs for our growing state. We know the dignity of having a job and being able to put a roof over your head and food on the table for your family. People know the difference between a state election and a federal one—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—but, if there is a lesson to be learned, it is this: we must work each day for our communities and listen to what people say. This is becoming increasingly true when it comes to women. While we can always do better, I am proud of the diversity and equality displayed by the government I lead. We also work best when we work together. I look forward to continuing to work with Anthony Albanese for a fairer and better future for all Australians.

### Weather Events; Floods

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.40 am): Heavy rainfall and flooding has taken a great toll on many communities throughout the state this year. Rainfall totals across eastern Queensland are double the May average, with some parts of North Queensland receiving five times their monthly average for May. In total, State Emergency Services personnel received more than 2,126 requests for assistance since the beginning of the latest weather event. Fire and Emergency Services swiftwater crews responded to 78 incidents and, tragically, a 32-year-old woman died after her car was swept off the road west of Mackay on 11 May.

While the bureau advises that the worst of the wet weather is behind us, Queenslanders must always remain vigilant. Numerous flood warnings are still active across Southern and Western Queensland including major flood warnings for the Condamine and Balonne rivers and Cooper Creek. Showers are expected to continue across Eastern Queensland before a drier air mass brings welcome sunshine to most of the state this weekend—fingers crossed!

While we brace for even more wet weather this week, it is important that we get on with the job of rebuilding communities that have been impacted by flooding. Seventeen local government areas have been activated for disaster recovery funding arrangements. Four of these local government areas have also been activated for emergency assistance payments of up to \$180 per person or up to \$900 for families. These LGAs are: Lockyer Valley, Southern Downs, Western Downs and parts of Moreton Bay. These same four local government areas have been activated for the Essential Services Safety and Reconnection Scheme, which helps to reconnect essential services like electricity, gas, water and sewerage.

In addition, 672 damage impact assessments have been undertaken across hard-hit areas including Gympie, the Lockyer Valley, Moreton Bay and the Southern Downs Regional Council area. The Queensland Recovery Authority and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services will continue to assess properties this week.

There is no doubt that it has been a challenging start to the year, with three major flooding events already in 2022, but I can assure Queenslanders that we will be with them every step of the way as we continue to rebuild and recover. This week I urge everyone to please monitor the weather, drive to the conditions and, if it's flooded, forget it.

### Flood Recovery, Tradies

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.42 am): A multimillion dollar promotional blitz has begun in three states in an effort to lure more interstate tradies to paradise to help with Queensland's flood recovery efforts. Today I can update the House that our Tradies in Paradise campaign is being promoted across a range of targeted advertising platforms as well as to spectators at AFL games in South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria.

We want to encourage more cabinetmakers, carpenters, electricians, gasfitters, plasterers, plumbers, tilers and other construction trades, architects, certifiers, designers, building engineers, planners and surveyors to move to Queensland and continue the rebuilding efforts. While we are encouraging tradies to come for at least eight weeks recovery work, we are hoping our long pipeline of major infrastructure projects in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032 might just make them decide to trade up to paradise and stay in paradise forever.

Our Tradies in Paradise scheme was launched last month, with offers of up to \$1,750 to be paid to the first 1,000 tradespeople who move to Queensland and work for eight weeks rebuilding communities impacted by the recent South-East Queensland flood. I can also advise the House that the first people who answered the call and have completed eight weeks work are now able to submit their incentive payment applications via the website. If you are a tradie, we want you. Come to Queensland. We promise you will love it.

### Federal Labor Government; Marine Industry

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure) (9.44 am): Firstly, I would like to join the Premier in welcoming the new Anthony Albanese Labor government. I know that they will be a government who will deliver for Queenslanders and work with Queensland, instead of fighting with us.

One of the most exciting growth stories in Queensland today is that of our marine industry in the state's Far North. Cairns is well established as one of Australia's and the world's leading hubs for the maintenance, repair and overhaul work that keeps vessels shipshape. The Palaszczuk government has helped to ensure the Cairns Marine Precinct is recognised globally as a destination for national and international vessels of all sizes. We are now working to secure the precinct's future, industry growth and more jobs thanks to a \$150 million Queensland government funding commitment. This will be matched by the incoming federal Labor government, making it a \$300 million upgrade.

I was in Cairns last week for the announcement of a major expansion that will allow maintenance repair and overhaul works to be undertaken on more vessels and bigger vessels in Far North Queensland. The designation of Cairns for the Navy's Regional Maintenance Centre North East is testament to the great capability of local industry there underpinned by the support of Queensland defence industries.

The new common-user facility will support an expansion that will attract vessels of up to 120 metres in length for repairs and maintenance. There will be a 5,000-tonne ship lift enabling repair work on new hardstand areas. There will be specialist facilities for blasting and painting work and more capacity for wet berths. The precinct already has three busy shipyards and supports 4,600 jobs. With this expansion more opportunities will be sailing in for larger defence and commercial contracts.

Cairns is one of the few Australian ports offering both in-water and land facility expansion for the Department of Defence. It is also home to Queensland's only operational Navy base. The Queensland government already understands the great potential this project holds for the Cairns economy. We have already made a separate \$30 million investment in the precinct. Now, with the partnership of the Australian Albanese government, we can take the next step.

### Federal Labor Government, Economy

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.46 am): After nine years of cold shoulders and raw deals from Canberra, Australia now has a federal Labor government that will finally listen to Queensland, and that is a federal Albanese Labor government—a federal Labor government that understands properly funding child care, a federal Labor government that understands properly funding aged care, a federal Labor government that understands properly funding support for veterans and disability services, and a federal Labor government that understands

properly funding education, skills and training, and public hospitals and health care. Be assured, Mr Speaker, that we will be calling on the federal Albanese Labor government to do all of that and more when it comes to delivering Queensland's fair share.

We know that our nation faces challenging times—an uncertain international environment both in Europe and to our north, cost pressures on working families, unprecedented demand for housing and health services, and a federal budget left with \$1 trillion of LNP general government debt. When we call on Canberra to back Queenslanders we will get a fair hearing that has been absent for nine years. The Albanese federal Labor government can also look to Queensland for what can be achieved in difficult times—nation-leading job creation, lower debt and deficits, higher economic growth and a skilled, diversified and resilient economy. The hard work of Queenslanders over the last 2½ years provides a clear path forward for all of Australia. We look forward to better times under a federal Albanese government.

### Federal Labor Government, Workers

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.48 am): I would like to join the Premier and others in congratulating our new Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, and the great federal Labor team. I look forward to working with the new Labor government to deliver for Queenslanders. I am pleased to hear work has begun on the employment summit, which will include addressing casualisation and insecure work.

Every single worker deserves governments at all levels that support and protect them, especially from high cost-of-living increases. I am pleased to say that Queenslanders have had this at a state level since 2015. I am proud of the nation-leading industrial relations reforms we have delivered. We have taken decisive action for Queensland workers where the Morrison federal government failed to do so. In 2017 we legislated Australia's first paid family and domestic violence leave. Finally action will be taken at a federal level to make this important entitlement a national employment standard.

When it comes to tackling worker exploitation we have led the nation on a number of fronts. In 2018 we established Australia's first labour hire licensing scheme. Our scheme has gone from strength to strength. Currently, nearly 3,700 labour hire providers are licensed to operate in Queensland. Labour hire and worker exploitation are national problems, and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his government understand this. I look forward to working with them to establish harmonised laws that reflect the high standards of Queensland's strong scheme. When it comes to worker exploitation, the scourge of wage theft is at the top of the list. That is why we acted and became the first state in Australia with operational wage theft laws. Finally action will be taken to tackle criminalising wage theft from a national perspective—a 2019 election commitment that was never delivered by the Morrison government.

The Palaszczuk government also has a strong record on advocating for fair wages and conditions for low-paid workers in the federal IR system. That is why we are supporting a minimum wage increase that keeps up with the cost of living and increases to wages in the aged-care sector. I am pleased to say that we now have a federal Labor government that will support low-paid workers who have experienced stagnating wages for too long. The Palaszczuk government has, and always will, stand up for Queensland workers. I look forward to working with the federal Labor Albanese government, which will finally do the same and help the rest of Australia benefit from our nation-leading work. Australian workers deserve no less.

### Federal Labor Government; Influenza

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.51 am): I would like to add my voice to the congratulations to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and the entire Labor team on their election.

**Government members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs D'ATH:** It sounds wonderful, I agree. I look forward to working with the new federal government in relation to health reform.

Queensland has seen very little flu circulating in the community over the last two years. It is for this reason we have been warning of a severe flu season this year, and it is already upon us. Influenza is spreading across Queensland and our numbers have doubled in the past week. This year's flu case numbers have already surpassed those of the entire 2020-21 flu season. In the next fortnight we could see upwards of 500 flu hospitalisations with the peak yet to come.

This year influenza A is the dominant strain. Influenza A affects younger cohorts than influenza B, results in more severe disease than influenza B and is associated with higher hospital admission rates than influenza B. Queensland has not had an influenza outbreak since 2017, and even then one-third of the infections were influenza B. This year 98 per cent of the cases reported are influenza A. That is why we have announced that from today all Queenslanders will have free access to a flu vaccination until the end of June. Queenslanders who want to protect themselves from the flu can get vaccinated at GPs and accredited pharmacies.

Influenza A can be deadly, so we need to get as many people vaccinated as quickly as possible. We already know how busy our GPs are, and since our announcement yesterday some practices have already seen an increase in the number of patients who want to access a free flu shot. This shows that the cost of the vaccine has been a factor in some people's decision to get vaccinated. We know that making it free will encourage a greater uptake of the flu vaccine this season. This will help to ease pressure on GPs and our busy public health workers by reducing incidence of respiratory illness in the community. Importantly, it will also assist businesses and the economy because with more workers vaccinated we will hopefully see a reduction in workforce shortages that would otherwise have occurred due to the flu. The Palaszczuk government is investing \$40 million to provide free flu vaccines this year. We are leading the nation with this initiative. Come forward to get your free flu shot. Protect yourselves and your loved ones.

### Federal Labor Government, Renewable Energy

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (9.54 am): The votes are in. Anthony Albanese has been sworn in; a better future has arrived. With Labor in the Lodge hope is renewed, and that hope is renewables. Finally Queensland has a federal government in Canberra that will work cooperatively with us to drive renewable energy—not veto it. There is no stronger partner in renewables than Queensland. This government has delivered 50 large-scale projects generating more than 3,000 megawatts of clean energy, meeting more than 20 per cent of our energy needs. We have the highest level of rooftop solar uptake in the world, a Zero Emissions Vehicle Strategy, the Electric Super Highway, hydrogen partnerships with Japan, South Korea and now Europe, and a tri-state hydrogen superhighway agreement.

We also recognise that you cannot be serious about renewables if you are not serious about energy storage, which is why this government is delivering nation-building, game-changing pumped hydro schemes at Kidston in the north of Queensland and Borumba south of Gympie—close to 3,000 jobs and 1.25 gigawatts of reliable, dispatchable power to secure our future energy system. We are delivering a big battery blitz across the state, with 400 megawatts in the pipeline from Townsville to Toowoomba. That is just what Queensland has achieved going it alone in the absence of federal leadership.

Now that the fossil fuel dinosaurs of the LNP are extinct, the renewable energy doors are wide open. We will deliver more energy projects, putting further downward pressure on power prices, because the Albanese government will invest \$20 billion to modernise Australia's transmission system. We will accelerate our clean transport future and help more Queenslanders and Australians behind the wheel of electric vehicles because Labor will introduce an electric car discount and close the gap in charging infrastructure. We will see hydrogen-powered trucks traverse our major Australian freight routes because Labor will work with the states on 16 refuelling stations. We will make batteries here with all of the critical minerals in the north-west of Queensland because Labor will onshore battery manufacturing so that Australia is a renewable energy powerhouse, not just a raw materials supermarket. Together, the Palaszczuk and Albanese governments will shore up the grid with reliable, clean energy that is Australian made from top to bottom, and that will power a better future for all Australians.

### Federal Labor Government, Women

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.57 am): Last year women across the nation marched to demand justice and safety. The groundswell they created would not be silenced, and it is these very women who have now delivered the Morrison government the reckoning they failed to act on last year. These women have used their votes to elect members of parliament who are committed to tackling gender inequality and fighting for women's safety. They have elected a government—an Albanese Labor government—that will deliver outcomes for women and girls.

The Albanese government will make it easier for families, in particular working mums, to re-enter the workforce with affordable child care. We know that during COVID-19 more women lost their jobs than men and they overwhelmingly shouldered the majority of additional caring responsibilities. A federal Labor government will: lift the maximum childcare subsidy rate to 90 per cent; increase childcare subsidy rates for families earning less than \$530,000; and extend the increased subsidy to outside school hours care. This will make it easier for women to re-enter the workforce as we focus on our post-COVID economic recovery.

Failures in aged care, whether it is terrible food, substandard care or low paid, insecure work, also overwhelmingly impact women. There are almost twice as many women using aged-care services than men and over 80 per cent of the aged-care workforce is women. The Albanese government will make a submission to the Fair Work Commission supporting a case for improved pay for aged-care workers. Aged-care reform will not just improve the quality and safety of care received by older Australians; it will create a better economic future for hundreds of thousands of women workers as well.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to ending violence against women and children. However, ending violence needs to start with prevention. I look forward to working with federal Labor, which have committed a \$77 million investment for appropriate consent and respectful relationships education. Nationally, we are in a housing crisis and only under a federal Labor government will we build 30,000 new social and affordable houses, which will provide important housing for domestic and family violence victims. Only an Albanese government will deliver for women and girls in Queensland.

### Federal Labor Government, Environment

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (9.59 am): I too would like to congratulate the Albanese Labor team. I look forward to working with a federal government that actually works with Queensland to drive down emissions, deliver action on climate change and protect our environment.

I am pleased to update the House with news that Queensland has been recognised as Australia's leading carbon-farming state in a first ever national assessment and report led by the Carbon Market Institute. The recently released carbon-farming scorecard highlighted the Palaszczuk government's groundbreaking Land Restoration Fund, strong policy initiatives and ongoing partnerships with key stakeholders. The Carbon Market Institute ranked each state, with Queensland earning the top score of 80 per cent. This excellent result reflects our leading role in delivering carbon projects that generate environmental and economic co-benefits, with the LRF the first scheme in Australia to value and pay for the strong co-benefits associated with carbon-farming projects.

This means Queensland landholders are not just paid for the carbon they store; they will also benefit from longer term outcomes like healthier waterways, increased habitat for threatened species and more resilient landscapes. One example is producers like Dan and Emma-Jane Burnham from Central Queensland, who work with environmental project developers GreenCollar. They said they had seen significant, positive changes to the ecosystems on their property, Stonehaven, since getting involved in carbon farming. Emma-Jane said—

It is something we are really proud of and hope to pass on to the next generation.

GreenCollar's chief operating officer, Nerida Bradley, agreed and said—

The projects we are developing under the LRF scheme are some of the first to tangibly demonstrate the value of biodiversity improvements alongside carbon abatement and sequestration and are setting the standard for carbon projects across the country.

Following on from our strong results, other states across Australia are now replicating the LRF's successful model of paying farmers, First Nations communities and other land managers to run carbon projects that generate co-benefits. The Palaszczuk government will continue to lead the country by supporting carbon farming initiatives to tackle climate change and empower First Nations and regional communities.

### Federal Labor Government, Roads and Transport

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.01 am): The people have spoken. They have voted for change.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my right! I will wait for silence.

**Mr BAILEY:** The people have spoken. They have voted for change. They have voted for what will be a majority Albanese Labor government—a federal government that will deliver integrity via a federal independent commission against corruption this year.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr BAILEY:** They will deliver a federal independent commission against corruption—a positive change. An Albanese Labor government will also finally deliver Queensland our fair share on transport and road infrastructure funding. This will come in the form of existing jointly funded projects and new commitments that will now be looked at by this Palaszczuk state Labor government.

These new commitments include: almost \$1 billion towards Bruce Highway upgrades on Brisbane's north side, including upgrades to eight lanes between Uhlmann Road and Dohles Rocks Road, which I know is well received by the members for Bancroft and Kurwongbah and a number of other members up there; the removal of the Coopers Plains level crossing; upgrades to the Kuranda Range Road in Far North Queensland; a major upgrade to the Cairns Marine Precinct, as outlined by the Deputy Premier earlier; major upgrades to the Bruce Highway from Rockhampton to Gladstone; the creation of six lanes on Loganlea Road from the Logan Motorway to the M1; and a \$500 million national electric vehicle strategy which Queenslanders will benefit from, on top of our own Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy here in Queensland.

This is the authentic and contemporary leadership the industry has been crying out for and did not get under the Morrison-Joyce government. I note the former deputy prime minister said this morning that he had done such a wonderful job. Well, good luck to him with that line. Many of these commitments will require a state contribution, and in some cases we have already agreed to funding because we see the value in these key projects for Queensland. Importantly, we will work collaboratively with the Albanese Labor government on these projects.

One of the big takeaways from the election campaign is that the Albanese Labor government—as it did over the last three years—wants to work with states like Queensland, not against us. We especially saw the record during the pandemic, which was supported by those opposite, of the undermining of health advice. We now have a Prime Minister who wants to bring people together, not create division. We have already seen how Queensland will be getting its fair share under Anthony Albanese as Prime Minister and with a federal Labor government. Through our continued collaboration, we can now achieve better results for the whole of our state.

### **Federal Labor Government; State Disaster Coordination Centre; Emergency Services**

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.05 am): With the election result on the weekend, Australians now have a Prime Minister who will not say he does not hold a hose, a Prime Minister who will stand up and take responsibility on working with communities on resilience and disaster recovery, and a Prime Minister who will actually say that it is his job to help.

The Palaszczuk government has always been a government for all Queenslanders—a government for Queenslanders in the cities and a government for Queenslanders in the regions. We have seen that reality on display during what has been a very challenging period in this state's history—during COVID, then a devastating wet season, with floods and severe storms. For our frontline personnel, dealing with COVID and the wild weather truly has been a marathon. An integral part of the response to the pandemic—and any emergency for that matter—is Queensland's State Disaster Coordination Centre, or the SDCC as many people call it. The SDCC moved to stand up at 6 am on 2 February 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic—well over two years ago. The SDCC was continuously activated for a record 817 days—that is two years and three months continuously.

The people at the State Disaster Coordination Centre undertook a formidable workload. For example, they set up 93 hotels as part of the Queensland government hotel quarantine program and accommodated more than 160,000 people. The State Disaster Coordination Centre not only dealt with COVID over this extraordinary period in Queensland's history; in addition, the SDCC also responded to 12 major events, including cyclones and floods. Just this month, we had more flooding, with the people of Laidley and the Lockyer Valley particularly affected.

It was also National Volunteer Week last week. I want to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to all of our emergency services volunteers. During the severe weather season, the State Emergency Service volunteers received almost 20,000 requests for assistance and performed over

110,000 operational hours. During this month's flooding event, the State Emergency Service volunteers received almost 2,000 requests for assistance, the Rural Fire Service volunteers conducted washout operations in various locations as the flood waters receded, Fire and Rescue Service crews conducted nearly 20,000 damage assessments, and swiftwater rescue crews responded to more than 1,200 incidents.

After 800-plus days of continuous operation, the State Disaster Coordination Centre finally stood down on 29 April this year. I want to thank all of those involved at the State Disaster Coordination Centre, including the State Disaster Coordinator and Deputy Commissioner, Steve Gollschewski, who led this dedicated team throughout these troubled times. The workers, the volunteers and the emergency services personnel who support this State Disaster Coordination Centre are true Queenslanders standing up for Queenslanders and helping them in their time of need.

### **Federal Labor Government, Resources Industries**

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.09 am): First of all, let me join the House in congratulating our new Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, and his new federal government. As resources minister, I am excited to have the opportunity to work with a federal government that is just as focused on Queensland jobs as the Palaszczuk government. One of those major job-creating sectors in the coming decades will be new economy minerals. In the lead-up to the election on the weekend, our now former prime minister named Western Australia as his partner of choice for new economy minerals. Well, how did that work for him on the weekend! I know our new Prime Minister will have a firm focus on maximising the opportunities that Queensland's abundance of new economy minerals will bring.

Queensland's new economy minerals sector is absolutely surging, and the Palaszczuk government is backing it all the way. The latest data shows mineral exploration expenditure totalled nearly \$270 million in 2021, up more than 36 per cent on the previous year. Much of that exploration is for new economy minerals. In Queensland, exploration is up by more than half for copper over the year, and the hunt is well and truly on for nickel and cobalt. These are minerals vital to the renewable energy revolution necessary for both energy generation and storage.

The Palaszczuk government is fuelling the search by providing free, high-quality and accessible geological data to explorers, and we are supporting them to find new economy mineral deposits as well. Last month we published the results of the first state government commissioned airborne gravity geophysical survey, covering more than 4,700 square kilometres of land north of Cloncurry.

The first of the 13 recipients of our latest round of exploration grants has hit the ground running. Hammer Metals has completed drilling at its Mount Philip haematite project in North-West Queensland. The other recipients will be following suit over the coming field season.

Vanadium is the new economy mineral with significant potential in large-scale energy storage batteries and is a component in the steel-making process.

I was delighted to grant a mining lease to Multicom Resources late last year for Queensland's first ever vanadium project. Multicom is now working towards construction at its Saint Elmo vanadium mine site near Julia Creek where they are also targeting high-purity alumina. The Palaszczuk government does not only want to mine vanadium; we want to create long-term, well-paid jobs for Queenslanders through vanadium processing, as well as manufacturing.

In Townsville, we are working with proponents to establish a suitable site for a demonstration-scale common-user vanadium processing facility to kickstart the industry in the north. This month, the Queensland Coordinator-General made the \$242 million Richmond-Julia Creek vanadium project a coordinated project.

Through investments like our \$23 million new economy minerals initiative, this government is backing the resources industry jobs and business opportunities of the future.

### **Multiculturalism, Small Business**

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.12 am): Queensland is one of the most culturally diverse places in the world. Queenslanders from all backgrounds have helped shape our state and contribute to our future. Cultural diversity is one of our greatest strengths as a state and as a country. It supports our diverse economy, particularly through the countless small businesses run by Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

As everyone in this chamber knows, small businesses are the backbone of Queensland's economy, and indeed nationwide, with 97 per cent of Queensland's businesses being small business. Migrant small business owners make a significant contribution, with national data showing one in three Australian small businesses are owned by migrants. These small business owners have also helped to revitalise Queensland's regional communities and connect us on a global scale. Small business continues to be a key focus for our government as we seek to help build inclusive, connected and thriving communities for all.

As the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, one of my priorities has been to work with my colleague, Minister Di Farmer, and support the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training's Mentoring for Growth program which is celebrating its 20th year of operation in 2022. We are proud to support this program, which gives small business owners free access to business experts to discuss a range of business issues tailored specifically to their needs.

With the help of our incredible network of community service providers and leaders in the multicultural community, we have assisted the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training to connect with culturally diverse communities. They are recruiting, training, and developing mentors to join their team of more than 300 small business experts from across the state.

We know people from migrant or refugee backgrounds can face additional barriers to starting and operating small businesses. We know that better access to information, networking and local market knowledge can be their keys to success. Our vision is for migrant or refugee small business owners in Queensland to step out onto a level playing field alongside the broader small business sector. We want to ensure they have every opportunity to succeed.

Through our work, we have been able to better understand the barriers and the opportunities migrant small business owners face. We also want to learn how the Mentoring for Growth program can continue to benefit them even more, both as a mentor and mentees.

I had the pleasure last week of opening the Multicultural Small Business Expo in Brisbane for my colleague, Minister Farmer. I heard incredible stories from migrants who, through hard work and perseverance, have established successful businesses in Queensland, and I met with proud mentors who are participating in the Mentoring for Growth program. This included Pushpa who has been a mentor for fourteen years. They are now proudly making valuable contributions to the community and our economy by providing employment opportunities, sharing their rich heritage and supporting other small business owners from around the world.

As just one initiative supporting small businesses in Queensland, I have no doubt the Mentoring for Growth program will continue to have a positive impact on many small businesses, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I look forward to continuing to work alongside my colleague, Minister Farmer, to make sure that they can reach their potential.

## **SPEAKER'S STATEMENT**

### **Visitors to Public Gallery**

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to welcome to the public gallery today the delegation from the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils, led by FNQROC Chair, Michael Kerr, Mayor of Douglas Shire. The FNQROC delegation includes the following mayors sitting in the public gallery today: Deputy Chair Angela Toppin, Mayor of Mareeba; Peter Scott, Mayor of Cook Shire; Barry Hughes, Mayor of Etheridge Shire; Jason Woibo, Mayor of Hope Vale Shire; Rod Marti, my former tennis coach, Mayor of the Tablelands; Terry James, Deputy Mayor of Cairns Regional Council; and my very good friend Ross Andrews, Mayor of Yarrabah. The delegation is ably supported by Darlene Irvine, FNQROC Executive Officer. I welcome the FNQROC delegation and the leaders from Far North Queensland to the Parliament of Queensland. Please make them feel welcome.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

## **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.17 am.

### **Ambulance Ramping, Data**

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.17 am): My question is to the Minister for Health. What is the rate of ambulance ramping in Queensland in 2022?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I assume he is talking patient off-stretcher time which is the proper terminology to be using. The most recent quarterly data will be released very shortly for 2022.

### **Ambulance Service, Response Times**

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** My question is to the Minister for Health. On average, how long does a Queenslanders wait for an ambulance in 2022?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. As I just said, the performance data will be released very shortly.

### **Beef Industry**

**Mr O'ROURKE:** My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on the government's commitment to growing Queensland's beef cattle industry?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. He is a very strong community champion for Rockhampton and a very strong representative for the beef industry in this state. We are happy to talk about all of these industries because we are a government for all of Queensland.

Just over 12 months ago, I stood with, from memory, the Treasurer and the Minister for Agriculture out in Longreach, where we committed to fixing up the saleyards with Garry Edwards and Gavin Tickle from the AAM Investment Group.

At that point the iconic local landmark had not been used for more than seven years. Whilst I was in Longreach I announced \$3.2 million to start construction on stage 2 of the Western Queensland Livestock Exchange. Despite more than 300 millimetres of rain falling in Longreach over the last six months, I am pleased to confirm that construction is complete at the mighty Longreach saleyards. Once again we on this side are delivering for the bush.

**Mr Dick:** That is right, no better friend.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. Through this project we built a new selling ring complex, a new central office, new infrastructure to weigh cattle, draft facilities, ramps and a new saleyard. It is a Labor government that has restored these saleyards back to their former glory. I can also confirm that the first sales in the new yard will take place on 1 June. Isn't this great news, Mr Speaker? It is fantastic news for the west. I know the member for Gregory is smiling. There we are, thank you. You are welcome.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members to my right gesticulating.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I can also confirm to the House that our beef exports are up 10.6 per cent. When you grow the economy, you grow the jobs, you deliver the infrastructure and it has flow-on impacts. Unfortunately, it seems that our federal Nats and our federal Libs are once again at odds with one another, with Barnaby Joyce unleashing on the Liberals. The teals have come in and demolished the Liberals.

*(Time expired)*

### **Emergency Departments, Wait Times**

**Ms BATES:** My question is to the health minister. How many Queenslanders are currently not seen on time in Queensland emergency departments?

**Mrs D'ATH:** As the member knows, the performance data for 2022 will be released shortly. We have been saying this for a number of weeks now. We are releasing it this month. Last year it was released in June, but this year we will be releasing it in May. It will have the quarterly data to answer those questions for the member.

### **Gender Equality**

**Ms BUSH:** My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics. Will the Premier update the House on what the Palaszczuk government is doing to address gender equality, and is the Premier aware of any alternative views?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Cooper for that very important question. I am very proud of the women I have on our team. Our caucus is always advocating for more gender equality. It makes our party richer and stronger to have that balance. That balance is not just being felt in our

government but also being felt right across other areas of business and the community. In fact, I look forward to seeing the make-up of the Albanese ministry, where we will obviously see more women taking more prominent roles in the government.

In March we released the new Queensland Women's Strategy setting out our plan of commitment over the next five years to support women and girls with a particular focus on economic security and safety. Last parliament we released our response to the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, supporting in principle all 89 recommendations including \$363 million in funding. That is a very strong commitment of our government in relation to these very important issues affecting women. That is on top of the \$600 million we have committed since 2015 to bring an end to domestic, family and sexual violence.

We have appointed Dr Linda Colley as Special Commissioner, Equity and Diversity. She is doing a great job. I had a meeting with her recently. I am very proud of that appointment. We set targets and we delivered. We were the first government in Australia to achieve women making up 50 per cent of cabinet. We are just under that, but we have a record 54 per cent women on government boards. We also appointed not just the first female Chief Justice but the second as well. We also have the first female Police Commissioner and, of course, the first director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

What is absolutely fundamentally clear is that at the recent federal election the federal LNP failed to listen to the voices of women across the nation. There is no clearer evidence than the massive swings that were seen across the state federally.

**Mr Lister** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Southern Downs, you are warned the under the standing orders. Welcome back.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Clearly, the former prime minister failed to listen to the voices of reason, the voices of women across the nation. It is a lesson for those opposite as well to listen to what women have to say and—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr Butcher** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Gladstone, you are warned under the standing orders.

### **Elective Surgery, Waiting List**

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the health minister. How many Queenslanders are currently waiting for elective surgery?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. Clearly it is going to be a pretty repetitious question time from those opposite. The most recent data will be released shortly. As far as the current data is concerned, that is publicly available; it is on the public website. I am sure they know where to find it.

### **Far North Queensland, Job Creation**

**Mr HEALY:** My question is to the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and the Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure. Can the Deputy Premier outline to the House what the Palaszczuk government is doing to create more jobs in more industries in Cairns and Far North Queensland, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for Cairns for his question. I can report for the member for Cairns that the second day without Scott Morrison as our prime minister feels just as good as the first day did. Having a Prime Minister determined to work with us to deliver a better future for Queensland means our state's best days indeed are ahead of us. It is good to finally have a government that will work with us instead of fighting with us, a government that believes that we should make things here in Queensland, a government that believes workers deserve to have wages rise as their cost of living rises and a government that will help us make sure that Queensland gets our fair share of the clean energy jobs of the future starting in Cairns. I acknowledge the FNQROC delegates here with us today.

While the LNP flatly refused to support our vision for the Cairns Marine Precinct, federal and state Labor working together in partnership are contributing \$150 million each, a \$300 million investment into future jobs in manufacturing in Cairns and the Far North. The common user facilities there will support the local industry to create jobs: a new ship lift for vessels up to 120 metres and new

painting and blasting facilities, really bolstering the work that Cairns already does as a hub for the repair, maintenance and shipbuilding industries of the state. It will allow us to pursue more opportunities with the Royal Australian Navy and the Australian Border Force as well as private industry.

I know that between now and the Olympics, the Palaszczuk government's superyacht champion will be working with the industry to make sure that when the world's superyachts are looking at where they should have their maintenance work done they will look to the Great Barrier Reef, where they can be on the reef at the same time. I cannot think of a better example of what can be achieved when we work together for a better future than the Cairns Marine Precinct. It is great to see a massive investment in jobs in the Far North, opposed by those opposite and being delivered by us.

### **Specialists, Waiting List**

**Mr MANDER:** My question is to the Minister for Health. How many Queenslanders are currently on the waiting list to see a specialist?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. The performance data will be coming out shortly. I find it extraordinary that opposition members would be asking about waiting lists, because they spent more money advertising about their waiting list than on getting people on the waiting list seen. I will say that the surgical waiting list was very short under their government because you could not get to see a specialist through outpatients to get onto a surgical list in the first place, so there was a waiting list for the waiting list.

We know that, thanks to the investment by the Palaszczuk Labor government, we have significantly reduced the number of those on the long waitlist well beyond the recommended time frames, despite what we have gone through in this state over the last couple of years. Our staff did extraordinary work to fast-track the surgery that we had to delay as a result of a National Cabinet decision back in 2020. Our hospitals did an incredible job in playing catch-up on that planned care. We have done very well to provide additional services, whether it is breast screening or other allied health services that we provide in our hospital system, to keep people healthier. This is despite what we went through with COVID. We are leading the country in many of those responses.

This government has invested in 3,105 more doctors; 10,662 more nurses and midwives; 5,340 more health professionals; and 1,038 more ambulance officers. We have boosted frontline health services, with 9,535 more health workers over this term of government alone—a record \$22.2 billion investment. Since 2015 we have delivered more than 1,300 more hospital beds; an additional 992 will be delivered by 2026. That is the record of the Palaszczuk government. That record will only improve now that we have an Albanese federal Labor government because finally we will have a federal Labor government that understands health.

### **Net Zero Emissions**

**Mr TANTARI:** My question is of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on the Palaszczuk Labor government's commitment to growing jobs in new industries as a part of its plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, and is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for his question. As the member for Hervey Bay knows, Queensland is perfectly positioned to become home to more heavy industry, more traditional and advanced manufacturing and more skilled jobs through our push to net zero—precisely because of our push to net zero and not in spite of it. As the member for Hervey Bay knows, in his electorate we are working on the latest of five community batteries spread across the state. I know that he is a great champion for that in his local community. It will ensure Queenslanders can make the most of solar power after the sun goes down. I welcome the mayors from Far North Queensland who are in the gallery. I know that they understand what is happening with our energy system in Queensland and they know of the jobs that can come from renewable energy.

Of course, that comes as news to Keith Pitt, in the member for Hervey Bay's own area, because he does not think batteries can store solar power. How could we forget that? It is no wonder his primary vote went backwards. Good on Jason Scanes, the Labor candidate for Hinkler—what a great job he did. When it comes to green hydrogen, renewable energy and electric vehicles, we have a clear path to push Queensland forward and to the fore of these new industries.

Then we have the approach of the Queensland LNP. No-one will ever forget Matt Canavan saying that net zero is dead. Once again, the climate change deniers, the science sceptics and the anti-vaxxers in the Queensland LNP helped wreck the federal coalition and destroy the federal LNP

and the federal Liberal Party on the way. People such as Matt Canavan and Keith Pitt have destroyed the party opposite. Julian Simmons, Trevor Evans, Dave Sharma, Trent Zimmerman, Katie Allen and Jason Falinski are all looking for a new job. Up and down the coast, there have been swings against Angie Bell, Karen Andrews and Andrew Wallace.

**Mr Minnikin** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection from the member for Chatsworth, because we know who will be next: the teal front bench—the members for Chatsworth, Clayfield and Moggill. They are next.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order, members.

**Mr DICK:** Thanks to the self-indulgence and ill-discipline of the extreme LNP—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Kawana is warned under the standing orders.

**Mr DICK:**—they rolled the federal treasurer out of parliament. They ensured that Josh Frydenberg lost his seat—and who did Australia get in return? Colin Boyce. When they pick up the pieces, who will they look to for leadership? The kind, smiling face of Peter Dutton, whose description of what happened to Brittany Higgins was ‘he said, she said’ and whose approach to foreign affairs is to threaten war. Good luck to the next federal LNP candidate for Ryan.

The Leader of the Opposition owns all of this because this is his team, and he will be held accountable for all of those people—Dutton, Pitt, Canavan and Boyce—and everything that they stand for. It is no wonder he does not support net zero.

*(Time expired)*

### Health System, Data Reporting

**Mr MICKELBERG:** Mr Speaker—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Sorry, member for Buderim, I could not hear you over the noise from members to my left.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Clayfield is warned under the standing orders.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** My question is to the Minister for Health. The minister knows the numbers behind the Queensland health crisis. Why do Queenslanders not deserve to see them?

**Mrs D'ATH:** As I said, our performance data will be released this month, as we have committed to do. I want to indicate to the chamber what the current published performance data shows. Despite the incredible pressure that our health system has been under—2,727 staff furloughed at one point, around 520 beds used for long-term aged care and disability, an increase in the quarter of nine per cent in emergency department demand and a 45.8 per cent increase in ambulance demand over the period 2014 to 2020—in the December quarter last year there were 640,000 presentations to an emergency department, an increase of nine per cent on the December quarter 2020. Despite treating more than 50,000 additional patients, the median wait time remained unchanged at 14 minutes. We also improved our patient off-stretcher time compared to the last quarter.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left, I have made it clear in previous rulings that if a minister is being responsive to the question asked I expect to hear the answer. You will cease your interjections.

**Mrs D'ATH:** In the December quarter, 35,171 Queenslanders received elective surgery. Ninety per cent of Queenslanders received their surgery within 258 days, down from 310 days the year before. The median wait time for elective surgery was 37 days, down from 40 days the year before. This is despite an 11.4 per cent increase in demand.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Buderim is warned under the standing orders.

**Mrs D'ATH:** As at 1 January 2022 there were 3,193 patients waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery, still below the peak of 5,166 in May 2020. We have invested more than \$600 million to reduce long waits for specialist outpatients. Despite significant population growth,

an almost 10 per cent annual increase in demand and the impacts of COVID on our health system, there are fewer Queenslanders waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment than when we came to office. Despite all of those pressures and going through COVID, it is still less than when we came to government, having to mop up the mess left behind by the Newman government.

I said before that those opposite spent money on advertising. They allocated \$77 million for the wait-time guarantee but did not allocate any money to actual patient care—just the advertising. It is shameful that those on the other side would come in here and talk about our record without acknowledging the mess they left behind.

### Industrial Relations

**Mr SMITH:** My question is to the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. With the election of the Albanese government, can the minister please outline the opportunities ahead in the industrial relations space?

**Ms GRACE:** I thank the member for Bundaberg for the question. He is a very proud ex-teacher—and I acknowledge the students in the gallery—who understands that workers have suffered at a national level over the last few years under the Morrison government. I also acknowledge the Far North Queensland ROC. Together we have been working very closely in delivering infrastructure for education with some of the best facilities that I have seen in your areas for a long time. I welcome them and thank them as well. We work cooperatively together to deliver upgrades, halls and all of those things that are happening throughout Queensland.

More generally, I am actually amused today because listening to those opposite one would think that there has been no change of government federally. It is extraordinary that they come in here delusional, out of touch and clearly demonstrating they have nothing to worry about over there. Everything is fine. It just demonstrates how out of touch you all are.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Through the chair.

**Ms GRACE:** How out of touch they all are. Obviously the National Party over there is contemplating its future. Even though they got Colin Boyce up, it was through a lot of sacrifice, let me tell you. It should have been Deb, but they got that really dynamic Colin Boyce federally, the trailblazer who is going to do so much work. It is interesting. They could have had another woman in the member for Nanango—we are friends, Deb; I will say it here in the parliament—who would have made a lot better member, let me tell you, Speaker.

We are going to do a lot better, in answer to the member's question, when it comes to industrial relations. There are so many things that have been ignored by the previous government. We have seen the triple whammy for workers right across Australia: we have seen cost-of-living increases, we have seen increases to mortgage rates, we have seen stagnating wages, we have seen casualisation, we have seen the boom in the economy. During the 10 years of the Morrison, or should I say the former Morrison government—good to say—all those things were totally ignored. It is now an opportunity for us to work cooperatively with a federal Labor government to address the issues that we have addressed in this state and those opposite voted against.

### Health System, Data Reporting

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question is to the Premier. What is stopping the government from releasing hospital and health data for 2022?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am advised that it is coming out in May, as the minister has said. I am further advised that the same quarter last year was released in June. It is actually coming out earlier. There we go.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will direct his comments through the chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am also advised that New South Wales has not released its quarterly data either. Since the member for Nanango asked me that question, I have to reflect on what the member for McConnel said. This last election we have seen Colin Boyce elected to federal parliament when it could have been the member for Nanango, but they do not back women—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, member for Everton, you are both warned under the standing orders. You had a good go this morning.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We are putting praise on the member for Nanango. It is very rare, but we are actually praising the member for Nanango and she is rejecting that praise. We have delivered a new hospital in the seat of Nanango, a new hospital in Roma—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, the question related to hospital data. I will ask you to come back to the question. It was a very specific question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As I said, it is going to be released earlier than it was last year.

### **Federal Labor Government, Health System**

**Mr KELLY:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Can the minister comment on the benefits for Queensland's health system in having a federal Albanese government?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for Greenslopes for his question. I also want to acknowledge his contribution to the health workforce as a registered nurse and the efforts he has gone to in vaccinating people against COVID throughout the pandemic. I thank him and all nurses for their tremendous efforts.

Last time we stood in this chamber we had the Morrison federal government in power. It had a disastrous record on health. It refused to back in Queensland on our COVID response, siding with Clive Palmer instead of Queenslanders. We have spent the last few weeks listening to Scott Morrison run around this country claiming success from COVID when we all know—and the public saw through him—that his government did everything to undermine Queensland's response to COVID to keep people safe. They told us that we were giving them a shakedown when we asked for our fair share of funding for the health system. We know they criticised our border controls and the restrictions that we put in place. Josh Frydenberg oversaw a \$20 million cut to Queensland hospitals in their most recent budget because they believed COVID was going to be over in September this year and ignored every health minister who said that funding should be extended to at least the end of June 2023.

We have seen successive coalition health ministers freeze Medicare rebates, eroding the ability of GPs to remain accessible and affordable in the communities. Today that changes. We have an Albanese Labor government, a government investing in aged care, a government investing in disability and a government investing in Medicare; a government that will unite Australians rather than seeking to divide them. We have been fighting the exponentially rising tide of hospital demand without federal support. We have been able to achieve so much in this state through the Palaszczuk government under the leadership of our Premier. We have expanded our bed base by another 1,300. We have recruited a record number of staff. We have committed to our nation-leading satellite hospital program as well as constructing new hospitals and a pipeline of further investment.

With an Albanese government we have a chance to make even more progress. It is a government that understands health because that is what Labor does. It is the same government that created Medicare. It is the government that created the National Disability Insurance Scheme and knew what it was supposed to do in the first place. Those who followed ruined it. I look forward to working with the new Albanese government.

### **Townsville, Road Infrastructure**

**Mr DAMETTO:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Due to exponential residential growth in the northern beaches of Townsville, the main access to Townsville city, Woolcock Street, is now at full capacity. Will the minister respond to calls for the state government to fast track upgrades to Woolcock Street that include but are not limited to the Bohle River bridge and the North Shaw Boulevard and Shaw Road intersections?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the honourable member for the question. It is a very important issue up there. The Palaszczuk government is investing \$1.16 million in planning funding for the north Townsville road, North Shore Boulevard to Ingham Road area, which includes Woolcock Street, to look at what can be done to make the network safer and to improve travel times for the local community. The project looks at a range of traffic issues in the area, including how best to address the congestion there, given the constraints that I know the member is well aware of: for example, the proximity to the river, the two Bohle River bridges and the two rail crossings as well as some proposed developments in the area. I am pleased to advise the member that the planning project will commence very soon—within the next couple of months. I am happy to offer the member a full briefing and to take any feedback he might have on the project, and also once the project has been awarded and is underway.

I can inform the chamber that when it comes to Townsville and the north, the Palaszczuk government certainly has the runs on the board in terms of investing in infrastructure: \$1.18 billion in road and transport projects are being delivered by this government throughout the northern region, which takes in Townsville, Burdekin and the Hinchinbrook regions. Those projects include the \$514 million Haughton River Floodplain Upgrade project between Ayr and Townsville; the \$230 million Townsville Ring Road stage 5, which I know the member for Thuringowa has been a huge advocate for, with stage 4 completed in 2016; a \$99 million commitment to the Townsville Northern Access Intersections Upgrade; and \$96 million for the Burdekin River bridge. We are also investing heavily in the Mount Isa rail line, which is an economic artery for North Queensland and the north-west. That line will benefit from capital upgrades worth \$344 million over the next five years. We are investing in the infrastructure that is wealth generating for North Queensland and North-West Queensland in particular. We will continue to do that.

That is not to mention, of course, keeping our Townsville port in public hands and investing in it. At the moment we are seeing one of the biggest investments in the Port of Townsville in its history. It is a phenomenal project that will create a wider channel, allowing much larger ships to come directly to Townsville. Ships will not have to go to Brisbane meaning products are put onto trucks, making it more expensive. This will mean cheaper imported products coming into North Queensland. We will have a bigger port that will be set up for decades to come because this government kept it in public hands and we are investing in it. We believe in the north, we invest in the north and we have great members in the north.

### Federal Labor Government, Climate Change

**Mr MELLISH:** My question is of the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs. Can the minister update the House on what the federal election means for climate action in Queensland?

**Ms SCANLON:** I thank the member for Aspley for the question. I first became involved in politics in 2007 because of climate change, like many young people did, so it is great to see elected a federal Albanese Labor government that has a credible and real climate action plan. It is a government that will actually invest in renewable energy, not veto wind farms; it is a government that will incentivise electric vehicles, not say that they will destroy the weekend; and it is a government that will not embarrass us on a global stage.

In the past 48 hours we have had peak organisations such as the National Farmers' Federation, the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Industry Group come out and say that climate is one of the No. 1 opportunities for this incoming federal Labor government. However, in the very same 48 hours we have heard a number of comments from the Liberal National Party here in Queensland. We have also heard the leader of the National Party, Barnaby Joyce, say, 'I know that we have a target, but I'm going to let the Nationals have their say in their party room in the next fortnight,' undoing all of the supposed work that they had done. I will censor the next comment from Keith Pitt, who said—

We were all told we needed to suck it up on net zero but as expected it made no—  
expletive—

difference and it hurt us elsewhere.

We heard cosplay miner Matt Canavan say that surrendering to the 'radical environmentalism' had promoted the coalition to lose and, this morning, he backed up it again, calling net zero a 'failed agenda'.

However, it is not just the National Party that is anti climate; it is also the Liberals. Gerard Rennick said—

It's not like I don't care about the environment. I just don't believe in the science of climate change.

Of course, given those comments in the past 48 hours from members of the Queensland Liberal National Party, I was very interested to see what the Leader of the Opposition and the supposed shadow minister for environment were doing over the past few days. The member for Bonney headed down to the Gold Coast for a period to hang out with that pinnacle of integrity, Stuart Robert. It is no wonder that they did not want to see a federal ICAC. Then he headed out to the seat of Ryan with the member for Broadwater, pretending like they were being progressive.

Ben Smee, from the *Guardian*, rightfully pointed out on Twitter recently that the Liberal National Party in Queensland is the only major political party in this country that has not said what its position on emissions reduction and renewable energy is. They went to the last election proposing to scrap all

of our targets, but they will not say what their current position is. They say that they are different and that they are new men, but really they are just 'Newman'. We saw how that worked out for Campbell at the most recent election: net zero seats.

### General Practitioners

**Dr ROWAN:** My question is to the Premier. When commenting on flu vaccines, the chair of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners said—

It's a pity that the Deputy Premier didn't show the same faith in GPs delivering a great vaccine service when he blamed community doctors for the ramping crisis.

Given this view, does the Premier agree with her deputy's comments that general practitioners not seeing sick Queenslanders is a reason why our hospitals are under pressure?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I will say this to the member for Moggill: first and foremost, I encourage Queenslanders to get their flu vaccine. The data is absolutely clear that we are seeing a doubling of cases and it is absolutely imperative that Queenslanders, especially those who have young children, think long and hard about getting that vaccination. My niece has been very sick with a flu like she has never experienced before in her life and everyone was very worried about her. I really do encourage people to talk to their families and their friends about this and all members should be encouraging everyone to get the flu shot this season.

Secondly, thank goodness there is now a federal Labor government. One of the key things—

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Just you wait.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Through the chair, Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition could be courteous enough to listen to the answer. Health will be on the agenda at the next face-to-face National Cabinet meeting. That is a good thing because all of the states are dealing with similar issues and similar pressure points. We know it is tough to get GPs into rural, remote and regional areas. We know that there are issues with bulk-billing. We know that there is an issue with not having 24/7 medical centres in local communities so that a family can go to their local community medical centre that bulk-bills, rather than turning up to an emergency department. Those are practical measures that we are looking forward to working on with the Albanese Labor government.

The opposition seems to think that COVID is not having an impact on our hospitals, but I can tell the House that it is. There are over 400 people in hospital with COVID. The opposition seems to think that the flu is not having an impact, but there are over 150 people in hospital with the flu. The opposition seems to forget that aged care and people with a disability are having an impact on our hospitals because the Morrison government failed to do anything to get them out. They were negligent and the chickens came home to roost on the weekend.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition is warned under the standing orders.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The member for Moggill should think long and hard about his local community and about being connected with that local community or he will find himself with a teal candidate running against him at the next state election.

*(Time expired)*

### Women, Government Boards

**Mrs MULLEN:** My question is of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. Will the Attorney-General update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting more women onto government boards and is the Attorney-General aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I thank the member for Jordan for her question and for her support of gender equality and the meaningful policies we have to put more women into leadership positions. After those opposite in government cut the women on boards target, we introduced it. As the Premier has said this morning, I am really pleased to see that we have exceeded our own targets and we now have 54 per cent of women on government boards and bodies. On this side of the House, we absolutely believe in getting women into leadership positions and to parliament.

Maybe the LNP will finally start listening to one woman in its ranks, Bridget Archer, who once again held her seat and called for quotas in the Liberal and National parties. Let us be honest: the LNP has been abandoned by women. At the weekend 11 women replaced LNP men: Wentworth gone; Kooyong gone; North Sydney gone; Curtin gone—all gone to women. Faced with a government that bullied and harassed its own women in parliament, women Independents have created movements in formerly safe Liberal seats.

Women remembered when the prime minister stood in the parliament and said that women who marched 'should be thankful they were not met with bullets'. That is what women remembered on the weekend. They remembered when Matt Canavan described gender equality as a 'luxury'. It is not a luxury; it is a right. Amongst the LNP bloodbath on the weekend, which seemed to have claimed the political careers of so many men, it seems that Amanda Stoker, the former assistant minister for women, is also set to lose her seat. I guess women do not want to vote for a woman who spends her time pandering to men's rights groups and the pro-life movement.

Now we see that Peter Dutton looks likely to be the new leader of the LNP. This is the man who once said that women on Nauru were lying about being raped and needing abortions in order to get off the island. This is the man who called Brittany Higgins's rape allegation a case of 'he said, she said'. This is a man who recently lost an appeal over his defamation case in which he was labelled a rape apologist. This is the future of the LNP. They have learnt nothing from the weekend. The Leader of the Opposition in Queensland talks about wanting to see more women in parliament, but what does he do? Does he stand up to people within his own party who make these appalling statements? It is time for the Leader of the Opposition to step up, actually be proud to talk about gender equality and actually get some women on that side of the House.

*(Time expired)*

### **Bundaberg Hospital, Clinical Incidents**

**Mr BENNETT:** My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to reports a nurse at the Bundaberg Hospital medicated a person without clinical need. Is the minister aware of any other similar circumstances at this hospital?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. I am aware of the allegations and the incident. I understand that it has been reviewed at the HHS level but is currently also being reviewed by Clinical Excellence Queensland. I will await the findings of that. It is a serious issue, absolutely. I am very concerned about the—

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Under standing order 118(b) there is also an aspect around the issue of being aware of any other instances.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Sorry, Manager of Opposition Business: the minister is just over 22 seconds in response. Three minutes are allowed. I would caution you—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! I will wait for silence, members. I am giving a ruling. I would caution you in terms of frivolous points of order. The minister is very early into her response.

**Mrs D'ATH:** As I say, it is a very serious allegation. Certainly, we would expect, as would the public, that it be properly investigated. I am aware that the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service recently conducted an internal review into the concerns regarding the provision of an incorrect dose of Olanzapine and determined that appropriate practice had not been undertaken. The nurse involved is no longer able to administer medications. The internal review indicated that there was no patient harm in relation to this incident. As I say, I believe that Clinical Excellence Queensland is also looking at the matter.

### **Electric Buses**

**Mr SKELTON:** My question is of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister update the House on Queensland's electric bus rollout and advise of any alternative approaches?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the member for Nicklin, who is a strong advocate for infrastructure and for action on climate change. I know that, with the member for Caloundra, he recently welcomed the addition of five new electric buses into the Sunshine Coast fleet—fantastic to see. Of course, they have no emissions, are better for the airshed, involve better technology and are quieter as they go by. We will see a lot more electric buses coming out across Queensland in future years because of the policies of this progressive Palaszczuk Labor government.

Of course, transport is the second biggest emitter in terms of sectors. We are embracing zero emissions technology to drive us towards a much cleaner future in terms of acting on climate change, but we know that those opposite have no commitment to net zero. They do not even have a climate policy of any coherence. They are the only major party in Australia without any decent climate policy or a commitment to net zero. They are not supporters of the transition that our economy needs.

Based on Saturday, it is probably worth a look at what is left of the coalition's ratty old bus and its dirty exhaust smoke of sexism, transphobia, anti climate action and intolerance. We know that Josh Frydenberg, Trevor Evans, Ben Morton, Dave Sharma, Jason Falinski—what a loss!—and Tim Wilson will not be on the bus. There are a few empty seats. We will see the new member for Bowman, whose background is one of on-the-record misogynistic comments about women and how they appear. He is their new talent. The member for Fadden had to step down because he breached ministerial standards. The member for Flynn is already out there undermining net zero, his own party's policy, just like he did in here. There is also the member for Hinkler, who did not realise that wind and solar power could be despatched with batteries. This federal ex-minister needed the idea of batteries and storage explained to him!

Of course, what can you say about Senator Rennick? He is already out there talking about going further to the right—talk about not having any idea—and of course Peter Dutton is driving the bus. This is the man who boycotted the apology to the stolen generation—incredible heartlessness. He joked about water lapping at the doors of our Pacific islands! It is no wonder under foreign policy the Solomon Islands signed up with China instead of this country with that sort of incompetent leadership. Of course, Matt Canavan is saying that net zero is dead. The old tricks do not work anymore for mad Matt, do they? It is a smaller, much more compact bus and we will see what the lucky deputy leadership looks like.

*(Time expired)*

### **Emerald Hospital, Emergency Department**

**Mr MILLAR:** My question is to the Minister for Health. In the 2020-21 financial year the federal government provided the state \$10 million to upgrade the Emerald Hospital emergency department. Work has not begun. When will the people of Emerald get their upgraded ED?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. I am happy to follow up on those works. I am happy to look at the detail of that commitment too because, as we know, the previous Commonwealth government said a lot of things but did not necessarily follow through on the commitments that it made. I will find out exactly what happened with that Commonwealth funding and where that is at.

In speaking about the Emerald Hospital, can I say how proud I am to be part of a government that is investing in not only our major tertiary hospitals but also our regional hospitals—the Kingaroy Hospital, the Blackall Hospital and the Roma Hospital. We are continuing to invest in our regions just as we are investing in our populated areas. We know that people need state-of-the-art hospitals and multipurpose health facilities no matter where they live in Queensland.

We also need primary allied health care. People need access to affordable, accessible GPs so that they do not end up with acute chronic illnesses and having to go to hospital and staying much longer because their condition has become more complex. We need more of a workforce. We need to work with a Commonwealth government that will assist us with health workforce planning across the country. We need to attract more of that workforce into this country but we also need to grow our own. In recent years, the allocation of placements for medical students has gone down because the Commonwealth has taken them off us and other jurisdictions and given them to New South Wales. If we are going to grow our own doctors we need to not just stop the Commonwealth taking placements off us but we also need placements opened up and increased so we can have more doctors in Queensland and in our regions—people who are living and studying in our regions going on to work in our regions. That is what we want. That is how we are going to deal with our workforce shortages, particularly around doctors.

We have a great generalist program. We are leading the nation with our generalist program in our hospitals. We need to work with a Commonwealth government that understands that this is a national problem. I know that an Albanese Labor government will do that. What we saw from the Morrison government initially was a response to the state health ministers: 'We've had a look. There is not a problem. There are no extra demand pressures on our hospital systems across the country in the middle of COVID. Nothing to see here. Nothing we need to do.' We did not accept that. Health ministers

of all political persuasions came together and said, 'We need collaboration across this country, including with the Commonwealth.' Health stakeholders are calling for this. We have been calling for this. Now we have a government that will actually do it.

*(Time expired)*

### Renewable Energy

**Mr HARPER:** My question is to the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement. Can the minister please update the House on the Palaszczuk government's investment in large-scale storage to support the continued uptake of renewables in Queensland?

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the member for Thuringowa for the question. Let me recap on this government's leadership on the renewable energy revolution—50 large-scale projects delivered by the Palaszczuk government; the highest levels of rooftop solar uptake in the world; and meeting more than 21 per cent of our energy needs from renewables. The member knows that to take full advantage of Queensland's sun and wind resources energy storage is the key. Batteries are critical for soaking up our sunshine to feed into the energy system when Queenslanders need it the most.

We have taken the lead on energy storage. That is why we are delivering a big battery blitz right across this state. The blitz kicked off when we connected a four-megawatt Tesla battery where else but in Bohle Plains, in the member's electorate of Thuringowa. We kicked the big battery blitz into gear last year with five more batteries across the state. They include another battery in Black River, in the electorate of Thuringowa, which is complete. In the electorate of Keppel at Tanby a big battery will be turned on this July. In Bargara, in the electorate of Burnett, a big battery will come online in August. In Toowoomba North another big battery, delivered by the Palaszczuk government, will be switched on this August. In Torquay, in the electorate of Hervey Bay, another big battery, delivered by the Palaszczuk government, will be switched on in September.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I take the interjection. The Palaszczuk government is like the energiser bunny when it comes to renewable energy. We could list them all day long. The batteries get even bigger. We will deliver a \$150 million 100-megawatt battery at Kogan Creek. A further 150-megawatt battery at the Tarong Power Station is due in 2023. The Palaszczuk government will deliver a 150-megawatt battery at Stanwell Power Station. This is forecast for 2024.

This government does not want to just import these batteries and install them. We want to see those batteries made here—delivering jobs for regional Queensland. The member for Thuringowa can tell members all about the critical metals in the North West Minerals Province. We have the metals in the ground in this state to onshore battery manufacturing and create literally thousands of jobs in the Queensland manufacturing industry. With a change of Australian government on the weekend we will do that.

I know that many of us were celebrating the 170th anniversary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union last night. They are celebrating 170 years and we on this side of the House congratulate them. They know that the best is yet to come. The Albanese Labor government will deliver an Australian-made battery plan with the support of the Palaszczuk government. Together with our government, Labor will make Australia a world leader in batteries—a regional jobs powerhouse.

### Electricity Prices

**Mr HART:** My question is to the Premier. Why is the Queensland government allowing wholesale power prices in Queensland to be the highest of all eastern seaboard states, with a daily average megawatt hour value sometimes more than double other eastern states?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier you have two minutes to respond.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am advised that our retail prices are still the lowest. We are investing in a whole range of energy infrastructure that I still do not see those opposite embracing as the world changes. We have also provided dividends—a return back to families—because we have kept our energy in public hands. I will tell you one thing, Member, it never went up 43 per cent as it did under the former LNP government.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I have finished.

**Mr POWELL:** The question referred to wholesale prices.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The Premier has indicated she has finished her response.

### Resources Industries, Jobs

**Mr SAUNDERS:** My question is to the Minister for Resources. Will the minister update the House on the government's effectiveness in creating resources jobs in regional Queensland and whether there are any alternative approaches?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, you have one minute to respond.

**Mr STEWART:** I thank the member for the question because he is a terrific advocate for his community and a strong supporter of the jobs and prosperity that the resources sector brings to regional Queensland. Some 80,000 jobs is how many jobs the resources industry provides in Queensland. Our government is working hard to ensure we continue to benefit from our abundant resources well into the future by investing in the new economy minerals that will power the world's renewable energy revolution as we head towards net zero.

There was someone in this House who never seemed all that interested in speaking out about resources jobs. Of course, I am speaking of the former member for Callide, Colin Boyce, who looks to have just scraped in as the new federal member for Flynn, despite a strong swing towards Labor—turning a safe seat into a marginal seat. Well done, Boycey! Thank heavens he will be sitting on the opposition benches because in the campaign he made it clear he is an LNP climate change denier who does not believe in net zero. The good people of Flynn—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** The period for question time has expired.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Influenza, Briefing

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (11.18 am): Before I move the business program motion, I advise all members that my department will be offering a briefing in relation to influenza A and what we are seeing in the community. That will be available tomorrow morning in the Undumbi room from 7.30 to 8.30. This briefing is available to any members or their staff who wish to come along.

## MOTION

### Business Program

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.18 am): I move—

1. That the following bills will be considered during this week's sitting:
  - (a) the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill, a maximum of three hours to complete all stages;
  - (b) the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, a maximum of 4½ hours to complete all stages;
  - (c) the Evidence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, a maximum of 4½ hours to complete all stages; and
2. the following time limits for the bills listed in 1. to apply:
  - (a) the minister to be called on in reply by 30 minutes before the expiry of the maximum period of time.
3. If all stages of a bill listed in 1. have not been completed within the maximum period of time specified in 1., or by 5.55 pm on Thursday, 26 May 2022, Mr Speaker:
  - (a) shall call on a minister to table any explanatory notes to their circulated amendments, any statement of compatibility with human rights or any statement relating to an override declaration
  - (b) shall put all remaining questions necessary to either pass that stage or pass the bill without further debate
  - (c) may interrupt non-specified business or debate on a bill or motion to complete the requirements of the motion
  - (d) will complete all stages required by this motion notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders.

The motion as circulated allocates the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill a maximum of three hours, the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill a maximum of 4½ hours and the Evidence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill a maximum of 4½ hours. We have

built into the time for each one of those bills the opportunity for the minister to reply within 30 minutes of the end of that time frame. I do not intend to speak to this motion in detail. I thank the members of the Business Committee for their consideration of this motion. I believe it is a sensible distribution of the time we have allotted for government business this week. I ask members to support the motion.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.19 am): After a short vacation from having business program motions, they are back.

**Mrs D'Ath:** The honeymoon's over.

**Mr POWELL:** The honeymoon is clearly over. I take the interjection from the Leader of the House. It will come as no surprise that the opposition will not be supporting this motion. We stand by the statements made by the member for Kawana, the deputy leader of the LNP, and every other member in this House on this side of the fence who has said that we reserve the right to speak on each and every bill. That is what we are elected to do. That is what our constituents in each of our electorates elected us to do.

To take on board the comments by the Premier about us all listening to our constituencies a little more, one of the things our constituencies tell us is that they want us to represent them here in this chamber. Therefore, when we come up against a business motion that is clearly guillotining debate on important legislation, we will oppose it. As has been mentioned by the Leader of the House, the bills this week include the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill, the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Evidence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—all of which have very important and relevant aspects for each of our electorates. Therefore, we in the LNP will be opposing this motion. We want to continue to speak on each bill.

As we have offered previously—the former manager of opposition business, the now deputy leader, offered for us to sit later—we are happy to sit much later if that is what is required to get these bills passed, but we will not accept any reduction of the time allowed for debate. I have already seen the speaking list for the first bill, the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill. I can guarantee that there are far more speakers on the list than the 2½ hours of debate will allow. I suspect it will be the same for the following two pieces of legislation. We need a House where we can debate the bills that come before it. We need to sit the hours necessary to debate those pieces of legislation. The LNP will not be supporting this motion.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.21 am): I rise to support the Leader of the House. This is, again, sensible management of parliamentary business as per normal in jurisdictions right across this country. I saw the member for Glass House speak just before me but I could hear the member for Kawana. I congratulate the member for Glass House on his new role, but he clearly has not found his own voice or his own response. It is sad to see the opposition opposing a sensible, orderly approach to business and—

**Mr Watts:** And silencing the opposition. A sensible, orderly silencing—that is what is required. That would be preferred, wouldn't it?

**Mr BAILEY:** The member for Toowoomba North interjects. He should be careful.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): The member for Toowoomba North will cease his interjections.

**Mr BAILEY:** There were big swings against the LNP in Toowoomba recently—very big swings—but I digress.

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba North, you are under a warning.

**Mr BAILEY:** What we need is a modern parliament that takes into account family-friendly hours. The lack of women on the opposition bench is reflected in their continual obstruction of modern parliamentary procedure, which is normal right across this nation and internationally. They are behind the times not just on policy, on net zero, on the environment and on women but also on values.

If they really think having lots of speakers reading out the same tired, dusty old notes from the LNP opposition office—often very similar contributions—is some kind of profound contribution, I disagree. They need to prioritise, like any government, like any opposition or, indeed, like any crossbench, what they speak on and value. This is normal procedure. I endorse the motion moved by the Leader of the House.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (11.23 am): It is always interesting to hear those in government complain about the order of the House and how it is very important to silence the opposition to make sure that debate is curtailed and that members do not get the opportunity to represent their electorates. I find it fascinating because I sat in the parliament here when there were only a few members on this side. It was interesting to hear the debate then. We never curtailed debate.

**Mr Bailey** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. The minister will cease his interjections.

**Mr WATTS:** It is fascinating to me to hear that all of a sudden the orderliness of parliament and being expedient with our time is critically important. What we have seen is fewer sitting weeks. What we have seen is fewer sitting hours. What we have seen is less work being done by the government. What we see is a lazy government. We see a government that does not want to debate the issues, that does not want to hear from the opposition and that does not want to hear the voices of the people of Queensland. They do not want to hear the voices of the people of Queensland—that is, members—coming into this place to debate legislation.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. The member for Pine Rivers will cease her interjections. The member for Logan will cease his interjections.

**Mr WATTS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, as you would expect, they would like to hail me down. They would like me to be silent because the last thing they would like to hear is that there are other voices in Queensland that want to be heard in this place. There are members who were elected to this parliament who represent their communities well, who work very hard in their local communities and who sit on this side of the chamber. They might have an opposing opinion to that of the ministers and the government opposite. They would much rather not hear from them because they are arrogant. That is the problem. They are arrogant and they believe that they are deserving to rule without any dissension or debate. That is the problem.

We come into this chamber specifically to debate. We might not even finish debate within the time allowed but why curtail it? Why force it upon members in this House to not have their voices heard? There used to be a time when members would come to this chamber to make sure their communities' voices were heard. This government would like to see those voices silenced.

This business motion is a nonsense. They claim that it is about managing the parliament, yet we saw in the debate just last sitting week how many speakers from the other side were added to the speaking list when they were desperately running out of legislation. They did not have any more legislation ready to bring into this place, so they started adding speakers from the other side to pad out the debate. I did not see any guillotine dropping on their own members. The speaking lists were put out. Then all of a sudden the next day there were more members on the speaking list. Then the next day there were more members on the speaking list.

I have absolutely no problem with all of those members choosing to speak, but it is interesting to me how the guillotine is dropped on our throat when it suits and then they filibuster when it suits—when this government has no legislative agenda, when it has no way forward for the people of Queensland, when it has no reason to stand in this place and talk. They want everyone to be silenced and to not have our voices heard, yet on other occasions when they have no legislation before the House ready because the ministers are lazy and unprepared and have no agenda for Queensland—

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr Bailey** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. The two ministers there will cease their interjections.

**Mr WATTS:** We see the lazy ministers come into this place with no legislative agenda for the people of Queensland—no real way forward. We have heard of the debacle—the absolute crisis—in the health department. If you come to my electorate, you will see the crisis not only with the hospital not being built but also with crime running out of control. We do not see any legislative agenda coming forward, yet they want to silence this opposition.

On the other hand, when it suits, they want to filibuster in this parliament. You cannot have it both ways. Either every debate is going to be curtailed and the government's own members will not be able to filibuster when it suits, when all of the ministers are off having a long lunch with a glass of red wine, or we can come into this House and debate until nobody is left who wants to jump to their feet. If people jump to their feet they should be heard and then you have respect for parliament. If you curtail people

from jumping to their feet, ensuring that they cannot be heard by using your majority, then you have no respect for this parliament, no respect for democracy and no respect for the people who voted members to this place to have their voices heard.

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

**AYES, 48:**

**ALP, 48**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 35:**

**LNP, 30**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts.

**Grn, 2**—Berkman, MacMahon.

**KAP, 2**—Dametto, Knuth.

**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

Pairs: Howard, Gerber; McMillan, Weir; Power, Last.

Resolved in the affirmative.

## STATE PENALTIES ENFORCEMENT (MODERNISATION) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 17 March (see p. 539).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (11.34 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

At the heart of this bill are two binding principles: that people should pay what they owe; and that people are paid what they are owed. The amendments in this bill relating to the Residential Tenancies Authority will ensure that people are paid what they are owed. When tenants entrust their bonds to the state they must have confidence their money is safe and secure. Similarly, landlords need the confidence that bonds are available if called upon. It is now clear that the previous model could no longer deliver this certainty.

I have today written to the member for Toowoomba South and shadow Treasurer to affirm once again that these changes will not affect the debt position of the state. A copy of that letter was forwarded to the opposition office electronically by email and I delivered a copy to the member for Toowoomba South in the chamber. I am pleased that he read the letter this morning; I noted him doing that.

Specifically, there will be no increase to the value of assets or liabilities shown on the general government sector balance sheet as a result of these changes. I now table a copy of the letter delivered to honourable members in the House to ensure that the member for Toowoomba South and all members of the opposition—in fact, all members of the House—can be left in no doubt in relation to this matter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 24 May 2022, from the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment, the Hon. Cameron Dick, to the member for Toowoomba South, Mr David Janetzki MP, regarding a statement made during matters of public interest on 10 May 2022 relating to the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill 2022 [\[694\]](#).

A member would intentionally mislead the House if they suggested or implied that this amendment is 'accounting trickery'. In a similar vein, a member would fall into error and intentionally mislead the House if they suggested, imputed or stated that these amendments are 'tricks and distractions'. A member would mislead this House if they suggested this bill is 'accounting without principles', the government is somehow 'raiding from renters', the bill was 'sneaky and a mean-spirited cash grab for Queensland renters' or 'more trickery accounting'. All members are now on notice as to the truth, and they should act and speak accordingly.

**Ms Bates:** So you're threatening members now, are you?

**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection from the member for Mudgeeraba. Those words are highly offensive and unparliamentary and I ask her to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Minister, do you take personal offence at what the member said?

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I take deep personal offence.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mudgeeraba, will you withdraw?

**Ms BATES:** I withdraw.

**Mr DICK:** I am seeking to assist members of this House and not threaten them, as alleged by the member for Mudgeeraba. That was a disgraceful comment. As I say, all members are now on notice as to the truth, including the member for Mudgeeraba, and should act and speak accordingly. I will go into more detail regarding the RTA changes later in this debate contribution.

**Ms Bates:** Misogynistic bully!

**Mr DICK:** Mr Deputy Speaker, again I take deep personal offence at the words used by the member for Mudgeeraba and ask her to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mudgeeraba, the minister has taken personal offence. Will you withdraw?

**Ms BATES:** I withdraw.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In the middle of that point of order—I am not sure exactly which section; you may want to seek some guidance—the term that was used against the Treasurer which I heard, ‘bully’, was then reiterated while you were making a judgement to ‘misogynist bully’. I do not know which way we do that. It is most unparliamentary. I am not sure of the section.

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mudgeeraba, I do not need your assistance.

**Ms GRACE:** Maybe you would like to get some guidance in relation to it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister, I do not need your assistance either. I did not hear that interjection. Member for Mudgeeraba, do you have anything else to withdraw? Treasurer, you have the call. There is no point of order.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take very deep personal offence at the words used by the member for Mudgeeraba, ‘misogynistic bully’, and I ask her again to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister, I have already ruled on that. There is no point of order. Minister, you have the call.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will be checking the audio. The other purpose of the bill—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister, can you just confirm that is not a slight on the chair?

**Mr DICK:** Not on you at all, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is a matter for me and the member for Mudgeeraba so I apologise to you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Pine Rivers, I warned you previously about interjecting. You are now warned under the standing orders.

**Mr DICK:** The other purpose of the bill is to give legislative effect to the integration of specified fine administration functions into the Queensland Revenue Office from the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service. These amendments represent one of the most significant improvements to the way the State Penalties Enforcement Registry operates in its two decades of existence. The amendments are about ensuring that outstanding amounts owed to Queenslanders are recovered faster and more efficiently.

As mentioned in the explanatory speech, the bill also contains other important amendments to modernise the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999 and the Taxation Administration Act 2001, and to ensure the continued effective administration of both SPER and the Queensland Revenue Office. However, I want to talk specifically about the amendments to the State Penalties Enforcement Act which will enable time frames for the registration of defaulted infringement notices with SPER to be prescribed by regulation.

The bill will not prescribe any time frames because this will be done at a later stage after consultation with administering authorities, including local governments. This is because the bill provides for different time frames to apply to different administering authorities. For example, for an

administering authority like the Moreton Bay Regional Council or other large local governments, which already have robust collection practices and are doing a good job with recovering payment of fines, registration time frames could be longer.

We welcome councils like the Moreton Bay Regional Council which, as the committee evidence showed, take a responsible and proactive approach to fines management. As the committee heard, the Moreton Bay Regional Council have good processes in place to ensure infringement notices are followed up in a timely way. I am advised that only debt that is truly difficult to collect is ultimately referred to SPER by the Moreton Bay Regional Council. I understand it is also referred within reasonable time frames that allow SPER the best possible chance to collect the debt. These are all things that we want fine issuing authorities to do, and we have no intention of interfering in this space.

On the other hand, for administering authorities like small councils that do not have access to quality debt collection resources, there is merit in requiring them to refer at an earlier stage, to help them help themselves. We want to help and encourage smaller councils to avoid missing out on money simply because they take too long to refer debts, and all members should support this intention.

The bill also amends the Land Tax Act 2010 to give beneficial land tax treatment to trustees of special disability trusts. This important amendment ensures that more funds can be used to meet the care and accommodation needs of beneficiaries with severe disabilities. I particularly want to thank the Deputy Speaker, the member for Greenslopes, for bringing this matter to my attention. The member for Greenslopes has been a passionate advocate on this issue.

I acknowledge the Economics and Governance Committee's report on the bill which was tabled on 6 May 2022. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all committee members and the secretariat for their hard work in considering this bill. I would also like to thank those who made submissions to the committee about the bill and those who appeared as witnesses as part of the committee's inquiry. I note that the committee made one recommendation to parliament—that the bill be passed. I also note that opposition members of the committee provided a statement of reservation, which I would like to address.

Opposition members commented on the government's management of SPER, the debt pool and write-offs. In September 2020, the government announced the Debt Recovery and Compliance Program to increase SPER's resources and capability. This program included the establishment of a dedicated Debt Management Centre in Ipswich. As of 31 March 2022, the centre had collected more than \$145 million. That money has been collected for Queenslanders. This program has also enabled SPER to increase its enforcement activities to focus on people who have longstanding debts and a history of nonpayment. These activities include the seizure and sale of vehicles and other property, and garnishing wages and bank accounts. These initiatives contributed to over \$325 million of debt being finalised in 2020-21.

I am advised that SPER debt recovery is projected to reach an all-time high of \$300.4 million in the 2021-22 financial year. This increase in collection is a direct result of the investment this government has made in SPER. The integration of functions from the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service into the Queensland Revenue Office is expected to bring forward repayments of more than \$20 million in its first year.

In relation to debt write-offs, SPER takes all reasonable steps to pursue debts owed to Queenslanders. However, some debts simply cannot be recovered—for example, where a debtor has passed away or a business has been deregistered. In 2020-21, \$37.5 million of debts were written off after all reasonable attempts were made to recover those debts. Overall, SPER collects more than 89 per cent of the value of the fines referred to it. It is standard practice in both government and the private sector to write off uncollectable debts. It was also standard practice under the LNP when the member for Clayfield was the Treasurer. There were write-offs every year of the three years of the Newman LNP government, including \$102 million in 2012-13. To quote the member for Clayfield from his evidence to the Finance and Administration Committee on 13 July 2013, he said—

Cleansing of the SPER debt pool has been conducted with \$100 million in aged, unrecoverable debt being written off in 2012-13. I authorised that debt to be written off. Much of it was over five years old and, in fact, some of it was over 10 years old. It was quite simply unrecoverable at that rate.

This demonstrates the point that the LNP believed write-offs of unrecoverable debt was an appropriate step to take. Bizarrely, although entirely predictably, the LNP now says write-offs are somehow scandalous. It is simply common sense. Writing off uncollectable debts means that SPER officers can focus their efforts on debts that can be collected and pursue debtors who continue to avoid paying the debts that they properly owe to Queenslanders.

I now return to the amendments concerning the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, including claims made by the LNP that these changes are intended to inflate budget figures. As advised by Queensland Treasury during the committee process, the RTA is already part of the general government sector, which means assets and liabilities held by the RTA are already reported as part of the general government sector balance sheet, and this reporting framework will remain unchanged. There will be no increase to the value of assets or liabilities shown on the general government sector balance sheet as a result of the changes. The RTA will continue to show the value of bonds as an asset, which will now be held as cash, rather than investments, and the value of the bond liability on its balance sheet.

Under the current funding model, the RTA relies on investment returns on tenants' rental bonds to meet its operating expenses. Returns from investment markets have been weak so far in 2021-22. As interest rate expectations and inflation have increased, returns on fixed income investments, such as government or corporate bonds, have been negative. I am advised that the RTA has not been immune to this, with year-to-date returns on its investment portfolio also being negative. In previous years, between 30 June 2016 and 30 June 2020, the RTA moved from a positive equity position of \$42.8 million to a negative equity position of \$312,000. This was the result of investment returns being insufficient to meet the RTA's operating expenses. The 2019-20 result of a \$43.3 million deficit, driven by investment losses, was a key contributor.

The proposed amendments will provide for a stable and reliable funding approach of annual grant funding from the Consolidated Fund. This will ensure the RTA can continue to deliver essential services, without being concerned about the impact of volatile investment markets. When it comes to investment returns, Queenslanders understand that things are turbulent in the world right now, and this has been no different for the RTA. This change gets them away from having to worry about investments and lets them focus on their core business—looking after the rental system. The changes will not impact the RTA's operations, powers or core functions and no jobs will be lost due to the reforms. On the contrary, the RTA will be backed with a significant appropriation. I can advise the House that the RTA will be provided with \$35 million in funding annually. This amount will be increased in line with other agencies, including to meet the results of enterprise bargaining.

I also note this is more than they have spent on average over the last three years. By any measure, this is a good financial outcome for the RTA. There will be no change to the way renters and landlords interact with the authority, with all services including those relating to the payment, redemption and holding of rental bonds remaining unchanged.

Stakeholders, including Tenants Queensland and the Real Estate Institute of Queensland, can be confident that the authority will have a stable and secure funding source that will underpin its operations rather than being subject to volatile investment returns.

Tenants' representatives are right to point out that the Newman LNP government defunded the services they provide. They not only defunded them, they put out a media release bragging about defunding 23 community and local government organisations that provided these services.

Our government, the Labor government, knows the value of tenants' representatives. That is why we reinstated funding to these services by providing \$6.6 million per year. As Tenants Queensland correctly observes, this funding comes from consolidated revenue, being an appropriation. The Palaszczuk government's tenancy advice services do not, and should not, rely on investment returns and that should be extended to the operation of the RTA, as this bill provides.

What this sorry saga shows is that having a supposedly independent investment account is no guarantee that tenants will get what they deserve; that is, fair, funded representation. What it shows is that the only way you can guarantee that disadvantaged people will get proper community services and proper representation is to have a Labor government. As we know all too well from recent history, the LNP do not care about the rules, they do not care about the independence of the RTA, and they will use every trick in the book to cut funding, cut jobs and cut services.

Turning briefly to consultation, it is worth noting that the RTA has been consulted in this process at every step of the way, a process that was commenced with the chairperson and chief executive officer of the RTA in October 2021. I want to thank the CEO, Jennifer Smith, for her support and also the board chair, Mr Paul Melville, for his ongoing support and consultation on behalf of the RTA board, which includes many esteemed representatives from the community sector, including those who have worked for tenant organisations. I commend these important reforms and this bill to the House.

Interruption.

## DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

### Absence of Members

 **Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Honourable members, I wish to advise the House that the members for Ipswich and Currumbin will be absent from the sitting of the House this week. Both members are attending the CPA Advanced Parliamentary Development Residency Program in Sydney this week.

I also remind those honourable members who are on a warning: Southern Downs, Gladstone, Kawana, Clayfield, Buderim, Nanango, Everton, Broadwater, Toowoomba North and Pine Rivers.

## STATE PENALTIES ENFORCEMENT (MODERNISATION) AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1230, on motion of Mr Dick—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (11.52 am): Let me begin my contribution today, for the comfort of the House, by stating—obviously my voice is a little off-key—that I undertook a number of COVID tests mid last week. I was clean. However, a four-year-old has brought home some germs from kindy. I am feeling as fit as a fiddle; however, my voice continues to suffer. I wanted to set the record straight at the outset.

I might have one of the quieter voices in this House and, this week, one of the croakiest voices in this House, but I want to affirm for the Treasurer that I will not be intimidated by his efforts here today.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Those words are personally offensive and I ask the honourable gentleman to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Member, the minister has found that personally offensive.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I withdraw. Let me rephrase. The Treasurer should not underestimate my resolve and my determination to always speak up for what we believe on this side of the House. I fully accept that there will be contestability over every single bill in this House. There will always be contestability about the nature of the provisions of a bill and the philosophy behind it, but we on this side of the House are full of resolve. We will not be influenced by a treasurer who sends letters seeking to curtail debate and anything I have to say on this bill today that there might be—

**Mr DICK:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at the words that I am seeking to curtail debate of anyone in the chamber, and I ask the honourable member to withdraw because they are deeply offensive to me personally.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member, the minister has found that personally offensive. Will you withdraw?

**Mr JANETZKI:** I withdraw.

**Mr WATTS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member just voted for a guillotine bill to curtail everybody from speaking in this House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. Resume your seat. Member for Toowoomba South, did you withdraw?

**Mr JANETZKI:** Yes, I did withdraw. The words and the arguments that I will put today will often be the words of others, of stakeholders, of people who are raising issues not just about this bill but about the government's approach to how the finances are being managed in this state. I will not be influenced and I will not be resiling from our position to put the case to this House. I will return to some of those questions and the Treasurer's comments again shortly.

I want to start with the bill. The bill was introduced by the Treasurer on 17 March and was referred to the Economics and Governance Committee. The committee reported on 6 May recommending that the bill be passed. The committee's opposition members submitted a statement of reservation.

There are two key aspects to the bill. Firstly, and most publicly, the bill amends the State Penalties Enforcement Act, the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation and the State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Act to implement an integrated approach to managing fines for camera

detected offences and tolling offences, with functions centralised in a single agency being the Queensland Revenue Office; provide a framework for the earlier registration of unpaid infringement notices with SPER for enforcement; and make miscellaneous amendments to modernise the operation of the State Penalties Enforcement Act and support the effective administration of SPER.

To achieve this, the bill prescribes the registrar of SPER as the authorised person for service of infringement notices for camera detected and tolling offences, and the administering authority for the same, as well as for other infringement notice offences in respect of which DTMR was already practically the administering authority.

The bill also provides for a reduced time frame for the registration of defaulted infringement notices with SPER, with the aim of increasing opportunities for earlier collection. The bill also makes a range of consequential amendments to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act and Traffic Regulation 1962 to give effect to the aforementioned changes. In addition, modernisation measures are proposed such as the use of body worn cameras by SPER enforcement officers, and the prescription of enforcement costs that can be recovered for enforcement debtors.

Confidentiality provisions are also modernised to enable the registrar to disclose confidential information contained in a court order for the purposes of remitting an amount collected under the court order to an entity entitled to the amount, as is the process of the appointment of SPER enforcement officers to ensure that only those appropriate are appointed as such. The committee received seven submissions on the bill. Four of the submissions related to the proposed SPER amendments. Concerns and suggestions were raised. LawRight proposed that SPER should take measures to ensure that its discretion is exercised appropriately and that any relevant decision-making matrices or guidelines are made publicly available to ensure transparency. Moreton Bay Regional Council requested that further consideration be given to the mechanism by which it secured collective feedback to deliver to SPER. They also flagged increased costs for local governments associated with the earlier registration date of fines with SPER.

Several concerns were noted by the LGAQ, including updating the fines online web portal service, greater consultation with issuing authorities in relation to the cancellation of enforcement orders, refunding of fees on the approval of work and development orders, regular and quarterly engagement with issuing authorities, and greater transparency on the community outcomes from work and development orders. I will return to the political background of these SPER amendments and the government's appalling mismanagement of SPER over the years very shortly.

The second key aspect of the bill are amendments to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act to provide, as the Treasurer claims, stable funding for the RTA and ensure security of rental bonds on behalf of Queensland tenants.

In summary, the government proposes to move the financial model of the RTA from one which is funded by the interest earned from investment of the moneys received by way of rental bonds to that of funding an agency by way of a grant in the budget. At present, the act establishes two accounts for the holding of money by the RTA. Section 149 identifies those as the rental bond account and the rental bond interest account. Section 150 requires that money received by the RTA by way of rental bonds should be paid into the rental bond account.

Section 150 also provides that the amounts in the account may be invested according to the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982. Section 151 provides for the expenditure of rental bond amounts that have now been claimed after a considerable period. Section 152 provides that the rental bond interest account should be used to hold earnings from investments and liens by the RTA. That section also provides for the only ways in which money can be paid out of that account. Those include meeting the costs of the RTA performing its functions under the act, investing moneys and paying out moneys for any other purpose authorised under the act.

One other feature of the proposed amendments is the enactment of a new section 482A, which will give the Treasurer the authority to direct the RTA about the banking arrangements for the rental bond account. Submissions regarding the proposed changes to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act were lodged by Tenants Queensland and the REIQ. Both submissions were strongly opposed to the amendments. The REIQ noted that they were deeply concerned with the proposed amendments and that the brief summary provided in the explanatory notes does not, in their view, substantiate any basis for the proposed material amendments. They added that they were disappointed by the absence of any stakeholder consultation prior to the bill and the insertion of such a fundamental change in a nondescript omnibus bill.

Tenants Queensland criticised the lack of consultation and asserted that the changes would remove the autonomy of the industry regulator and destroy a self-funded model that has stood the test of time. I will return to those submissions, but for those reasons and for the government's appalling record when it comes to SPER—a generational failure of record—the opposition will be opposing this bill.

Let me begin going through some of the history of the regulation of SPER in Queensland, because it is important that we begin to understand the mismanagement of SPER since it was introduced all those years ago. From where he sits today, the Treasurer has played an integral role in the management of SPER—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Logan, you are about to speak. I have already told you to cease your interjections. No more interjections, please.

**Mr JANETZKI**:—over the last 20-odd years, but let me go back to the very beginning. The language that we hear again in the Treasurer's media release and comments since the SPER bill was introduced this time around bear a striking resemblance to what we have heard over the last 20 years from Labor when it comes to SPER. Back in 1999 the then attorney-general, Matt Foley, said—

It will keep most defaulters out of jail but does not shy away from ensuring people who have been penalised by our courts pay their debt to the community ...

If I recall, when that bill was introduced in 1999 it was to amend a Borbidge government bill that was introduced into the House. However, as is so typical of Labor governments, upon the election of the first Beattie government, it languished on their backblocks for nine or 10 months. That was the initial media statement on SPER back in 1999. I think there have been 30-odd amendments to the SPER legislation over the last 20 years. Next we saw Peter Beattie, then premier, talk about the SPER amendment bill. In October 2006 he said—

The government's ... (SPER) will be able to write off uncollectible and unenforceable fines up to 30 years old under legislative changes to be introduced into Parliament next week.

Again they were trying to fix SPER—unable to ever get on top of the ballooning SPER debt but also on the legislative framework that should be governing it. Then we had the then attorney-general, the then erstwhile member for Greenslopes. What was he saying back in September in 2009? This is very similar to media releases from 2022; nothing much has changed, just more Labor mismanagement. He said then—

The community expects that people who receive a fine for breaking the law will repay their debt in full.

It is critical to preserving public confidence in the law and maintaining the integrity of fines as a deterrent.

These tough new measures will send a strong message to people who thumb their nose at fines—if you don't pay up, you will lose your wheels ...

That is tough talk from the then member for Greenslopes and attorney-general. Next we are back in November 2009—more media statements from the then attorney-general and now Treasurer. He stated—

Queenslanders expect people who break the law and receive a fine to pay their debt in full.

They also expect the government to take appropriate action against long-term fine bludgers with significant debts who simply refuse to do the right thing.

That is more tough talk from the then member for Greenslopes and attorney-general and now Treasurer. There is more. We are in April 2010 now, and there is more from the then attorney-general and now Treasurer. He stated—

Fine dodgers are getting the message. Queenslanders expect people who break the law and receive a fine to pay their debt in full.

...

The publicity—

get this—

surrounding the new laws has certainly prompted debtors into paying their fines.

With a SPER blowout well beyond a billion dollars, I think that was a little precipitous of the then attorney-general and erstwhile member for Greenslopes and now Treasurer of Queensland. With all this tough talk from the Treasurer in his history in parliament, we would not have much confidence or

faith in the Treasurer today getting on top of the SPER debt or managing or governing SPER appropriately. Now he seeks a consolidation of power under this bill. Under this bill he seeks a consolidation of power and the administration of SPER under his control. That was the then attorney-general and now Treasurer.

Now we turn to February 2012 and the Hon. Paul Lucas. He was then the new attorney-general but nothing much had changed. SPER management was still poorly enacted and the SPER debt was continuing to balloon. The then attorney-general announced consultants PwC would independently assess the operation of SPER with a view to improving its already impressive record of recovering outstanding debts. PwC has always been a favourite of the Labor government. It was interesting that around this time we also saw a significant ballooning in SPER debt. It was about that time that the Labor government changed the tolling arrangements when they were busy privatising the motorways. They were busy privatising Queensland assets and they changed the tolling arrangements, which fed into the ballooning of the SPER debt. That is the history of the SPER debt.

I will finish with the Treasurer's media release from the other day, which is remarkably similar to media releases from this Labor government over the last 20 years, including from the then attorney-general. The media release states—

"Queensland taxpayers expect that if someone owes them money, it should be paid back—and that's what these changes are all about," the Treasurer said.

Instead, the conclusion that we can draw is that the more the people in the seats change, the more they stay the same. How can Queensland have any confidence whatsoever that this Treasurer and this government will ever get on top of the SPER arrangements in this state? That is the history.

When the member for Inala became Premier, the government wiped a number of the key achievements of the Newman government when it came to SPER, and I notice that the Treasurer talked about some of those. I am sure the member for Logan will speak about them as well. It is worth repeating. When the Newman government assumed power, so much was in complete disarray, and SPER was no exception for all the reasons in these media releases that I have just talked about. The government said over and over the same things and nothing ever changed.

When the member for Clayfield was treasurer, he oversaw the collection of nearly \$200 million in unpaid fines; significant aged debts of five years or greater with little prospect of ever being repaid were written off, and that cleared the decks for a dedicated focus on debt collection. At the time the LNP set in place a comprehensive SPER program including things such as wheel clamping, seizure and sale to recover unpaid debts; SPER's ICT system was upgraded; and some debt recovery functions were handed to specialist debt recovery firms. Of course, many of those reforms were dropped as soon as the Palaszczuk Labor government was elected in 2015.

In 2015, what happened to the management and governance of SPER? The Palaszczuk Labor government talked about focusing on technology. As we know, IT and Labor governments do not mix. In 2016, the Labor government signed a contract for an ICT project that would streamline the administration of SPER in this state. What we saw over the next few years was a debacle. We had the under treasurer at the time—now the Premier's chief of staff—stating in estimates that costs were under control and were, to use the exact words, 'safe and sound'. Former treasurer Jackie Trad spoke in this House. Things had got so bad that there were 300 change requests and blowouts of an estimated \$20 million.

**Mr Tantari:** Save your voice!

**Mr JANETZKI:** I will keep going, member for Hervey Bay. Do not worry: I will use all of my 30 minutes, even if I am completely hoarse by the end, because the story of Labor's mismanagement of SPER needs to be told.

The then treasurer had lost so much control over the project that she had to refer it to the Auditor-General. We saw the Palaszczuk Labor government's desire to focus on technology ending in disaster. What did the Auditor-General say in the report that was handed down? It blew the whistle—as the Auditor-General is constantly doing week after week right now. It is compelling reading. Every single Auditor-General's report is highlighting gaps in the governance of this state—whether it be financial management, contract variations or the appointment of directors on boards controlled by the Treasurer. It does not matter; it is all falling apart.

Back in 2019, what did the Auditor-General's report say? It said that the implementation of the project was based on 'unfounded optimism'. A consultant in April 2017 suggested to the Labor government that they should consider abandoning the contract, yet the government ploughed on. They wasted tens of millions of dollars of taxpayer money. They did not stop; they cannot manage projects.

Last term it might have been abandoned IT contracts, name changes to hospitals and fat dog apps, but it continues to get worse. Now we have \$200 million quarantine facilities with 1,000 beds that are empty—not hospital beds, not homeless beds, not social housing beds but empty beds that are worth \$200 million. We have infrastructure projects that have cost overruns to the tune of beyond \$3 billion. It does not matter what it is: they cannot manage money and they cannot manage projects. That continues until today.

In 2017, the Palaszczuk Labor government introduced work and development orders, in which people work off their SPER debt by attending counselling and treatment programs or doing relevant courses. I would be interested to hear the Treasurer report on those numbers, noting that 10 per cent of SPER debtors at the time—as reported by the then treasurer, the member for Mulgrave—were responsible for 20 per cent of the total outstanding debt. I would be interested to know if the Treasurer could update those numbers for the House.

Then in September 2020, on the eve of the election, the Treasurer had another go. It was not good enough back in 2009, 2010 and during all the tough talk again most recently. In September 2020 he launched the Debt Recovery and Compliance program, which it was claimed would raise an additional \$488.1 million—to be specific—by 30 June 2024 at a cost of \$74.95 million. Nearly two years on, I would be interested to know the progress of that project. If the Treasurer cannot inform us today, then perhaps it will be revealed in the budget.

At the end of all this mismanagement, we see that the outstanding value of SPER has continued to boom. In 2014, the total outstanding SPER debt was \$999 million. By 2019-20, it had blown out to \$1.29 billion. During the examination of this bill by the committee—I applaud our deputy chair for his work on that committee—it was reported that figure had declined by around \$100 million so far this financial year. I note that in answer to a recent question on notice of the Treasurer, they said that they had written off \$100 million this year. I am not sure whether they are going collecting it or whether they are writing it off. I look forward to an update in that regard.

Now the Treasurer is back on the job. He is claiming that further amendments, after all these years and after all this failure, will continue to boost collections by a further \$20 million a year. How can anyone have confidence in the Labor government when it comes to the management of SPER? How can Queenslanders have confidence in the Treasurer's ability to rein in approximately \$1.2 billion of SPER debt, when the government cannot even manage an ICT project that manages the system? How can we have any confidence that they will manage the SPER system when they cannot even manage an ICT project that is meant to manage the SPER system? For those reasons alone, we have no confidence and the bill should be opposed.

I now turn to the issue of the bonds of Queensland renters that the government is desperately trying to justify. We saw that occur again with the Treasurer's letter here today. It is unprecedented in my six years in the House that the Treasurer would seek to influence the House. I say again: do not underestimate our resolve and our determination on this side of the House. We are putting the views of concerned stakeholders, whether it be Tenants Queensland or the REIQ—all those people who have looked at the numbers. I will turn to some of the accounting treatment that the Treasurer is talking about shortly. The Treasurer and the government are desperately trying to justify this change. They say that nothing will change, so what is the point? Why are they doing it? Why is the government doing this, if the Treasurer is saying that nothing will change? We have seen this government loading up debt on government owned corporations and raiding the superannuation funds of public servants. We saw what they did with the titles registry valuation last year, and now they are at it again.

There has never been any suggestion that the current financial model adopted by the RTA is anything but stable and reliable. There are no instances of the RTA failing to pay out a rental bond due to limited cash flow. The RTA financial reporting data indicates a very strong 2021 financial year, with \$60 million in returns generated from their QIC investments. The Treasurer's reasoning, that the RTA making a loss in the 2020 financial year justifies this change, is flawed. The reason for that result was an accounting adjustment. Cash flow was still strong. It shows once again that the Treasurer does not know how to properly read an annual report. This is despite the fact that they seem to sit on these reports for months before they are tabled in this House in any event.

What accounting treatment will be applied to the shifting of these funds? It is highly likely that it will be a method by which the government may claim a reduction in reported net debt without actually advancing the state government's net financial worth. I look forward to observing how the treatment is undertaken in the budget papers this year. Others have said that the Treasurer may be trying to add another billion dollars to the government's balance sheet. I accept his position. Presumably that would be to keep the credit rating agencies happy. Let's just assume for a minute that it might be true.

We have seen the Treasurer's record. We know that when everybody else was silent in the aftermath of their devastating loss in 2012 it was the Treasurer who stuck his head up first. I am going to quote him again. We know how paranoid the Treasurer is about our credit rating and what lengths the Treasurer will go to to make sure there is no downgrade. We have seen the valuation of the titles registry; we know the lengths he will go to. It was only a year ago that we saw the Treasurer shrink into a tiny ball as he tried to justify the valuation of the titles registry. We know what the Treasurer has been up to. A July 2012 *Brisbane Times* interview betrays what the Treasurer was really thinking. In it he states—

I do think Labor fell into the error, or seriously miscalculated and under-estimated the desire for Queenslanders to hold onto the AAA credit rating ...

We know that the Treasurer obsesses about this more than anything else. Last year we saw the titles registry action. We are watching you very closely, Mr Treasurer. What does the Residential Tenancies Authority think about this reform? We have the official media release, but they did not appear at the public hearing and did not make a submission. Treasurer, what does the RTA really think about this? We have seen the reports. What did the housing minister know about this or was this an idea dreamt up by Treasury and delivered? I want to pass on a comment about Tenants Queensland and their initial reaction on the day the bill was dropped in the House. They said—

Remember, bonds are tenants' money held in trust until the end of a tenancy.

...

The changes were tucked away on page 7-13 of this omnibus bill.

...

Key concerns for us are—ensuring we can continue to track what happens to the significant interest, resources and investments generated over many years from tenants' bonds and that tenants continue to benefit directly from it.

...

This successful campaign has meant the RTA has been able to provide free services to the entire rental sector—lessors, agents and tenants.

This is what Tenants Queensland is saying—

Remember, bonds are tenants' money held in trust until the end of a tenancy.

...

This was a surprise to us—we were neither aware nor consulted on them.

Tenants Queensland and the REIQ were stakeholders in the dark when it came to this reform. I have nearly completed my 30 minutes and my voice is nearly cooked, but I am going to finish anyway. This shows the wrong priorities of the Treasurer. This bill will not free up land to help build one more house or take one extra family off the social housing waitlist. It will not make rents grow at a slower rate or make housing more affordable. All it does is cause more uncertainty where no more is needed. This Treasurer has the wrong priorities for this state and this government must go!

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (12.22 pm): To misquote someone, 'Never have so many vocal chords been damaged for so little purpose.' To go further, normally one would say 'full of sound and fury, signifying nothing', but this was full of croaks and groans and was unintelligible. One thing I did pick up was that the member for Toowoomba South was intimidated by a letter. I sought a copy of the letter, which is tabled for the benefit of the House.

Let us look at the advice. The advice was that the RTA is already part of the general government sector, which means both assets and liabilities held by the RTA are already reported as part of the general government sector balance sheet. Members must understand that that is a fairly mundane piece of accounting advice. It goes on—

There will be no increase to the value of assets or liabilities shown on the General Government Sector balance sheet ...

It seems that the member for Toowoomba South was embarrassed and intimidated by accounting advice. Presumably he has nightmares where CPAs come and talk to him about accounting advice. The member for Toowoomba South is not ready to be the Treasurer of this state because simple accounting advice in relation to general government ledgers intimidates him and he feels bullied and embarrassed. He is not up to it.

The administration of the State Penalties Enforcement Registry is vitally important. We have seen it continue to grow as individual Queenslanders build up significant debts. It has a major impact on their lives. I am sure people on this side have met people for whom this is the case. I am pleased that this

government, and especially this Treasurer, has undertaken these reforms to make a difference, not like the last government when the failed Treasurer put it in the far-too-hard basket and let the SPER debts build up. I note that the member for Toowoomba South wished to go through every other bill except this bill. I was going to pick him up on relevance, but I think we have silenced him for some time due to his yelling. I would like to address some of the points he made. It is clear that we need to look at the history. Since 2020 when we put in place the recovery and compliance program, including the dedicated debt management centre in Ipswich—that I note the members for Jordan and Ipswich know about—it has collected more than \$145 million for the state, getting that debt down for people whom it would hang over. These initiatives have also contributed to over \$325 million worth of debt being finalised in 2020-21. I am advised that SPER debt recovery is projected to reach an all-time high of \$300 million in the 2021-22 financial year. The member for Mermaid Beach is no doubt enthusiastic that that is happening.

The member for Toowoomba South spoke about write-offs. We have had \$37.5 million worth of debts written off. It is important to compare that to the failed member for Clayfield's regime as treasurer. They wrote off \$102 million in 2012-13. They put it, as I said, in the far-too-hard basket. It is not an easy task, but our government is beginning to have an impact. We heard in our public hearings that there had been some stabilisation in the debt and it had reduced from its peak. As I chaired the hearing, I noted with positivity its stabilisation. However, the deputy chair interjected, the one commended by the member for Toowoomba South, noting that it was a bit of a step in the right direction. He said, 'I think it is an improvement.' Even members of the committee from the opposition are congratulating the Treasurer, SPER and Treasury officials for these positive steps.

This bill was introduced to the House on 21 March and referred to the Economics and Governance Committee. We noted that the policy objectives of the bill are to implement an integrated approach to managing fines for camera detected offences and tolling offences, with functions centralised in a single agency—the Queensland Revenue Office; provide a framework for the earlier registration of unpaid infringement notices; to make changes to the holding of the assets of the Rental Tenancy Authority; as well as changes to Special Disability Trusts.

The EGC sought a briefing on the bill from Treasury officials and the transcript of that hearing is available on the EGC webpage. We called for submissions from the public and organisations ahead of a public hearing on the bill on 19 April. We heard from Ms Katrina Beavon from the REIQ; Ms Penny Carr and Ms Mary Flowers from Tenants Queensland; Ms Greg Chemello and Ms Sheryl Krome from the Moreton Bay Regional Council; and Mr Stephen Grace and Ms Famin Ahmed from LawRight. After these hearings and after careful examination of the bill we noted these important reforms improve the collection of SPER debt and guarantee rental tenants' bonds by making sure that their bonds are securely held in trust. It is for that purpose that the committee recommended unanimously that the bill be passed.

Labor members value equity. Those who build up debts have them hanging over them. We want them to address and get on top of their debts as soon as possible. For that reason I wish to draw to the attention of the House the information that LawRight provided in relation to specific difficult circumstances. This bill is all about getting people to understand the debt they are beginning to build up and to assist them in making changes to get on top of it so they can do better.

We know that with delay there is the potential for older debts to build up and become harder to recover, leaving a lasting legacy for those who hold them. It is really important that we have a quicker rate of referring them into SPER so that they can be addressed professionally and quickly. We know that there is an equity issue in that the burden of debt for disadvantaged people is so much greater. The committee heard from the Moreton Bay Regional Council, which gave us great insight and information—information that I think would be beneficial for Treasury and the regulation that is to come—about the way debts are referred and the council's efforts to service the residents and ratepayers of the community by ensuring that their debts are dealt with as quickly as possible.

There will be changes relating to SPER officers doing things such as work usually performed by a locksmith, towing or transporting an impounded vehicle and storing or securing property. SPER officers will be able to use body worn cameras. This is an important tool and we have seen it used in other areas of law enforcement. I note that the Minister for Police is here. Body worn cameras have protected both police officers and members of the public. When a law enforcement officer uses a body worn camera, the person who is losing their asset will be protected because, when informed of the fact, they will not behave badly, which can lead to worse consequences. Often the officer is accompanied by a police officer, but that police officer might not have the right angle and that can lead to a dispute

over the issues. Body worn cameras are really worthwhile and we balance that against other issues. Importantly, the use of a body worn camera also protects the officer involved so that they have a very clear record of their interactions.

The bill proposes reforms to the Residential Tenancies Authority. Concerningly for renters whose bonds are held in trust by the Residential Tenancies Authority, there were times when there was a deficit in the investments of the Residential Tenancies Authority. In 2017-18—obviously well before COVID—there was a \$7.9 million deficit and in 2019-20 there was a \$43.3 million deficit. The committee heard that a letter of comfort was sought and given by Treasury to the RTA. It is really sensible that we say to renters, who value their bonds, that we hold their assets securely and that we will act as guarantor to ensure they get their bonds back at the end of the rental period. That is a really important process that we value. We are ensuring that there is security over a renter's bond and that it will be returned to them.

I encourage members to look at the submissions the committee received on the Special Disability Trust. This is particularly meaningful for me because of a family I know in Park Ridge. They had attempted to make an arrangement to ensure the long-term security of their son, who has a very profound disability through a motor accident, but they ran into tax problems. This initiative will give more security to families that are dealing with that really difficult situation. They will be able to set up a special disability trust to ensure their disabled children can be financially secure. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (12.32 pm): It is another sitting week and another SPER bill hits the House. The \$1,200 million—I repeat: \$1,200 million—blowout in fines and penalties owing to Queensland taxpayers lays squarely at the feet of the Queensland Labor Party and their ill-advised decision to sell the rights to infringement notices to a private operator. We have seen bill after bill brought into this House by the Labor government, which is trying to contain the blowout in uncollected penalties but with virtually no diminution in the monolithic debt owed to the Queensland taxpayers in sight.

I refer to the comment of the member for Logan that when we came into government we were unable to reduce the massive SPER debt of \$700-odd million at the time, as I recall, that Labor had run up. However, there was no capacity because of the setup that they had put in place by selling assets—more Queensland assets sold by the Labor government! That was the problem for the Newman government in that particular period. This bill fiddles around the edges of recouping some of that money. As a party we would support all attempts to reduce the debt, even if those feeble attempts resulted in very little change to the debt figure owed to Queensland taxpayers. However, we cannot support other sneaky measures in the bill, which I will refer to further in my speech. I guarantee that over the next 2½ years, until the 2024 election, we will see that debt figure rise, particularly in view of the tough economic times ahead with rising inflation and rising interest rates that will force more people into the bad decision of not paying their infringement penalties. Labor could not manage a tuckshop financially, let alone put Queensland into a positive position financially.

However, there is one provision in the bill that I am totally uncomfortable with. It is the removal of the RTA board's independence when it comes to holding renters' bond money and passing control of that almost \$1 billion worth of rent payers' money to a tricky-fingered Labor government that has demonstrated it will use deceit, dodgy accounting evaluations and any non-disclosable financial dealings to avoid a ratings agency downgrade because of its indiscriminate large-scale borrowing shattering the Queensland balance sheet.

I note that today the Treasurer rose with a letter from his Treasury saying there is no difference in the assets and liabilities balance sheet. Oh der! I happen to be an accountant. When you have an asset that is other people's money there is a liability to pay that money back. However, there is a trick to this and it is all about the income level that this level of funding in government hands will create. It may give them capacity in the ratings agencies' eyes to pay back more money that they are owed in terms of their debt. It is not about the balance sheet as such, as the letter is purported to show, although I have not seen it yet; it is about the income that they hope to derive from the billion dollars in the Labor Party balance sheet.

The last Premier to suffer a ratings agency downgrade of Queensland's financial position was Anna Bligh, who was unceremoniously dumped at the next election by the greatest majority ever seen in this House. The architect of her financial demise was boy wonder treasurer Andrew Fraser. This Treasurer is desperate not to add his name to the history of failed Labor treasurers.

**Mr POWER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Having examined the bill through the hearings process, I cannot see the relevance of the speech of the member for Mermaid Beach's speech to this bill.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Member for Mermaid Beach, I ask you to come back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr STEVENS:** If the member for Logan had waited, I was coming to the analogy: if it smells like a cook up and it looks like a cook up and there is no justifiable reason for the government to take over the Robbie Schwarten inspired RTA, it seems that Treasurer Dick is up to his less-than-honest thimble-and-pea tricks again to avoid the ratings downgrade. I withdraw.

**Mr DICK:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offense at those words.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Treasurer. I believe the member has withdrawn.

**Mr STEVENS:** I withdraw. It is no wonder that the Treasurer is now referred to in financial circles as 'Tricky Dickie'.

**Mr DICK:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise on two points of order. Firstly—

**Mr STEVENS:** I withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mermaid Beach, take your seat while I take the point of order.

**Mr DICK:** The first point of order is that I find those words personally offensive and ask that they be withdrawn. The second point of order is on the clear abuse of the processes and standing orders of this parliament by saying unparliamentary words and then seeking to immediately withdraw them, knowing that they are unparliamentary. I would ask you, Madam Deputy Speaker, to take appropriate action against the member for his clear, blatant and flagrant disregard for the standing orders of this parliament.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): I will take advice on that. Member for Mermaid Beach, I agree that you will need to withdraw in terms of that comment being both personally offensive and unparliamentary. I caution you to refrain from engaging in that behaviour again in this speech.

**Mr STEVENS:** I withdraw. This smells like another 'great, get ready for sale titles office financial giggle' where the valuation of government assets that were not and will not ever be sold puts \$7½ billion on to the government's asset side of the ledger, aiding to hold back the tide of a ratings agency downgrade over Labor's \$130 billion of debt. The valuations were never disclosed by the duplicitous government as they were probably based on—as we find out a little bit later—somewhere between a 50- and a 100-year valuation. It is ludicrous to say what will happen in 2072. We do not know how this Treasurer sleeps at night knowing that he deliberately deceived and calculatedly overstated this Queensland government's financial position to the people of Queensland. As the—

**Mr DICK:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at the words that I am deliberately deceiving the people of Queensland. I ask the honourable member to withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mermaid Beach, the minister has taken offence. I ask that you withdraw.

**Mr STEVENS:** I withdraw. There will be a day of reckoning when the economy of Queensland turns down and when this Treasurer's fumbling and fiddling around the financial position will be exposed for all to see. Does the Treasurer note that inflation in Queensland is now upwards of five per cent and that the rising interest rates that will go with that as the year comes on will put enormous pressure on the financial position of Queensland?

It beggars belief that in 2016 the RTA had accumulated reserves on its investments of \$43 million, around four per cent of the rental bond moneys of \$1 billion. Just as the COVID outbreak trashed financial markets around the world, the Treasurer's feeble excuse for taking over the administration of the RTA's investment portfolio was that its reserves had fallen to minus \$42 million and that the government had to give a letter of comfort guarantee to the RTA's funds. That equates to around an eight per cent drop on funds invested in a devastating worldwide financial crisis because of COVID. To give the House a comparative drop in market value of shares, let us take one of the country's top blue-chip investments, the Commonwealth Bank. In July 2019, the period we are comparing the RTA drop in finances to, Commonwealth Bank shares were \$83. When COVID hit in February 2020,

they fell 36 per cent, to \$53, but bounced back in July 2020 to \$72, the corresponding 2021 period to the RTA's investment portfolio. They were down that year by 13 per cent, which makes the RTA's drop of eight per cent look meagre in comparison.

By the way, Commonwealth Bank shares today are around \$100. So the Treasurer's fabricated excuse for taking over the RTA's investment portfolio fails on every account. One can only deduce that the reason for the Treasurer hijacking the RTA board's remit has more to do with the wobbly balance sheet than protecting the interests of renters throughout Queensland. I acknowledge the member for Coomera, my financial adviser on the share market, who gave me those facts and figures.

It was conspicuous that the RTA board and administration failed to provide a submission to the Economics and Governance Committee and did not choose to attend committee hearings. This silence obviously indicates their disagreement with the proposed changes. Again, they join the conga line of frightened and threatened public servants and board members too intimidated by this integrity shattered Labor government which takes no prisoners when it comes to revenge and reprisal. It was also notable that consultation was deemed by this Labor government to be not necessary, which is in stark contrast to the Premier's hollow promises to be open and accountable in all of her government's actions.

Open and accountable has now degenerated into cover-up and being falsified by this Labor government. History will prove that this Palaszczuk period of governance over Queensland's finances is the biggest economic disaster for Queensland in its 157 years of existence.

In closing, this latest attempt at disguising the true state of play of Queenslanders' finances from rating agencies and Queensland taxpayers is a great big example of how this government will say anything, do anything and hide everything to stay in power and how Labor mates are living on jobs for the boys. The end is nigh and October 2024 cannot come quick enough.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (12.45 pm): I rise to contribute to the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill. I honestly do not think I could muster as much hyperbole in a lifetime of speeches in this House as the member for Mermaid Beach could muster in just 10 minutes. The end is nigh apparently, according to the member for Mermaid Beach. I want to speak about the bill given that it is kind of what we are here for.

**Mr Dick:** Gee, you're old fashioned!

**Mrs McMAHON:** I know. Call me old fashioned, thank you, Treasurer. I will take that interjection. As a member of the committee that considered this bill, I thank all the members—some more so than others—the chair, secretariat, submitters and those who appeared at the public hearing. There are a number of objectives of this bill; however, in the time that I have I would like to focus on aspects relating to the management of SPER, its administrative framework and the management of aspects of its debt.

The State Penalties Enforcement Registry is a division of the Queensland Revenue Office and is responsible for the collection and enforcement of unpaid infringement notices, court ordered monetary penalties, offender debt recovery orders and offender levies. As an agency, SPER works with defaulted fines across a range of organisations such as Queensland Police, Queensland Transport, local governments, tolling companies, Queensland Rail, universities and some hospital authorities. Currently, infringement notices may only be served by persons who are authorised officers, being a person appointed by the chief executive of the Department of Transport and Main Roads or a police officer. For the information of members in the House, SPER debts are not always speeding tickets or tolls. As an example, as at March 2022 in Logan outstanding parking fines held by SPER were more than double tolling and speeding fines.

The first part of the bill that I want to talk about is the changes to administrative functions that lock in the changes that occurred as part of some machinery-of-government changes. In February 2022 administrative functions relating to the relevant offences were integrated into the Queensland Revenue Office. This means that as at 1 February Queensland Treasury was responsible for sending infringement notices and acting as an administrative authority for such offences other than distracted driving offences. Distracted driving offences are those such as mobile phone and seatbelt offences. They will come under Queensland Treasury from 30 November 2022. This means that Queensland Revenue Office officers were appointed as authorised officers for the purpose of serving infringement notices.

This bill gives legislative effect to the fine-serving and administrative arrangements currently in place. Ultimately the Queensland Revenue Office, which includes SPER, will become the agency for issuing and administering infringement notices and collecting fines for relevant offences; however, the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service will retain responsibility for prosecuting the relevant offences.

I note submitter concerns about the ability for discretion to be applied within the Queensland Revenue Office when it comes to personal circumstances of debtors; however, the role of SPER has never been to act as an arbiter of whether the fines were deserved or to hear appeals of such. Where there is a complaint that the debtor is not responsible for the offences, SPER has always had the ability to refer the offences back to the issuing agencies to examine. This will be retained under these new arrangements. What SPER has done and will continue to do is work with debtors to find ways to make payment plans and other arrangements to pay off their SPER debt.

Another aspect of the bill that I will speak to is the reduced time frames within which defaulted infringement notices may sit with SPER. Currently, a person issued a fine by any agency generally has 28 days to pay that fine. After that 28-day period, the issuing agency has up to 12 months from the issuing date to register the defaulted fine with SPER to commence recovery action.

SPER reports that the sooner a debt is registered with them the greater the likelihood of debt recovery. Treasury advised that 61 per cent of debts referred to SPER are finalised within the first two months of them having them. They stated that any time the collection period goes beyond 60 days, the likelihood of collection diminishes rapidly. After 60 or so days probably about 60 per cent of fines have been paid. Over the next three years only another 20 per cent are paid.

It should be noted that whilst early consultation on this process flagged potential time frames for issuing authorities to register these debts, that is not articulated in this bill as consultation remains ongoing. I note the concerns of submitters such as the Moreton Bay Regional Council which uses a fine reminder notice system. This means that, after the original 28-day payment period is over, a reminder notice is sent to allow the defaulter a further opportunity to pay.

These councils were obviously concerned about the idea of having to register the defaulted fine at a prescribed earlier time which would be in the middle of their reminder period. They noted that for an issuing agency such as the council to register a fine with SPER, the issuing agency pays a registration fee of \$73.80 per fine. The concern was that such councils would rather allow more time and make arrangements for payment with their constituents rather than send the debt to SPER and pay the SPER registration fee. It should be noted, however, that whilst the issuing authority does pay the registration fee, when the debt is recovered by SPER that fee is returned to the issuing authority.

The third aspect of the bill that I will refer to in my contribution is the authorisation of body worn cameras by SPER enforcement officers. In conjunction with this, the bill also clarifies how SPER enforcement officers are appointed and how long such an appointment lasts for. With respect to the use of body worn cameras, the provision is in line with other agencies that use various enforcement powers in public. Whilst the majority of enforcement officers use their powers administratively, from time to time they are required to go into the field to undertake enforcement action such as seizure, immobilisation of the sale of vehicles. In any instance where such powers are used in a dynamic and potentially emotionally charged situation involving members of the public, the idea of body worn cameras provides a level of protection and transparency for both the enforcement officer and members of the public.

The fourth and final aspect of the bill that I will speak to is cost recovery for enforcement actions. Currently, when a vehicle is seized and sold SPER is responsible for the towing, storage and sale costs of the vehicle. When the vehicle is sold, the money from the sale of the vehicle is used to nullify the debt. The costs incurred by SPER are not paid out of the proceeds from the vehicle sale. Keep in mind when we talk about this that there are fewer than 40 enforcement actions that take place per year.

Enforcement costs will be articulated under the state penalty enforcement regulations to include work such as that done by locksmiths and costs associated with towing, the impounding of a vehicle, the storage and insurance of property seized and the sale of such property. The bill allows that should the sale of the property such as a vehicle exceed the debt outstanding, the enforcement costs are recovered from the sale price. Treasury advises that should the sale price not meet the enforcement costs, the cost will still be borne by the registry and not passed on to the debtor.

I have a very good knowledge of SPER and the old SPER system. I note that prior to SPER we had the warrant of commitment system. Anyone who failed to pay a fine was basically locked up for a period commensurate with the fine. That meant that at any given time we had dozens of people in watch houses for failing to pay parking fines. Failing to vote was often something that someone might be locked up for a couple of days for.

Whilst SPER has, and always has had, problems in terms of cost recovery, I look at the fact that previously the cost to the community of incarcerating people in our watch houses for days on end for not paying a parking fine was far greater. I know the overall figures are high, but I think we need to look

at what we had previously, where we are now with SPER and where further iterations of amendment bills will go with SPER. At the end of the day, these are fines and people need to pay them, but do they deserve to be locked up in a watch house or jail purely because of their monetary difficulties? From a budget bottom line point of view, I know exactly what I prefer. I prefer a SPER debt managed by this state and not bodies in custody. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (12.55 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Economics and Governance Committee's report on the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill 2022 and to the bill itself. I mention the report because it was interesting to review, as I was looking through all of the Hansard reporting of the questioning of witnesses, some of the tactics used by, in particular, the member for Logan as the chair of the committee. Indeed, almost all of the time that he spent questioning witnesses he spent asking them about the risk. He was not worried about the reward aspect of it. He was always talking about the short-term risk and not the long-term risk reward scenario.

**Mr Dick:** That's not what I heard.

**Mr CRANDON:** I do not have time to quote all of the matters concerning the chair of the committee, but one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine times he brought up the short-term risk and not the risk reward ratio or the long-term risk. I make that point before I turn to the bill.

I was asking myself all the way through the hearings and turned my mind to this question: what is their game? What is the Treasurer's game? What is he getting out of this billion dollars that is sitting on the balance sheet? Where is the deal? Where does he get the return or reward? I realised that they know a good deal when they see one. They have a billion dollars in the coffers that they can invest for the long term. This is a trust. This is a billion dollars that will continue to grow as rents increase. The rental bond fund will continue to grow. They have a billion-plus dollars sitting there now.

Do not worry about what the Queensland Investment Corporation would necessarily do with the funds such as invest them in private equity et cetera and the much bigger returns that QIC aim for, let us just look at what we would get if we were in QSuper. QSuper returns in a balanced fund were 8.04 per cent over the last 10 years. What does it cost to run the RTA—the whole shooting match? I think it is around \$40 million. Some 8.04 per cent of \$1 billion equates to more than \$80 million of return in a balanced fund in QSuper. If we look at the short term, the return for one year was 3.3 per cent, for three years was 5.37 per cent and for five years was 6.37 per cent. Let us remember that we were smack bang in the middle of a pandemic during that period. The 10-year return was 8.04 per cent.

I put it to members that what the deal is here and what they want is to take the opportunity away from the RTA to take those long-term returns, those forever returns, and use them to benefit renters in Queensland—over and above the \$40 million that it is costing to run the show—or indeed, God forbid, pay the interest back to those people who have their \$800, \$1,200 or \$1,500 bond in the fund. Instead of that, they get to keep everything over and above what it costs them to run the fund.

I will leave my contribution there. That is the game this Treasurer is playing. He wants all of the returns from the billion dollars and the ever-growing billion dollars—it will be \$2 billion one day and so it will go on—and he will give them a peppercorn amount to run their operations. He will not give them the opportunity to do anything more than that.

Debate, on motion of Mr Crandon, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Health System, Data Reporting; Federal Labor Government

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): Today is the 144th day of the year and Queenslanders cannot see one skerrick of data to tell them what is the situation with their health system at the moment in this state—and that is after 144 days. Today we came in to question time and asked some questions on their behalf. We wanted to know what the up-to-date ambulance ramping figures were. We wanted to know what the ambulance wait times were. We asked questions about the elective surgery wait times, the emergency department delays and the waitlists for the waitlists. We have seen nothing.

Today the government says they will release the data in May. Here is a newsflash: we are deep into May. For the minister to suggest that it cannot be done now tells me one thing and one thing only: this government does not want to face the music. I have a sneaking suspicion that the figures have

deteriorated further. After half a decade of decline the Queensland health crisis continues to deteriorate under the watch of this minister and this government. They have stopped listening, they have stopped acting and they have stopped caring, and Queenslanders are collateral damage.

We know that the minister receives data formally on the 10th day of every month. We know from RTIs that the minister receives it weekly, yet Queenslanders are not even given the decency of being shown January's figures! We are now towards the end of May. There are failings every day impacting everyday Queenslanders—people whom we have met as we have toured the state listening. There is Sandra from Ipswich. Can you imagine her thoughts when a terrified young boy was gasping for air while waiting for an ambulance that did not come? There is Brian from Ipswich, who is in his later years of life and waited six hours to get care at the Ipswich Hospital after falling in his backyard. There is Siahn from Gladstone. She suffers multiple seizures every day and she cannot even get in to see a specialist to try to get treatment to bring some normality back to her life. Amongst more than 100 people who turned up in Bundaberg, we met Peter. He has been waiting for a hip for 420 days.

Then last night there was the story of a five-year-old boy called Hiyaan. We do not know the details, but reports indicate that he was taken to Logan Hospital on Sunday night with stomach pains. He waited in the emergency room for four hours. He was discharged at 10 pm. He died later that night after being driven by his dad back to the hospital. I have seen the family asking for answers. They deserve no less. They deserve answers to what went on. On behalf of the opposition and this parliament, we say sorry to the Kapil family for their loss. No parent should go through that.

We must keep working every day to heal the Queensland Health crisis. We have put our solutions on the table as we have gone around the state listening to doctors, to nurses, to paramedics, to patients, to families. We have listened. We have acted. We want to see doctors and nurses back in charge. We want better triaging. We want the data in real time. Right now we would accept seeing January's data, yet we are now deep into May.

In other hospitals across this nation you can see data in real time, and that helps with resources and it helps drive a culture of service. We also want better resources—more beds, more staff, more equipment. If you listened to the Premier, there was only one way to fix this last element, and that was that it all had to come from Canberra. This is despite a cut over the last three years to the health and hospital networks at the front line and despite increases in health funding from both state and federal governments. Now we have been led to believe by the Premier that there will be a new dawn when it comes to health funding—fifty-fifty, I believe, was what was discussed.

On behalf of every Queenslander, we want to know when does the fifty-fifty funding deal start? When will the money hit the front line? When will we see more beds and more doctors and more nurses? When will we have an ambulance ramping rate that is not the worst in the nation? When will Queenslanders know when they pick up the phone that at the end of it is not a frustrated paramedic waiting at the end of a ramp while they suffer in their hour of need? The Premier said Queensland hospitals are for Queenslanders. Queensland hospitals are the responsibility of the Queensland government. Get on with it and fix it!

The Premier injected herself into the election campaign. She made it her remit to tell Queenslanders to vote for a change of government. She did it on many occasions. In one seat in particular she put store in injecting herself, and that was the seat of Ryan. She did robocalls. There was a direct mail piece. She was on the pre-poll. The current numbers showed, in an election where a Labor government came into power, that there was a swing against the Labor Party in this seat and in this state. There were no net gains. The coalition, in an election loss, holds 70 per cent of the seats in Queensland.

What I will not do though is follow the lead of the Premier and spend the next two and a bit years launching a political war with Canberra. What we say, as we did at the first possible opportunity, is that we wish the new Prime Minister all the best. We look forward to working well and productively with them because that is what Queenslanders expect and deserve.

During his victory speech, Mr Albanese made a point about what it would be like for a young child in social housing to see a prime minister come from a background like his. I thought that was a remarkable contribution. I also think it is quite special that for the first time in the nation's capital the Prime Minister will have a non-Anglo-Saxon surname. I grew up in a community where I only saw Anglo-Saxon surnames on the walls of my community, despite it being a proud multicultural community with a very large Italian heritage. I think that is another barrier that has been broken on behalf of every Australian, and we should acknowledge that today.

I have been through a few elections and I have been on both sides of the ledger. There is one thing that is clear, and that is that governments must listen—governments must listen and respond. Come election time governments need to be able to stand on their record. This one in Queensland will be in a lot of trouble. As the new Prime Minister said, governments do not get better in their fourth term!

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! I remind members of the opposition that your interjections are interrupting your own leader and making it difficult for anybody to hear what he is saying.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** They do not get better in their fourth term. Mr Deputy Speaker, let me tell you the things Queenslanders would want to see if the government could stop playing petty politics. They would want to see: a government that focuses on an economy for everyone, where those who aspire to more will be given the opportunity and those who are not able to do so will be given the comfort of knowing that the government will have its back; a government that will be honest with its books and not use trickery to try and prop up a very shaky budget; a government that believes in service delivery so that when somebody picks up a phone—and pays their tax—they know that an ambo will come; a government that, when someone comes into your house who does not belong there, a person in a blue uniform will turn up and, heaven forbid, they might even have the laws to stop the repeat offender from going back around time and time again; a government where an education system can have first-class facilities wherever a child goes; a government where someone in the bush deserves access to first-class medical facilities and they do not need to have a baby on the side of a road; a government where people in Ipswich having to step over people lying on the floor in an emergency department can be in the rear-vision mirror; and a government that values transparency and accountability and does not give up, unlike this tired fourth-term government.

### **Federal Labor Government; Off-the-plan Developments, Sunset Clauses**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (2.10 pm): Before I begin I do want to respond to a few of the issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition. I cannot believe that the Leader of the Opposition stood in here today and had a go at the Premier over the fact that they got absolutely wiped out in the seat of Ryan. Your own LNP member, remember him? Remember the guy who knifed Jane Prentice?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! You are the one I saw, member for Gympie, so you are warned.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** Julian Simmonds, the former member for Ryan, knifed his former boss, Jane Prentice, to take the seat. They got absolutely smashed in the seat of Ryan. I do welcome the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has welcomed the new Albanese government and said that he will cooperate with them. I find that hard to believe, given that not once did he pick up the phone to his own party when they were in government and demand more support and funding for Queensland—not even post floods, when New South Wales was getting \$3,000 and poor old Queenslanders were getting \$1,000. Not once did he pick up the phone to his own party, so I doubt very much that he will advocate to the Albanese Labor government and try and cooperate.

I am so pleased that we have a federal Labor government that will take action on aged care and Medicare to relieve our hospital system. I note that the Leader of the Opposition did not make one mention of the fact that the Albanese Labor government will be investing in health and has put health on the National Cabinet agenda because Scott Morrison refused to do so. We on this side of the House are very excited about working with a federal Labor Albanese government because we know it will mean more resources for our health and hospital systems.

Today I also want to talk about a really important issue, which is sunset clauses. We know that Queensland is a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family. It is no surprise that many people want to build a home and make a future here in our great state. Since the pandemic we have seen demand for housing in Queensland grow, and this has resulted in many more Queenslanders buying off-the-plan properties and experiencing delays in ordering building products.

Our Land Sales Act provides buyers with the right to terminate a contract for an off-the-plan sale of land if the contract is not settled within 18 months of entering into the contract. While this statutory sunset provision does not apply to sellers, I understand that some individual contracts include a clause which provides the seller with a similar termination right. Members may be aware of recent reports of

developers terminating contracts for off-the-plan sales of land if the contract is not settled within a specified time frame, and in some cases it has been done by the developer to take advantage of rising property prices.

I want to make it clear that sunset clauses are not part of the standard REIQ Queensland Law Society endorsed contract, and for that reason I strongly encourage anyone who is considering buying a residential property to obtain legal advice before signing a contract, especially when there are added conditions. Similarly, anyone who has already signed an off-the-plan contract and is concerned about the sunset clause should seek advice about their rights, including possible dispute resolution options and remedies, if the seller seeks to terminate the agreement. We also understand that these contracts have had real consequences—and in some cases devastating consequences—for people, especially those trying to get into the property market for the first time. I can appreciate that many Queenslanders are frustrated and angry. That is why we are committed to taking action to address this issue.

I have arranged for this to be considered as part of the work we are doing on a brand new Property Law Act. Careful consideration will be given to approaches adopted by other jurisdictions that have grappled with similar issues associated with sunset clauses being included in off-the-plan contracts. We will be consulting with buyers and sellers to understand more about the impact of these clauses and we will be introducing legislation to address this, along with the broader findings of the property law review, by the end of the year. Property law is complex and we do have to take the time to consult, but they are being examined as a priority.

I also want to take this opportunity to put developers on notice. The government's clear expectation is that they treat buyers fairly, reasonably and in good faith. I have been really disappointed to hear some of the stories of people being taken advantage of. Treat people and their money with the respect they deserve.

### **Member for Capalaba, Flyers; Palaszczuk Labor Government, Accountability; Influenza, Vaccination**

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.16 pm): I want to talk today about pot kettle black as far as it relates to the member for Capalaba—the most litigious member of this parliament—with respect to electoral expenditure, dobbing on members of parliament, fighting with his regional council—other than the member for Kawana, of course, because it is deserved. During the federal election campaign the member for Capalaba sent out flyers which I will table.

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of photographs of flyers relating to political material for federal election [\[695\]](#).

They were anti-Morrison government flyers. You would expect it from him because he is a fighter, but they were authorised by the member for Capalaba's electorate office address. He was spending his taxpayers' money, his electorate allowance, on dodgy political flyers despite the fact the Clerk of the Parliament sent out an email to all members on 25 March. I table a copy of an email from the Clerk.

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 22 April 2022, from the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, to members and staff of the Queensland Parliament, regarding the use of resources for purposes associated with elections (including federal elections) [\[697\]](#).

He then had to send out a further reminder on 22 April after that flyer hit the letterboxes. I also table a copy of a complaint that the Manager of Opposition Business made to the Clerk and the Clerk's response, which I will read into Hansard.

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of emails between the member for Glass House, Mr Andrew Powell MP, and the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, regarding the use of resources for purposes associated with elections (including federal elections) [\[696\]](#).

The Clerk says—

I have actioned this matter.

As you are aware, the ... Allowance and other resources cannot be used for electioneering ...

It is my view that attached flyer is clearly electioneering material.

He has breached what he has complained about for the whole entire time he has been in this parliament. I say to the member for Capalaba: pay back the money! How much did it cost the taxpayers of Capalaba? Pay it back and apologise for using his constituents' electorate allowance for election purposes.

I just came from a public meeting of the PCCC. I went to the last public meeting of the PCCC. I asked the chairman to tell the committee how much the CCC has spent on legal fees in relation to the Jackie Trad matter before the court. The CCC responded to the PCCC. We moved a motion today that the letter in which he says how much the CCC has spent on this matter be publically available. Guess what? The Labor members opposed the motion.

This Premier was elected in 2015. She looked down the barrel of the camera and said she believes in accountability, transparency and integrity. In a public meeting the four Labor members voted not to allow the people of Queensland see how much money they are spending to defend a report that Jackie Trad is trying to keep secret and continues to keep secret. It shows that Jackie Trad is still the puppetmaster of so many members over there.

If the Premier believes in transparency and accountability, then let the public know and release the figures that were just shown. I could not believe that Labor members voted against the transparency, when the CCC themselves were happy for it to be publicly released. They provided the letter and said, 'We will redact this part, but we are happy for the rest of it to be released,' but Labor members continue the protection racket of Jackie Trad.

I also say today that there has been a complete botch-up of the influenza vaccine rollout, as I have just seen in the *Courier-Mail*. I have received correspondence from GPs across South-East Queensland and across all of Queensland. They did not know about it. Their phones ran off the hook yesterday, with receptionists and GP managers answering phone calls where callers said, 'We want to book in for our free flu vaccine.' They then had to say, 'It's free for those over 65 and those with illnesses, but otherwise it's \$23.' The government announced it before telling the very people who are going to inject the influenza vaccine. What a botch-up. Those opposite want to talk and lecture people about botched-up vaccine rollouts. I say to the Labor government that they only need look in the mirror. What a process! Also, there are doctors who have private supplies they paid for which they cannot use under the public system. Are they going to be reimbursed for their expenditure? They absolutely should be.

I conclude on this before I run out of voice. I saw Labor members today happy to have an Albo Prime Minister, but they were all looking down. If we look across the room and at the Labor vote, the member for McConnel is gone and the member for Miller is gone. The Greens wave is coming across all of these seats. Goneski! Let it come. It cannot come soon enough.

*(Time expired)*

### Federal Labor Government

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (2.21 pm): I want to remark on some of the hypocritical comments made by the Leader of the Opposition, particularly in relation to health care. The member for Broadwater is a Gold Coast member of parliament who went to the last election refusing to match Labor's commitment for a satellite hospital, for a 40-bed mental health rehabilitation unit or for a hybrid theatre. The then leader of the opposition, the member for Nanango, spent days refusing to rule out cuts to healthcare workers through attrition numbers. What did they do in more recent times? In the most recent federal election, did they call on their federal colleagues to match federal Labor's commitment to an urgent care clinic on the Gold Coast? No. It is pathetic.

I want to turn to the results of Saturday, where millions of young Australians rejected the divisive politics of the LNP. They voted for a better future. They rejected an LNP government that denied climate change and incited culture wars, that cut climate funding in its last budget, that vetoed renewable energy projects and that was dragged to the table of net zero. They rejected an LNP government whose policy—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member for Kawana, you are warned.

**Ms SCANLON:** They rejected an LNP government whose policy it was to keep wages low. In fact, they gloated about it being a deliberate feature of their economic architecture. What did the acting youth affairs minister, Stuart Robert, do? He got on TV and said that the lowest income earners—many of whom are young people—did not deserve a dollar an hour pay rise. This is a man who was billing the Australian taxpayer \$1,000 a month for his own home internet bill. I do not even know how you rack up a bill that high. Young people rejected this LNP government which told renters that the solution to skyrocketing house prices was to just go and buy a house.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Broadwater.

**Ms SCANLON:** The LNP government then announced it would just bulldoze the superannuation of young Australians, which they admitted themselves would actually jack up house prices. Is any of this a surprise when they abolished the office of youth affairs?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Bonney and member for Broadwater, you are both warned.

**Ms SCANLON:** Instead, Australians voted for an Albanese Labor government which will build more affordable housing, together with Queensland's \$2.1 billion investment around housing. The Albanese government will bring back an office for youth. This is a government that promotes women and has affirmative action targets. It is pretty clear from the most recent results on the weekend that young women in particular rejected the LNP government that perpetuated a toxic culture and workplace and that failed to deliver the 55 recommendations of Respect@Work. What can we expect from a party whose senior minister Peter Dutton accidentally sent a message to journalist Samantha Maiden calling her a 'mad-expletive-witch' and insulting her for writing a story about alleged inappropriate conduct by one of his former colleagues?

What is the LNP's response to their problem with women? To preselect Henry Pike, the new member for Bowman, who fat shamed and degraded women on social media. At a state level we know what those opposite think. The member for Everton criticised our government for having too many women on the Parole Board. The member for Broadwater said he wants more female representation in the LNP, but he actually turfed out the youngest member of the Queensland LNP and the youngest woman to enter Queensland parliament.

The LNP now return to Canberra with 17 fewer seats. It should be a wake-up call that young Australians will not tolerate the divisive politics of the LNP. Despite that, senior figures are now jostling over whether they will progress the party further towards the far right. The same man who said that what happened to Brittany Higgins was 'he said, she said' and that rape victims in Nauru were trying it on is now being slated for the top job. The party is positioning itself towards hatred, towards climate denial, towards politics focused on a few and not many.

So it begs the question: what does the opposition leader and those opposite stand for? Is it with the so-called progressives like the member for Bonney? They are all on the same team ultimately as people like Peter Dutton, Matt Canavan, Gerard Rennick, Keith Pitt and Colin Boyce. While the Palaszczuk government and Queenslanders called for a fair share from Canberra, for climate action and for a federal government that actually cares and delivers things like the National Disability Insurance Scheme and aged-care reform, those opposite cowered in the corner and were silent.

The opposition leader, the member for Broadwater, owes it to Queenslanders, especially the young people who rejected the politics of the LNP, to put their position on the record. Do they stand by the comments over the past decade about women made by those on his team? Do they stand for the climate denialism of the LNP, when Australians have made it clear that they want action? Does he stand by a culture of homophobia, transphobia and discrimination? At the end of the day, they might be different faces but they are all part of the same political party.

### Queensland Health; Bundaberg Hospital

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.26 pm): At the outset of my contribution here today, I want to place on the record my sincere condolences to the family of five-year-old Hiyaan Kapil. There are no words for the grief and the heartache that this family must be feeling right now. On behalf of the opposition, I say to the family of Hiyaan that you are in our thoughts and in our prayers following your devastating loss. Hiyaan's family deserve an explanation and they deserve answers, and those must be provided by Queensland Health. I will also say that I am troubled by the Minister for Health's failure to acknowledge this tragedy today. The minister had every opportunity to acknowledge this tragedy in the House this morning but she chose not to.

I want to raise an important matter which has been raised with the opposition in relation to the Bundaberg Hospital. Members will know that the opposition recently held a health crisis town hall in Bundaberg where over 100 residents came out in force to bravely speak up about the worrying state of the public health system in Bundaberg. Some of the stories were truly harrowing, and I again want to thank all those who attended. However, the very concerning issue I would like to raise today is in relation to clinical malpractice at the Bundaberg Hospital. Specifically, it has been alleged that a number of clinical staff at the Bundaberg Hospital may have administered sedative medication to patients over an extended period of time. The allegations state that there may have been specific incidents which caused severe patient harm, all occurring on medical ward 3 of the hospital. I wrote to the minister on 11 May 2022 raising these concerns directly with her. I am yet to receive any reply. I table my letter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 11 May 2022, from the member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP, to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, Hon. Yvette D'Ath, regarding allegations of clinical malpractice at Bundaberg Base Hospital [\[698\]](#).

In that letter, I asked that the minister promptly address the following matters: one, to confirm that an internal investigation by the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service was undertaken following inappropriate medication administered on medical ward 3 of the Bundaberg Hospital; two, to provide the number of staff who were dismissed, disciplined or referred to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency following the investigation; three, to confirm how many patients were potentially affected by inappropriate medication administration; four, to confirm over what period of time the inappropriate medication administration occurred; and, five, to advise how many serious adverse patient outcomes were identified as part of the review, including any incidents or serious harm or death.

If substantiated, these allegations are deeply troubling. This is a hospital, a town and a community who have walked this sad and sorry path before. You would be hard pressed to find a Queenslander who does not know about the tragedy that occurred in the Bundaberg Hospital during the first decade of this century. We thought that saga of clinical malpractice was consigned to history. Alas, it appears this issue has raised its ugly head again.

I have given the minister nearly two weeks to respond to my letter, but time is now up. The minister needs to come clean about what has happened. These allegations need to be addressed. I ask the question here now: how long has the minister known about this? In answer to a question this morning, the minister said that she was aware of one case but did not answer the question if there were any other cases. Was it before the letter was sent two weeks ago or has the minister known for longer? If the minister has known for longer, why has the minister not told anyone?

In the interests of openness and transparency for the people of Bundaberg, the minister should address this issue in the House today. The minister's prepared statement this morning is not enough. The people of Bundaberg deserve better than this. What if the minister was not asked? Would anyone have ever known what happened on medical ward 3? Clearly it was the minister's plan to sweep this issue under the carpet rather than address the issue, and that is shameful.

I would like to acknowledge Beryl Crosby, who has offered her support to families who have been affected by the alleged malpractice. I would also like to place on the record an acknowledgement of the hard work of my colleague the member for Burnett, Stephen Bennett. His advocacy for a better health system in Bundaberg has been tireless.

That is in stark contrast to the member for Bundaberg, who promised a new level 5 hospital to the people of Bundaberg. You can find that Facebook post in the member for Bundaberg's deleted items. He deleted that promise. The gall! We will not forget that promise, member for Bundaberg, and trust me, the people of Bundaberg will not forget it either.

### Federal Labor Government

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.31 pm): On Sunday morning, Queenslanders saw the sun rise on change and a better future with the election of an Albanese Labor government. The Australian people took the opportunity to put behind us the nine miserable years of the previous Liberal-National government. I say that there is nothing more miserable than the performance of the member for Kawana today. That kind of behaviour is exactly why people are turning off politics, and it is absolutely disgraceful. I remind the member for Kawana that there was a 4.6 per cent swing to Labor in Fairfax and a 4.3 per cent swing to Labor in Fisher, so perhaps he should not gloat.

Scott Morrison obviously showed us that the bulldozer was less 'dozer' and more 'bull'—refusing to take responsibility, missing in action, blaming others and not admitting to his mistakes. The Australian voters have seen through him and his lacklustre and divided team with a clear and decisive kick.

On a local level, I want to congratulate my incredible local federal members. I first mention Milton Dick MP, the member for Oxley, who ran a terrific campaign. Milton has been my friend for 30 years. He is one of the hardest working representatives I know and he convincingly earned the trust of his community. At this time he has seen a 5.4 per cent swing to him and he holds almost 62 per cent of the two-party preferred vote. In the adjoining seat of Blair, going into this election as a marginal seat of 1.2 per cent, Shayne Neumann has prevailed with a 4.5 per cent swing to Labor. This is despite the LNP throwing everything at this seat, including a visit from Scott Morrison and Barnaby Joyce, though I am not sure that was a real positive for the Liberals. I also want to thank Pam McCreadie, our candidate in Wright. This is always a really tough seat for Labor, but she has managed to shave four per cent off that margin. We are very grateful to Pam and our incredible volunteers for taking on the fight in this important and changing seat.

I recognise that expectations are high for the new Albanese Labor government, and that is no surprise given how low expectations had gotten under the former Liberal-National coalition government. Anthony Albanese in his victory speech did not speak of miracles but of something fundamental to Labor and to our movement. He said—

No-one left behind because we should always look after the disadvantaged and the vulnerable. But also no-one held back, because we should support aspiration and opportunity. This is what my government will do.

This puts the new Albanese government in step with the Palaszczuk Labor government. The very things we have been fighting for since we won office in 2015 are exactly that: a hand up and a push forward for our communities.

For the first time in a long time, we can have a serious and meaningful discussion about health care in our country. Later this week I will be speaking more on the Health and Environment Committee's important report on the impact that primary, allied and private health care, as well as aged care and NDIS, have had on our public health system. It is a meaningful and considered report and, frankly, if the Morrison government had been re-elected this report would have been left to languish or, like those opposite have done, been derided.

An Albanese Labor government will address fundamental concerns in our health system such as addressing GP shortages in regional and outer metro regions like mine, ensuring that medications are cheaper for those who can least afford them and restoring regional telehealth services. An Albanese Labor government will implement practical measures to ensure older Australians receive the aged care they deserve. Seriously, when you have to include better food for residents as a key part of your aged-care policy, you know that the system is fundamentally broken and, frankly, an absolute disgrace.

An Albanese Labor government will do something more about extending the promise of home ownership to more Australians, not by raiding people's superannuation accounts to achieve this—doing little more than raising the prices of the very homes young and lower earning buyers could ill afford. We know that the LNP do not support universal superannuation, and if they had been re-elected I was confident that they would have further eroded and dismantled our super system.

Whilst I take no comfort in people losing their seats, I was pleased to see that junior Liberal minister Tim Wilson, who zealously pushed his 'home first, super second' policy, is now more 'Zoe Daniel first, Tim Wilson second' in the seat of Goldstein.

We now have a federal government that will implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full, that will implement all 55 recommendations of the *Respect@work* report and that will finally deliver a national anti-corruption commission. It is indeed a new and welcome dawn in Australian politics.

### Foster Carers

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.36 pm): I would like to bring to the House's attention the definition of a 'troublemaker': a person who habitually causes difficulty or problems, especially by inciting others to defy those in authority.

**Mr Harper:** Talking about the opposition leader.

**Ms CAMM:** I take that interjection from the member for Thuringowa. When I was in his electorate last week, it was quite interesting to hear his own constituents being referred to as troublemakers. I was in the electorate of Mundingburra last week. His constituents reported to me that he will not even return emails. The troublemakers I am referring to are foster carers across our state who are giving their love, their support and their attention to the most vulnerable children in our state. I note from the minister a statement released on Friday, after my visit to North Queensland. It reads—

I want parents and carers to know that support is always available to keep their children safe and their families healthy and thriving.

My message to the minister is: that is not the way foster carers and families across North Queensland are feeling. In fact, I heard from them that they think the minister's words are superficial at best. When the minister and her director-general travel to North Queensland to meet with foster carers, it is not seen as genuine engagement.

**Mr Harper:** You are a disgrace!

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for Thuringowa, you are warned.

**Ms CAMM:** I take that interjection. What is a disgrace is the lip-service paid by this government to First Nations children. What is a disgrace against this government is when children are sent back to community—

**Ms Enoch** interjected.

**Ms CAMM:** I am. I am referring to every minister—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member, you will put your comments through the chair. Member for Algeester, you will do the same with your interjections, but I ask you to cease interjecting.

**Ms CAMM:** Foster carers feel they need to meet with me in secret to share their concerns about young Indigenous children being sent back to community. In not one and not two cases but in three cases I have heard of children under the age of five being sexually assaulted. I hear words like 'manager's discretion' being used in relation to Child Safety senior management in North Queensland. Thresholds that would not be acceptable in metropolitan areas such as Brisbane somehow seem to be acceptable in Far North Queensland—thresholds that move based upon the colour of a child's skin and based upon the community from which they come.

The standards of care are not consistent between Brisbane, Central Queensland and certainly Far North Queensland. We hear that the responses to sexual assault claims that have been raised by foster carers and referred to child safety have been, 'It has been alleged but not substantiated.' We hear about toddlers who are being returned to situations where they have no voice—children who have no voice to speak about their own fear or their own safety.

This is a government that is tasked, resourced and budgeted to support and protect our most vulnerable children. I do refer to section 187 of the Child Protection Act, which is solely in place to protect children. That very act is used to threaten foster carers, carers and GPs across North Queensland. New disclaimers regarding that act have now been added to emails only in Far North Queensland. I do not see that addition to emails coming out of the department in South-East Queensland.

I know there are many hardworking child safety officers across this state, but I implore the minister—and I have said it before in this House: there is an issue in Far North Queensland. Whether it is an unofficial policy of this government or not, it is upon everybody who sits opposite. I will continue to meet with foster carers. I will continue to answer the calls from those children who cannot speak for themselves. It is upon everyone in this House—most importantly those opposite—to ensure they get to the bottom of it.

### Influenza, Vaccination

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.41 pm): I rise today to talk about and acknowledge the fast action by the Premier and the health minister on the advice of our Chief Health Officer in relation to the current high number of flu cases sweeping Queensland and, furthermore, the announcement and the fast implementation of free flu vaccinations right across Queensland for Queenslanders. That is true leadership—caring for Queenslanders. That is what Queenslanders expect and deserve—I hope the opposition is listening—a government that acts responsively to protect Queensland and delivers on high-quality health services.

The flu as we know it is caused by one of two types of influenza viruses: influenza A or influenza B. There is an influenza C, which causes upper respiratory tract infections in young people, but it is not as common as influenza A or B. Mr Speaker, as you are well aware, a lot has been learnt from the Spanish flu from over 100 years ago. Modern medicine has come a long way and has developed vaccines that will protect us from the serious health impacts of such a serious illness. In 2017, Australia recorded more than 229,000 flu infections, the worst influenza case numbers in Australian history. The announcement yesterday by the Premier and the health minister is proactive and will no doubt reduce the number of influenza cases as more get vaccinated.

As we know, our frontline health workers have been working tirelessly to provide world-class health services to all Queenslanders during the global COVID-19 pandemic, and I thank them all for their dedicated professional service. We as Queenslanders can show the rest of Australia yet again that we can come together as a community to help each other through this flu season by getting the flu vaccine and showing support for and helping take the pressure off our frontline health workers.

As we all know, the Scott Morrison government was awfully slow off the mark to order COVID-19 vaccines for all Australians and even slower to send our fair share of vaccines to Queensland. Nothing was said by the opposition; there was just crickets. During this time those opposite kept calling for the Queensland borders to be opened, knowing full well that the people of Queensland did not have adequate protection from the COVID-19 virus and Queenslanders did not want the borders opened. The opposition needs to listen to the people of Queensland.

What the Premier and the health minister announced yesterday clearly demonstrates the difference between a failed Scott Morrison Liberal-National coalition government and a caring Palaszczuk state Labor government. That is right; those opposite continually play petty, silly political games when it comes to health. We know that every health worker across the country is doing their very best to serve their communities during these tough, challenging times, even when their colleagues are fatigued or are struck down with COVID and/or the flu. It is also very important that our First Nations people get the flu vaccine as soon as possible as well as our more senior community members and those who are immune compromised.

We have also learnt that with heightened awareness and improved hygiene we can minimise the spread of any virus. We have done that well in the past. We need to keep going with washing our hands on a consistent basis and teaching our young people to also wash their hands. This is important. We are concerned about the rate at which flu cases are escalating in Queensland. The data has shown us just how different this season is to previous years. Influenza A cases have doubled in Queensland every week and we have seen a jump from 1,848 cases to 4,282 in the past seven days alone. That is why from today Queenslanders aged six months or older can get a free flu shot at their local GP or pharmacy until the end of June. We have seen how difficult it is to fight COVID-19. To fight both COVID-19 and the flu is doubly hard.

Flu vaccines are generally not free except for the most vulnerable, but the Premier and the health minister have made this unprecedented decision to protect Queenslanders. Yes, we know that there will be teething problems rolling out such an important vaccination program for Queenslanders. It does not mean we give up. Those opposite only poke fun and find fault, like bullies do, when it comes to serious issues. I urge everyone to roll up their sleeves and to accept the offer of a free vaccine as soon as possible. It is good for the individual, their family members, and their communities. It also helps our frontline health workers and our paramedics by reducing the number of cases presenting to our emergency departments.

It is only when we as a government work closely with our communities across Queensland that we can get better health outcomes that we need and deserve. Come on Queensland, get the flu jab and save lives.

### Public Liability Insurance

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (2.46 pm): To say the Mackay-Whitsunday region's small business, tourism and hospitality operators are going through some of the toughest years they have ever faced would be an understatement. Border closures, restrictions, snap lockdowns and uncertainty have taken their toll. Businesses have been forced to downsize and lay off staff while others have closed their doors for good. This year they are facing another battle for their lives in the form of public liability insurance. Entertainment venues, adventure businesses, cleaning companies and food trucks are among those most affected by what the insurance industry likes to call improvements in risk management or improvements in risk appetite. These improvements have caused insurance premiums to skyrocket for small and medium businesses all over Central and North Queensland. Insurers are telling them the risks are too high and they are either pricing them out of the market or refusing to cover them at all.

Right now it is the entertainment sector under attack. That is the pubs, live music venues and the nightclubs that operate past midnight who use security providers for crowd control. It is the security providers who have now been told that no insurer will cover them if they operate after midnight or, at best, 1 am. One business in particular, Pauly's Security, has come to me and said they and their biggest club in Mackay that they provide crowd control services to will be forced to close if something is not done to help them. They said they will have no other choice but to stop operating once their current policy runs out, and they are not the only ones. Security providers all over Queensland are going to be affected by this ruling, although it will be the regional areas that will be hit the hardest.

The main insurer of the industry is Arena, who is telling brokers that their capacity is provided under binding authorities from international underwriters—in this case it is underwriters based at Lloyds of London—who get to dictate the type of businesses they can and cannot provide insurance for and under what conditions. The broker I spoke with about the issue said that the industry is about to be hit by a new ruling that will mean most brokers are no longer offering crowd control security providers any public liability insurance for the period after midnight or, at best, 1 am. The reason security companies have been given for this is that Lloyds of London have adapted and changed their risk appetite. No

other explanation, statistics or data has been given to explain to these companies why they are no longer allowed to operate after midnight in an industry where most young people do not arrive at nightclubs until 11 o'clock at night.

These new requirements imposed by Lloyds will have a devastating impact on the industry, particularly in regional areas where most of the operators are small or medium-sized businesses and turn over less than a million dollars a year. Urban areas in the south-east may be better able to weather the storm as they are bigger and able to accept \$100,000 excess each time they are affected.

Miramar says that insurers may be able to look beyond their capacity provided by Lloyds to the open market more broadly in order to find other insurance cover, but only 'for larger businesses that are better positioned to meet these requirements'. It seems to me that this fig leaf of 'liability risk appetite' is just another way that banks and international insurance underwriters are doing everything they can to destroy small and medium enterprise in regional communities. Only one insurer—Timemark—offers insurance, but there is a \$100,000 excess for each claim, and this does not get paid back. This will destroy small operators and a lot of medium-sized operators as well, particularly in the regions. Many regional security operators and clubs are saying that they will have to close down over this. This is an absolute shame, given they have struggled so long through COVID.

This issue needs to be sorted out, and all three levels of government need to be involved to fix this. It is the state and local governments that mandate businesses having public liability insurance. This means that they both have a responsibility to ensure insurance is made available to them and that its conditions are reasonable and achievable for businesses. We are seeing clear market failure when it comes to public liability insurance. We have seen the Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman working with the industry nationwide to find a solution. They are looking at a discretionary mutual fund, which will most likely be the solution. I believe there is a requirement for the federal government to step in, because industry has been failed by state and local governments. People's livelihoods should not be destroyed just because they are unable to find an insurer to offer them public liability insurance. This is an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed.

### Member for Capalaba, Flyers



**Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (2.50 pm): I am not on the list to speak today, but I was fortunate to get a special shout-out from the member for Kawana so I thought I would address the matters he raised. A benefit of being the whip is that you can take these opportunities.

The member for Kawana spoke about a flyer. The use of taxpayers' money is very important. I have raised this issue in the past. I note that the member for Oodgeroo is interjecting. I have previously taken to the Speaker and the Clerk his flyer, which cost over \$10,000. It was caught out.

**Dr Robinson:** I find those comments offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn. It is misleading the parliament.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Oodgeroo, you are an experienced member of this chamber. If you want to raise a point of order, you rise to your feet and ask for a point of order. You do not just rise and start speaking; that is disorderly in and of itself.

**Dr ROBINSON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I did ask that it be withdrawn on a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will take some advice. Member for Capalaba, the member has found your comments personally offensive. I would ask that you withdraw.

**Mr BROWN:** I withdraw. Before drafting these flyers, you have to go to the handbook and look at the criteria when it comes to electioneering purposes. Certain criteria should be applied to communications. Communications must not feature the party logo. The one tabled earlier does not feature the party logo—tick. Communications must not include any exhortation to vote. The one tabled does not ask anyone for their vote at this election—tick. The communication must reflect a message and information from members to their constituents or seek feedback. It did that as well—tick.

The criteria set out that, for example, the communication cannot simply repeat a series of negative headlines. It does repeat a series of negative quotes. That is very different to newspaper headlines. I did dispute this with the Clerk at the time, and I do have the option to get this decision reviewed by the tribunal. I am still considering that, but I do have to think about the unintended consequences of taking a matter like this to the tribunal. I would like to clear that up: I dispute that it was electioneering paraphernalia. I tried to follow the handbook as closely as possible. As I have shown, I have met every single one of those criteria, in my opinion.

In relation to allowances, who does not follow the rules? As I have raised in this place previously, the former federal member for Bowman was caught out on his travel allowance. He is refusing to pay that money back. On Friday there was a story that he wants to run for state parliament and wants to represent somewhere in the Redlands. I hope he does run in Capalaba. Does the Leader of the Opposition want to accept him as a member of his team—the way he stalks women, the way he takes photographs of women's G-strings above their pants, the way he hides in the bushes, the bullying and harassment? Is this the type of male candidate that the member for Broadwater and Leader of the Opposition is going to have on his team? He has not ruled it out yet. The LNP headquarters ruled him out federally but the Leader of the Opposition has not ruled out Andrew Laming having a run in this state.

It is important to make sure that the record is correct and to ensure a better understanding when there is a personal attack with regard to the misuse of allowances. I have not used a single dollar of taxpayers' allowance for that flyer while it has been in dispute. That is important. I have used my own money to print and distribute that flyer while it has been in dispute. As I said previously, I am still considering my options in terms of having this matter reviewed by the tribunal because I believe that I have complied with all three criteria set out in the handbook, which we should follow.

I appreciate this great opportunity for me to highlight the differences, because the member for Oodgeroo has been caught out. He was forced to pay back the money. The former member for Bowman wants to be a state member of parliament under David Crisafulli—

**Dr ROBINSON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! I do not need anyone's assistance in ruling on this matter. Member for Capalaba, the member has found your comments personally offensive. I ask that you withdraw.

**Mr BROWN:** I withdraw, but it is typical. It is the same tactic that the member for Oodgeroo always uses: when you raise something of truth, he takes offence to it. It happened.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. You gave an instruction in relation to the withdrawal and the member immediately went on to qualify his withdrawal by again attacking the member for Oodgeroo. It was not an unqualified withdrawal.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you for your point of order. I will take some advice. Member for Capalaba, any withdrawal must be completely unqualified. I would ask you to move on in your speech and not address those matters further.

**Mr BROWN:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I was referring to the parliamentary tactics of the member for Oodgeroo.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am not going to have a debate, member for Capalaba. If you want to dispute my ruling, there is a mechanism for you to do that. You are most welcome to do that, but I have given my ruling and I would ask you to continue with your speech.

**Mr BROWN:** Yet again, as I said before, no taxpayer money has been used in the distribution or printing of that flyer. I am in dispute as to the definitions that are used in the handbook, as I have clearly laid out and it is clear to see from the tabling of the document.

*(Time expired)*

## STATE PENALTIES ENFORCEMENT (MODERNISATION) AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1242, on motion of Mr Dick—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (2.59 pm): I rise in support of the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill. The main purpose of the bill is to give legislative effect to the integration into the Queensland Revenue Office of specified fine administration functions from the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service. The bill also makes amendments to modernise the State Penalties Enforcement Act and support effective administration of the State Penalties Enforcement Registry, known as SPER, within the Queensland Revenue Office. The bill also amends the Land Tax Act to ensure that trustees of special disability trusts are subject to

more favourable tax-free thresholds and lower land tax rates that apply to individuals. The bill also amends the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act to provide a transparent and stable funding model for the Residential Tenancies Authority, or the RTA as we know it.

The bill also includes other amendments to various acts which modernise the confidentiality provisions. The bill amends the SPE Act and the SPER regulation, the SPEA Act and the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act and the Traffic Regulation. These amendments will integrate fine administration functions from the DTMR and the QPS into the Queensland Revenue Office. The Palaszczuk government is doing this to ensure enforcement action can be taken consistently and in a timely manner, with data showing that the longer a fine sits on the books unpaid the harder it is to collect. The amendments will generally commence on 1 July 2022 to ensure an orderly transition from the current arrangements. Amendments relating to mobile phone and seatbelt camera detected offences will commence on 30 November 2022 reflecting the deferred integration of functions related to these offences.

I would like to focus my contribution on a number of key areas of the changes to the bill to refute the conspiratorial narrative being peddled by members on the other side. I refer to the part of the bill that amends the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act to provide a transparent and stable funding model for the RTA to continue to deliver services and ensure the security of rental bonds held.

It is important to note that the RTA's current funding model established under the RTRA Act provides that the RTA funds its operations from income from investment returns on the rental bonds held by Queensland tenants. The current funding model was established when returns on low-risk investments, that being cash term deposits and bonds, were sufficient to provide a stable and predictable source of revenue for the RTA.

It is important to understand that in recent years returns on low-risk investments have reduced significantly. In response, the RTA increased its exposure to high-risk investments. This exposure to high-risk investments has led to investment losses which the RTA has experienced on several occasions. This in turn has created uncertainty for the RTA's operations.

Fundamentally, the new funding model, which includes rental bonds held by the RTA, will be held within the whole-of-government banking arrangements. The RTA will not earn any interest on the rental bond account. The RTA will be provided with ongoing annual grant funding from 2022-23 to fund its operations. This means that instead of relying on investment returns to fund its operations, the RTA will be funded through a stable, ongoing, annual operation grant and be able to focus on delivering its core services. In asking a question to the Queensland Treasury regarding this particular element of the bill during the public hearings—that is right, there was consultation on the bill even though those on the other side are saying there was not—

**Mr Mickelberg:** It's the peak bodies that say there wasn't.

**Mr TANTARI:** That's right, mate. Queensland Treasury said that this funding model was more reliable to ensure that the RTA had ongoing funds to ensure the viability of the operation into the future by avoiding higher risk investments. That is the Queensland Treasury saying that; it is not hearsay that comes from the other side. This will ensure the RTA is able to continue to deliver essential services and support to the rental sector without being concerned about the impact of volatile investment markets.

Let us make it clear, without all the scaremongering that goes on on the other side: there will be no impact on the authority's operations, powers or core functions and no jobs will be lost due to these reforms. These changes will not impact renters or landlords. I will repeat that—they will not impact renters or landlords. There will be no change to the way renters and landlords interact with the authority with all services, including those related to the payment, redemption and holding of rental bonds remaining unchanged. Rental bonds will continue to be received by the RTA, held by the RTA and paid by the RTA. However, they will no longer be invested in financial markets. They will instead be secured in a bank account. This model ensures that the RTA is adequately funded.

A further element of the bill, which I think all of us here in this place should be in full support of, is the treatment of special disability trusts. A special disability trust assists immediate family members and carers to define the current and future care and accommodation needs of family members with severe disability and means test concessions. The land tax imposes land tax at midnight on 30 June each year. Different tax-free thresholds and rates apply depending on the type of owner. Individuals, excluding absentees, are generally assessed for land tax at lower rates and subject to a higher tax-free threshold compared to absentees, companies and trustees. However, certain trustees are assessed

for land tax at the threshold and rates that apply to individuals. This beneficial treatment is currently limited to trustees for bankrupt persons and trustees for incapacitated persons whose estate is being managed by the Public Trustee. This is not currently available to trustees of a special disability trust. I think it is important to note that. Special disability trusts are established under the Commonwealth law to provide for the care and accommodation needs of profoundly disabled beneficiaries. Special disability trusts attract a number of benefits under Commonwealth and state revenue law to further their primary purpose.

This bill amends the Land Tax Act to ensure that the trustees of a special disability trusts are subject to the higher tax-free threshold and lower land tax that currently apply to individuals. This will ensure that all known special disability trusts will effectively not pay land tax. This is a great outcome for those who look after the most vulnerable in our community, in particular to provide funding for current and future care and accommodation of a family member with a severe disability. I think this is a great outcome. I thank the government for this change in the legislation that brings this area into line and ensures that anybody who must manage and use a special disability trust to support those most vulnerable in our community will have an outcome that is far better when it comes to tax-free thresholds and land tax rates that apply in this instance.

One other area of the bill amends the SPE Act to expressly authorise the registrar to disclose personal information of a SPER debtor to an entity where such information is contained in a court order that has been registered with SPER for endorsement and the disclosure is for the purposes of remitting an amount collected under court order to the entity. Currently, once SPER has collected a fine issued by a court it is required to transfer the money without providing any identifying information. For organisations such as the RSPCA it is quite time intensive and expensive to work out which fines the money they have transferred to them is for. This change would allow SPER to provide identifying information to organisations such as the RSPCA.

This bill, with all its amendments, went before the Economics and Governance Committee. I would like to thank the secretariat for their diligent work in ensuring the review of this bill through the committee. Contrary to what the member for Toowoomba South said earlier in the debate, consultation did take place. The committee did hear from witnesses, including the REIQ, which, by the way, were listed in the report if he had bothered to read it.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr TANTARI:** It was actually in the report. He said that the REIQ did not have time to actually come to the public hearing. They were listed in the report.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr TANTARI:** No, mate. In conclusion I thank the Economics and Governance Committee chair and member for Logan, the member for Mermaid Beach and all other members who worked through the various amendments of the bill. I would also like to thank the submitters and those who presented to the public hearing, as well as officials from the Public Service departments who shed light on questions that committee members had regarding this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Before I call the member for Ninderry I will remind the House of those members who have been warned: the members for Gympie, Kawana, Bonney, Broadwater and Thuringowa.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (3.08 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill 2022. The bill amends the State Penalties Enforcement Act to implement an integrated approach to managing fines for camera detected offences and toll offences with functions centralised in the Queensland Revenue Office, as well as providing a framework for the earlier registration of unpaid infringement notices for enforcement and makes amendments to modernise the operation of the SPE Act and support the effective administration of SPER.

The bill also amends the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, the TO(RUM) Act, and the Traffic Regulation 1962 on account of the integrated approach to fines management to eliminate unnecessary duplication of services across government, improve operational efficiencies, provide a central point of contact within government for the person served with fines for camera detected offences and tolling offences and enhance the effectiveness of SPER's activities.

Thirdly, the bill amends the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, the RTRA Act, claiming that that will provide stable funding for the RTA and ensure security of rental bonds on behalf of Queensland tenants. It also makes minor amendments to various tax acts to address anomalies for trustees of a special disability trust and confidentiality provisions.

I thank my colleagues on the Economics and Governance Committee who considered the legislation and the seven submitters that provided feedback on the SPER related amendments, including REIQ, LawRight, the Moreton Bay Regional Council, the Local Government Association of Queensland and Tenants Queensland. It is disappointing that there was not wider consultation, specifically on the amendments to the RTRA Act. Amendments that will substantially change the funding model of the Residential Tenancies Authority have not been widely considered and key stakeholders were not consulted. That alone raises more questions than answers.

This bill is another example of a state Labor government that is more concerned with the way things look than the way they are. The lack of transparency and question marks around the government's motives for some of the amendments are nothing but a blatant attempt to hoodwink Queenslanders and that is why the LNP will not be supporting the legislation.

On the introduction of the bill earlier this year, the Treasurer rightly pointed out that Queensland taxpayers expect that if someone owes them money then it would be paid back and that these amendments will do just that. He said—

It's all about accelerating the collection of funds owed to Queenslanders so they can be used on road upgrades, hospitals and schools as well as critical road safety, healthcare and emergency services our community needs.

The Treasurer is right, of course. However, what is of concern is just how much money Queenslanders are owed and how much the government has simply written off due to its failure to act on collecting that debt.

Under this tired third-term Labor government, the total value of the unpaid SPER debt has skyrocketed. In 2014-15, the SPER debt was \$999 million and by 2019-20 it had smashed through the \$1 billion mark and was sitting at almost \$1.3 billion. So far this financial year we have learned that more than \$100 million of the SPER debt has been written off, which is five times the average of the previous 10 years. Let us imagine those figures for a moment. How many more frontline health staff could be employed if this government was capable of implementing an effective debt recovery system? How many more teachers, doctors or police officers could be deployed to our regions? How many more hospitals could be built if the money was repaid and simply not written off as a bad debt? What about the remaining \$1.1 billion that is still outstanding? Will these amendments ensure that that money is recovered in a timely manner so that Queenslanders can be assured it is being invested wisely in essential services such as health, education and law and order?

Queenslanders have become all too familiar with this Labor government's poor track record when it comes to managing the economy. These shocking statistics prove that they have no idea. They have no idea when it comes to managing a budget, investing in essential services or listening to Queenslanders. If the figures cannot be fudged, they simply write them off as a bad debt. When Labor run out of money they come after yours but apparently not all the time: it is a fifty-fifty bet when it comes to unpaid fines.

The other concern I have with this bill is the changes it proposes to the way that the RTA is funded. Currently, the RTA is funded by the returns on the investment of rental bond moneys through the QIC. Under the proposed legislation, those returns will be earned by the state and would go into the Consolidated Fund and the RTA would then be funded by a grant from the Consolidated Fund. Both the REIQ and Tenants Queensland made submissions on these changes and both were strongly opposed to them. Tenants Queensland not only rightly criticised the lack of consultation but also asserted the changes would remove the autonomy of the industry regulator and destroy a self-funded model that has stood the test of time. The REIQ went even further in their criticism, indicating that they were deeply concerned with the proposed amendments and that the brief summary did not substantiate any basis for them.

The bill's explanatory notes indicate that community consultation was not considered necessary due to the mechanical nature of the amendments. Firstly, I do not consider substantially overhauling a funding model to be 'mechanical'. The RTA had no opportunity to provide feedback or have input into the committee process, which should immediately set off alarm bells. There was only one briefing and one hearing with Treasury to ask questions about the amendments. That lack of scrutiny is becoming a hallmark of this tired third-term Labor government.

Currently the RTA holds close to \$1 billion of rental bonds for Queensland tenants. The proposed amendments will have the effect of allocating those funds to the government's operating bank account. Does that sound familiar? There has never been any suggestion that the current financial model is anything but stable and reliable. There have been no instances of the RTA failing to pay out a rental bond due to limited cash flow and the RTA's financial reporting data indicates a very strong 2020-21

financial year, with \$60 million in returns generated from their QIC investments. Why fix what is not broken? These funds do not belong to the government; they belong to the tenants. Much like the raid on public servants' super, this smacks of robbing Peter to pay Paul. It smacks of cooking the books which, I might add, has become second nature to this third-term government.

In the committee hearings, Treasury officials were quizzed on whether the proposed amendments would result in any change to the government's revenue, expenses, assets or liabilities. Not surprisingly, it is revenue alone that will most likely be affected. Given the government's abysmal record when it comes to transparency, Queenslanders have every right to be suspicious about the government's motives. This bill does little to restore the public's confidence that the government is working in their best interests. The amendments relating to the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation are too little too late and those that will completely overhaul the funding of the Residential Tenancies Authority are little more than a blatant money grab. The government's complete lack of transparency needs to be exposed. Queenslanders deserve and expect much better and that is why I will not be supporting the bill.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (3.16 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill 2022. This bill delivers on the Queensland government's initiative to modernise the state's fines administration system and to improve the administration of SPER and the Queensland Revenue Office. I commend the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment for bringing forward this legislation and for his genuine commitment to ensuring that our fines administration system is working in an optimal and proactive manner for the benefit of all Queenslanders—unlike those opposite who, when in government, threw their hands up and said, 'This is really hard. Let's just send it to private debt collectors.' As the Treasurer has previously indicated, Queensland taxpayers expect that if someone owes them money it should be paid back. We want people to pay what they owe and to pay it back as soon as possible after they incur the fine.

Currently there are a number of administering authorities such as the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the Queensland Police Service, local councils, universities and courts. For example, currently the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation provides that infringement notices for camera detected offences such as speeding, not stopping at a red light or uninsured driving and tolling offences—collectively known as the relevant offences—may only be served by persons who are authorised officers, being either a person appointed by the chief executive of the Department of Transport and Main Roads or a police officer. The bill is aimed at giving legislative effect to some changes that were made to the fine serving administration system on 1 February 2022 that saw Queensland Treasury—of which QRO, SPER and the registrar of SPER are a part—take on the responsibility for serving infringement notices and acting as the administering authority. From 30 November 2022, this will also include acting as the administering authority for distracted driver, mobile phone and seatbelt offences. Sadly, as we know, we are seeing record fines for those offences and it is important that our fines administration system can respond accordingly.

Bringing fines management staff from DTMR and QPS into the SPER team is obviously important from an efficiency perspective. Having a single administering authority also assists in simplifying the fine process for debtors. As I have certainly seen in my own electorate, feedback shows that debtors can sometimes be confused by the number of authorities involved in the fine process: the authority that issues the fine, such as DTMR or council, and then the separate authority for collecting an unpaid fine, which is SPER. Under the proposed changes, the Queensland Revenue Office, including SPER, will become the single agency for issuing and administering infringement notices and collecting the fines for those offences. Of course, DTMR and QPS will retain responsibility for the prosecution of the relevant offences. This change is expected to bring forward repayments of more than \$20 million in its first year.

As outlined in the committee report, Treasury has pointed out that the longer action is delayed in the recovery of a debt the less likely it is that the debt will be recovered. In fact, a QRO analysis of SPER showed that, on average, 61 per cent of penalty debts are finalised within the first two months following issue, with finalisation rates decreasing sharply after that period. From the SPER data that I have seen that is certainly the case.

The bill includes an amendment to the SPE Act that will enable a timeframe for the earlier registration of default certificates for those defaulted infringement notices with SPER to be prescribed by regulation. Currently under the State Penalties Enforcement Act, a person has 28 days to respond to an infringement notice. An administering authority may register a default certificate with SPER. SPER then becomes responsible for the collection and enforcement of the unpaid amount only once this default certificate is registered.

As the explanatory notes point out, the actual time administering authorities take to register these default certificates with SPER varies, but typically it can be between two to six months from the date of the infringement notice. Delays in registering these default certificates with SPER result in real difficulty and cost in recovering those debts. The department advised the committee—

... the benefit of moving the referral across to SPER as soon as possible is that the older a debt is the harder it becomes to collect, the more cost it takes to collect and the less likely it is you are going to recover it. The goal of the amendments to propose a framework to shorten that period is to enable SPER to act quicker and to have a higher rate of recovery and a quicker rate of recovery of those debts owing to the state of Queensland.

Whilst the Local Government Association of Queensland and Moreton Bay Regional Council raised concerns in relation to a shortened prescribed registration time frame, it is important to note that a decision has not yet been made on this by the government and that further consultation on the regulation would be undertaken by the administering authorities. Ultimately, registering default certificates with SPER at an earlier stage will enable SPER to commence collection activities sooner, which increases the likelihood of successful recovery of debts owed to Queenslanders.

Late last year, along with my fellow Ipswich MPs—the members for Ipswich and Bundamba—I visited the Queensland government's new debt management centre established in the Ipswich CBD. The new debt management centre has seen around 130 new frontline jobs created. It was great to meet with SPER staff to find out more about the work they undertake. In particular, the SPER enforcement officers discussed with us their most recent regional activities whereby officers were travelling to a region and spending around four to five days dealing with a range of debt collection measures.

An important provision in the bill will amend the State Penalties Enforcement Act to expressly authorise the use of body worn cameras by SPER enforcement officers exercising their functions under the act. The use of body worn cameras by SPER enforcement officers when they undertake field enforcement activities will provide a number of benefits such as: reducing conflict between enforcement officers and debtors—SPER officers advise that sometimes there is a lot of conflict when they are trying to seize a vehicle or trying to speak to someone who owes a significant amount of money; providing a record of actions undertaken by enforcement officers; and enhancing accountability for enforcement officers. As members would recognise, not all debtors are happy to see enforcement officers. It is important also to ensure that these frontline officers, who are just doing their job, are adequately protected.

Another simple but important improvement to our fines system relates to court orders. Court orders requiring an offender to pay a monetary penalty to a prosecuting agency or compensation or restitution to a victim of crime, which is a third-party creditor, can be registered with SPER as a debt. SPER then becomes responsible for collection of the unpaid amount and payment of that amount to the prosecuting agency or third-party creditor. However, at this time the remittance advices only contain details of the court order and the offence but do not identify the debtor. This means prosecuting agencies and third-party creditors must contact Magistrates Court registries to identify who the debtor is, therefore increasing the workload of registries, which we know are already really busy.

The bill amends the SPE Act to enable the registrar to disclose personal information contained in a court order registered with SPER for enforcement for the purposes of remitting an amount collected under the court order. Again, this change will see an improved and more efficient fines administration system.

Finally, in relation to reforms of the funding model of the Residential Tenancies Authority, it is very concerning that the opposition continues to prosecute this idea that somehow the government is fudging or cooking the books. It has been made very clear today by the Treasurer that the RTA is already part of the general government sector and that the assets and liabilities held by the RTA are already reported as part of the general government sector balance sheet. This reporting framework will remain unchanged.

I am really surprised that the shadow Treasurer would be making these claims and would be advising his colleagues in this regard. This is really disappointing. I encourage members who potentially have made misleading comments in the House to withdraw those comments or face complaints to the Speaker.

The changes proposed to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act will mean the RTA no longer needs to rely on volatile investment markets to fund its operation. Member for Ninderry—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Order! The Treasurer will cease his interjections. The member for Everton will cease his interjections.

**Mrs MULLEN:** There is volatility, both negative and positive. In 2019-20, the RTA experienced negative investment returns and recorded a deficit for that year, moving slightly into a negative net equity position. The following year saw the investment markets rebound very sharply, which allowed the RTA to fund itself. This is clearly an unsustainable arrangement. The changes proposed will provide a more stable, consistent and reliable funding approach for the RTA's operations through an annual grant from the Consolidated Fund.

I thank the Economics and Governance Committee for its consideration of this bill. I thank the Queensland Revenue Office and Treasury officials for their work and detailed consideration of these changes, which will see a measurable improvement to our fines administration system and to the operations of SPER and the RTA. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.25 pm): I rise to make a small contribution to the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill 2022. Before I get into it, I do wish the member for Woodridge, the member who was known infamously for his 'debt is a tool' interview on *Today*, all the very best when we get to consideration in detail because, as part of his greatest hits collection, I do like re-reading *Hansard*. When we last spoke about a monetary bill when it came to his trying unsuccessfully to explain to the House the discount rate, it was amazing because the member for Woodridge likes to always use the little body language moniker of 'cue the crickets'.

**Mr Dick** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): The Treasurer will cease his interjections.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** We 'cued the crickets' for probably 15 or 20 minutes, but in consideration in detail the member for Woodridge failed to adequately explain how he actually valued the titles registry at \$7.8 billion.

**Mr DICK:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The honourable member is misleading the House. I find the words personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Chatsworth, the Treasurer has found those remarks personally offensive. Will you withdraw?

**Mr MINNIKIN:** I withdraw. It gives me a great deal of pride to speak to this bill. I note that the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill was introduced by the member for Woodridge in March this year. I also take this opportunity to commend the work of the Economics and Governance Committee. To all of those committee members I say: it was a job well done. However, as already stated, we will be opposing the bill. The committee recommended that the bill be passed, with non-government members lodging a statement of reservation focused on the proposed changes to the Residential Tenancies Authority's funding model.

To be specific, the bill can be broken down into a couple of key components, the first of which pertains to the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, the SPE Act. Essentially, that is to implement an integrated approach to managing fines for camera detected offences and tolling offences with functions centralised in a single agency, the Queensland Revenue Office. I note that it also provides a framework for the earlier registration of unpaid infringement notices with SPER, the State Penalties Enforcement Registry, and, finally, makes miscellaneous amendments to modernise the operation of the SPE Act and support the effective administration of SPER.

The second key component of the bill before the House this afternoon pertains to the TO(RUM) Act, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. I note that the integrated approach to fines management will seek to eliminate unnecessary duplication of services across government; to improve operational efficiencies and provide a central point of contact within government for persons served with fines for camera detected offences and tolling offences; and to enhance the overall effectiveness of SPER's activities.

Thirdly, I also note from my reading of the green and white papers that the bill amends the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act, the RTRA Act, to provide stable funding for the RTA and ensure security of rental bonds on behalf of Queensland tenants. As members in the House would know, the RTA is currently funded by returns on the investment of rental bond moneys through QIC. Under the proposed legislation, such returns would be earned by the state and would go into the Consolidated Fund. The RTA will then be funded by a grant from the Consolidated Fund, as is the case for other statutory authorities. I note that the bill also makes minor amendments to various tax acts to address anomalies for trustees of special disability trusts and confidentiality provisions.

We have heard from members on this side of the chamber that whenever we consider bills before the House we always look with interest at stakeholder views and the level of consultation of this government. This government prides itself on being open, accountable and transparent and engaging in fair dinkum stakeholder involvement—not basically wrapping up the present and saying, ‘We hold the gift before you.’

Here is how it went with this particular bill. There were seven submissions to the committee’s inquiry. All the submitters tended to concentrate on the SPER amendments and they were favourably disposed to the bill. For example, LawRight observed that the bill was procedural in nature and, unsurprisingly, encouraged SPER to use its discretion as an authorised authority to withdraw infringement notices after considering an individual’s circumstances. The LGAQ, the Local Government Association of Queensland, offered a number of enhancements to the bill in relation to updating the fines online web portal service and regular and quarterly engagement with issuing authorities. I am not sure how far that particular view went. It has already been mentioned by colleagues on this side of the chamber that the Moreton Bay Regional Council supported the bill but requested that further consideration be given to the mechanism by which it secured collective feedback delivered to SPER.

The seven submissions were wide and varied. Submissions regarding the proposed changes to the RTRA Act were lodged by Tenants Queensland and the Real Estate Institute of Queensland. Both submissions were strongly opposed to the RTRA Act amendments. Tenants Queensland criticised the lack of consultation. We on this side of the House have heard that time and time again when it comes to bills brought before the chamber. This bill is absolutely no exception. Tenants Queensland asserted that the changes will remove the autonomy of the industry regulator and destroy a self-funded model that has stood the test of time.

Moreover, the REIQ noted that they were ‘deeply concerned’ with the proposed amendments and that the ‘brief summary provided in explanatory notes does not, in their view, have any basis for the proposed material amendments’. They further went on to add that they were ‘disappointed by the absence of any stakeholder consultation prior to the bill and the insertion of such a fundamental change in a nondescript omnibus bill’. It is for these reasons and others that have been articulated by members on this side of the chamber that the opposition will be opposing the bill.

In relation to SPER, this seems to be something that the Labor Party has failed to come to grips with year after year. We can go back to the record debt blowouts under the one and only former member for South Brisbane. She abandoned an IT project—again costing the taxpayers of Queensland fists full of dollars. It was all too hard. I believe it was the member for Jordan who asked: what was the LNP’s response? She said it was to get private debt collectors involved. I would like to persevere with that train of thought for a moment. When we came to power in 2012 this was a high priority—maybe not the highest—given that this was ratcheting out of control. It was absolutely—

**Mr Dick** interjected.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** The member for Woodridge might like to listen to someone who can articulate the fundamental accounting equation. The member for Woodridge has failed to do that time after time. He is absolutely clueless, hopeless and an abject failure. It is quite interesting to note that we more often than not hear the contribution of the member for Jordan after the Treasurer has spoken. I have to tell members that I try to mark pretty fairly. It is not just the way the member for Jordan delivers her contributions, but it is the substance by way of comparison to the Treasurer, the member for Woodridge—

**Mr FURNER:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, on relevance. The member has strayed way off the topic of this bill and is waxing lyrical with nonsense in this chamber. I ask you to make him come back to the substance of the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): You have made your point. Take a seat, Minister. Member for Chatsworth, I invite you to return to the long title of the bill.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** I will return to the long title bill of the bill. As the members of the Labor Party like to do, this is a compare and contrast. Under the LNP treasurer, the member for Clayfield, using private debt collectors we collected unpaid millions. If we compare that to now, it has blown out to over \$1.2 billion. It has been clawed back somewhat—that is true—but the trouble is this. With the new mobile phone detection system, including the detection of people not wearing seatbelts—which we have made very clear we absolutely support; there are no two ways about that—it is going to mean, as the Treasury books will already be showing, an increase in SPER debts over time. Heaven help the taxpayers of Queensland retrieving that.

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (3.36 pm): The main objective of the bill is to give legislative effect to the integration of fine administration functions undertaken by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Public Service into the Queensland Revenue Office. These functions relate to camera detected offences such as not stopping at a red light, speeding and tolling offences. Some fine administrative functions have already been integrated into QRO. Other fine administration functions relating to mobile phone and seatbelt camera detected offences will be integrated from later this year. The bill also amends a number of other acts to give legislative effect to the integration of functions. The amendments will generally commence on 1 July 2022 to ensure an orderly transition from the current arrangements, while amendments relating to mobile phone and seatbelt camera detected offences will commence later this year.

I turn now to the parts of the bill regarding the Residential Tenancies Authority which the opposition are keen to speak on. The RTA, as has been mentioned, currently relies on investment returns on tenants' rental bonds to meet its operating expenses. The amendments proposed to the RTA will mean the RTA no longer needs to rely on volatile investment markets to fund its operations. The amendments will provide for a stable and reliable funding approach of annual grant funding from the Consolidated Fund. This is a sensible and cautious measure. I am confused as to why those opposite are opposed to it. It seems the LNP would prefer the RTA to play the market and risk tenants' bonds in an ever-changing global economy, rather than have the funds guaranteed by the backing of consolidated revenue. Maybe those opposite would prefer us to invest the bond money of Queenslanders into cryptocurrencies and NFTs or some other thing that they think they have an inside track on.

The member for Toowoomba South perhaps fancies himself as a bit of a wolf of Wall Street. He is probably a bit more of a wombat of West Street. We heard the member for Mermaid Beach speak on this bill with a bit of a brain dump of words that were certainly put together in sentences but did not make sense in the way he structured them. As much as those opposite would like to try to find something to criticise, this reform will ensure the RTA is able to continue to deliver essential services and support the rental sector, without being concerned about the impact of volatile investment markets. The RTA is very good at what they do, but we would not go to the RTA—

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Please take a seat, member for Aspley. Member for Coomera, your interjections are not being taken. If I have to refer to you again, it will be a warning.

**Mr MELLISH:** We would not go to the RTA if we wanted to play the stock market, just as we would not go to the member for Coomera for financial advice—nor should tenants be forced to. There will be no impact on the authority's operations, powers or core functions and no jobs will be lost due to the reforms. The changes will not impact renters or landlords. There will be no change to the way renters and landlords interact with the authority, with all services, including those relating to the payment, redemption and holding of rental bonds, remaining unchanged.

The Treasurer outlined in his second reading speech that he has written to the shadow Treasurer to explain that this will have no effect on the balance sheet of the state, yet those opposite continue to pursue this half-baked argument. The RTA will continue to show the value of bonds as an asset which will now be held as cash in a bank account rather than in investments, and the value of the bond liability will remain on the balance sheet.

We heard about how the LNP's only plan for SPER was to privatise the debt and privatise everything—let the market sort it out. It will cost taxpayers double, but that is fine as long as it is off their balance sheet. They are the party of debt and deficit. They never got a surplus in Queensland. They never got one in nine years in Canberra. They claimed they were back in black. They printed the T-shirts. They printed the mugs. They did not get there. Now the former treasurer is out there looking for a new job.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (3.40 pm): Let's talk about SPER. Let's talk about perhaps a forgotten cohort in regard to how SPER has operated or, to be more accurate, failed to operate effectively—and that is for victims of crime. I have constituents, a couple, who for more than 10 years have been trying to have court ordered restitution paid to them. It was handed to SPER and they still have not received payment. However, when you go to the government and ask for their help, they come back and say, 'No. There is confidentiality. We are not allowed to pass on the details of how these matters have been pursued by SPER.' Not only do the victims of crime fail to receive restitution; they fail to get an explanation. I have raised this with a number of treasurers. I have also raised this issue with the current Treasurer. I wrote to him more than six months ago and I raised this very fact.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Although an interesting story and a matter for a public audience—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): What is your point of order against standing orders, Treasurer?

**Mr DICK:**—it has nothing to do with this bill. It is entirely irrelevant to the terms of this bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** So your point of order is on relevance?

**Mr DICK:** Of course it is.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Take your seat, please. Member for Maroochydore, I ask you to be mindful of the long title of the bill and return to it.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Absolutely, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is interesting to hear the Treasurer argue that this has nothing to do with victims of crime who have court ordered restitution payments held up in SPER—in this case for more than 10 years.

I wrote to the Treasurer more than six months ago and have failed to get a response. Not only did my office write to the minister more than six months ago on behalf of these constituents who have not had payment from SPER for court ordered restitution; my office also advised me that they have followed up four times with the Treasurer's office asking him what he can do to help. We have just heard the Treasurer say, 'No. This bill has nothing to do with that—nothing to do with the victims of crime who are still waiting for court ordered restitution.' I am really disappointed. I table that letter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 15 December 2021, from the member for Maroochydore, Ms Fiona Simpson MP, to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Cameron Dick, regarding State Penalties and Enforcement Agency (SPER) unpaid debts owed to Queenslanders for court-ordered restitution [\[699\]](#).

The Treasurer could have at least replied to this letter on behalf of my constituents who are victims of crime and who raised this fault in the SPER system. Let's look at the explanatory notes on this bill. They say that there are confidentiality aspects to deal with to enable SPER to interact with the courts supposedly to make it easier to enable information to flow, to gather the information required to get orders enacted. I raised this issue about whether the victims of crime, at the other end of the process, will have the ability to find out what has happened and why it is still being held up. According to the Treasurer today, he said, 'No, this is not relevant.' I am really disappointed, Treasurer.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Direct your comments through the chair.

**Ms SIMPSON:** These people are constituents. Whether they live in my electorate or in the Treasurer's electorate, they deserve an answer from the Treasurer. They should not have to wait six months and get nothing only then to be told that the confidentiality provisions and this SPER amendment bill do nothing to resolve those issues. That is very poor. I expect that there will be other stories from victims of crime who not only have failed to be paid from court ordered SPER mechanisms but also cannot even get information. I am very disappointed that the Treasurer not only fails to care to respond to correspondence but tries to get up in this House and say, 'It has nothing to do with this bill.' It is about time they looked after victims of crime.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The words 'I do not care about constituents or victims of crime' are personally offensive. I ask her to withdraw. Secondly, on a matter of relevance—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will deal with the first one. Member for Maroochydore, the Treasurer—

**Ms SIMPSON:** I withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will hear the second point of order.

**Mr DICK:** The second point of order is on a matter of relevance. The member for Maroochydore has had a good go.

**Ms SIMPSON:** I refer to the explanatory notes that talk about—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Please take your seat, member for Maroochydore. I believe that there is a reasonable link between the restitution for offenders and the State Penalties Enforcement Registry. I will give you a bit of latitude there, but I encourage you to be mindful of the long title of the bill, member for Maroochydore.

**Ms SIMPSON:** As we see in the explanatory notes on page 6, they talk about disclosure of personal information in court orders. It is a reasonable question to ask the Treasurer: what about the victims of crime? What about their right to information? Why doesn't this minister want to answer that question? After six months since receiving a basic letter asking for his help, there has been zip—radio

silence—other than to try to abuse me. That is disappointing because there will be others whose stories are replicated—who are not able to get information about why they have not received their court ordered restitution.

Let's talk about another aspect of the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill, which interestingly enough covers the RTA. All the rental bonds are held by the RTA, the Residential Tenancies Authority. This legislation before the House amends the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008. Currently tenants' bonds are lodged with the RTA. That money is held on behalf of the tenants so that it is secure and is paid back to them assuming they meet the criteria of repayment. For some reason, this government has cooked up a story where they want to take about a billion dollars in rental bonds and put it into consolidated revenue. I do not think they have ever seen a hollow log they did not want to whack their sticky fingers into.

We have heard the Treasurer say, 'Trust us. We will guarantee that those bonds will be paid back,' but they do not explain what will happen to the revenue that will come from putting a billion dollars worth of rental bonds into consolidated revenue. They are a little bit cute about that. That money will not be going back to the RTA necessarily. It will be in consolidated revenue. After they pay for the operations of the RTA, any surplus from that billion dollar investment—any revenue from that billion dollar investment—will be pocketed by the government and put into consolidated revenue to go wherever they may see fit.

I think the criticisms that have been raised about why they have done this are valid criticisms. We have heard concerns from agencies who said they were not consulted about this before it happened. Now we hear government members say, 'This is really to protect it. It is about security.' In terms of the billion dollars worth of rental bonds that were lodged with the RTA, there is no skerrick of belief that that was ever under threat, that there was ever an issue that that money was not being appropriately invested. It was being invested, as I understand, through the normal procedures that see a return. Yet this government is trying to say, 'No. It was risky.' Let's call it out for the garbage that it is. It is an opportunity to take that money and put it into consolidated revenue and benefit from the income that comes from a billion dollars of investment which belongs to the renters of Queensland.

I do not trust this dodgy government. I do not trust them when they go away from a self-funded model, put it into consolidated revenue and say that it is for the good of everyone else. There needs to be transparency as to where the income from the bond dollars is going to be spent. Once that money goes into consolidated revenue, there is very little evidence that this government will abide by transparency in that regard. They have not been transparent in the consultation about taking rental bond dollars—a billion dollars worth, I understand. I certainly do not trust that they are going to be transparent into the future.

I tabled that letter earlier with regard to my constituents and the SPER issue. I call on this Treasurer to listen to the victims of crime with regard to SPER. Have some respect for them. I know this Treasurer likes to have a political spray against his opponents. Have some consideration for the victims of crime who need their questions answered rather than being told this legislation has nothing to do with them. What a shame it is they are not being heard by this Treasurer.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.50 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill. This bill gives legal effect to the integration of particular administrative functions that are undertaken by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service into the Queensland Revenue Office. Those particular functions relate to camera detected offences such as not stopping at red lights, speeding and some tolling offences. I would like to take a moment to talk about speeding and red light offences within the broader context of road safety. Earlier this month we lost nine lives on our roads over three days. So far this year we have seen over 100 people lose their lives. My thoughts go out to every person who has been impacted by those tragedies. Sadly, most of these are entirely preventable, and I would urge all Queenslanders to think about road safety every time they get behind the wheel.

Turning to the matters contained in the bill, it makes a number of amendments that modernise the operation of the State Penalties Enforcement Act and ensures the continued effective operation of the State Penalties Enforcement Registry, or SPER. These amendments will: allow for the earlier registration of default certificates for defaulted infringement notices with SPER; and provide that the registrar of SPER is the person who is the Commissioner of State Revenue under the Taxation Administration Act.

Importantly, it also includes provisions to authorise the use of body worn cameras by SPER enforcement officers who are exercising their functions under the act. I think that all in this House would recognise that in the dispatching of their duties they would be subjected to, or placed in, situations that

could become quite heated. We have already heard previous contributors to this bill speak about some of the benefits of having body worn cameras for our SPER enforcement officers. The bill also amends the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act to provide a reliable, safe and stable funding model for the RTA.

I would like to turn to some of the claims that have been made by those opposite during this debate that these bonds are being used to reduce debt. It has been made extremely clear by the Treasurer that this will have no effect on the balance sheet of the state. That was expressly mentioned in the Treasurer's second reading speech. During the committee process when the Economics and Governance Committee examined this bill Treasury itself advised that the RTA is already part of the general government sector, which means that the assets and liabilities held by the RTA are already reported as part of the general government sector balance sheet and that this reporting framework will remain unchanged. The RTA will continue to show the value of bonds as an asset which will now be held as cash in a bank account rather than investments, and the value of the bond liability will remain on its balance sheet.

I will now turn to the parts of the bill that relate to the integration of particular administrative functions. One of the most significant amendments in this bill will give effect to the integration of particular functions into the Queensland Revenue Office. As I have said, fine functions relating to camera-detected offences such as not stopping at a red light, speeding and tolling offences have already been integrated into the Queensland Revenue Office administratively from 1 February this year. Functions relating to mobile phones and seatbelt camera-detected offences will be integrated into the QRO from 30 November 2022. That follows a successful trial of the new technology that the Palaszczuk government rolled out in relation to road safety. I believe there was a 12-month trial of mobile phone and seatbelt cameras. I have certainly seen that technology rolled out in my local community and it is helping improve road safety, so the streamlining of administration functions behind that new technology should absolutely be supported. The amendments will generally commence 1 July this year to ensure an orderly transition from the current arrangements, with amendments relating to mobile phone and seatbelt camera-detected offences to commence a little bit later in November.

I will now turn to some of the claims that have been mentioned during this debate by LNP speakers about write-offs being used to artificially bring down debt from SPER. As part of this debate it does warrant mention there were write-offs every year over the three years of the LNP government, including \$102 million in the 2012-13 year. SPER debt recovery under this government is projected to reach an all-time high of \$300.4 million in the 2021-22 financial year. While we are talking about LNP debt it also bears mentioning that the debt of the federal LNP government—which we are now thankfully relieved of thanks to the voices of the Australian people—exceeded \$1 trillion. Is it any wonder that Australians turned out over the weekend in droves to vote for change and a new Labor government with a Labor Treasurer who will get us our fair share and ensure a brighter and much better future for Queensland and our country.

The Treasurer who introduced this bill has his office right next to the office of the brand new Labor Treasurer for Australia. I think it is an absolute perfect synergy that we are bringing forward this kind of sensible and sustainable reform that is going to improve the efficiencies for SPER recovery here in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (3.59 pm): We are about to have this debate guillotined so I have about two minutes to contribute. This is another classic example of how they just squash democracy. I want to speak about the RTA changes in the bill. This is a solution to a problem that we do not have. On this part of the bill, there was little or no consultation with the major stakeholders. Consultation is not after the bill has been put before the committee; consultation happens before a bill is put together. The REIQ—the tenants union, the bastion of the Labor Party—was not consulted about this, the RTA would not have been consulted about it, and I do not think the Minister for Housing was consulted about it either.

This shows the arrogance of this Treasurer. This is a Treasurer who cannot be trusted. There is no transparency. We know what they have done in the past with figures, and that is why there is doubt about what they are doing. There is not a problem. The RTA has never had a financial issue. The RTA has never failed to pay a bond, so why is the Treasurer doing this? He has not mounted a credible argument as to why there needs to be change. That is what adds to the suspicion. He has the arrogance to come before this House and give the shadow Treasurer a warning letter that basically says, 'Be careful what you say. Be careful about how you try to make this government accountable.' That is what this Treasurer does. His arrogance is breathtaking.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the words personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Member for Everton, the Treasurer has found your remarks offensive. Will you withdraw?

**Mr MANDER:** I withdraw. What did the REIQ say? They said—

We consider these proposed changes to be extreme, unjustified and unnecessary.

And the words 'extreme, unjustified and unnecessary' were highlighted in bold. With such a significant change, how many lines do members think were in the explanatory notes about this? How many sentences? There were three sentences in the explanatory notes about the changes that this government is trying to sneak through on a bill that has nothing to do with the RTA. It is a disgrace. It is an absolute disgrace.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time limit for this stage of the bill having expired, I call the Treasurer to reply to the second reading debate.

**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (4.02 pm), in reply: I am delighted to be able to provide this address in reply to this debate. Isn't the member for Everton agitated about the election result on Saturday? I think he is more agitated about what happened to him in October 2020. He talks about transparency. All I would say is where is the money for the Bruce Highway hoax and where is the money for the biggest dam in the world? That is the greatest hoax perpetrated on Queenslanders. He likes to throw criticisms across the chamber. He likes to call other people a disgrace. After the storied leadership responsibility he failed to discharge, their political party went backwards.

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member has not mentioned one thing that is relevant to the bill we are discussing. Can you please bring him back to being relevant to the bill?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Treasurer, the member for Mermaid Beach does have a point. Please come back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr DICK:** That is the disgrace of the conduct of the member for Everton. I thank those members who provided their support for the bill. These are important reforms strengthening the financial sustainability and security of the Residential Tenancies Authority.

**Mr Mander:** Rubbish!

**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection from the member for Everton. It is not rubbish, member for Everton. Read the bill and the explanatory notes. When an organisation with investment returns consistently receives negative investment returns, that is not a sustainable organisation. The government has ensured going forward—

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not taking any interjections. This ensures the financial security and stability of an organisation whose returns have been—

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Everton, cease your interjections.

**Mr DICK:** It has run deficits in fact. We need to provide that security to bond holders and to landlords because that is what Labor governments do. The bill gives legislative effect to the integration—and this is a very important point—of specified fine administration functions into the Queensland Revenue Office from the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service. I need to make these points again—to reinforce them—because of the misleading contributions made by almost every member of the LNP in this debate.

The bill also makes a number of amendments to modernise the administration of the State Penalties Enforcement Registry and the Queensland Revenue Office. The bill also amends the Land Tax Act 2010 to give beneficial land tax treatment to trustees of special disability trusts. I again recognise the member for Greenslopes for his work in bringing this matter to my attention. I listened to this debate intently, and not one member of the opposition and not one member of the crossbench was willing to talk about an important reform to help people with serious and significant disabilities in this state. Not one of them said a positive thing about a positive law reform to take another burden off people with disabilities.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** There they are interjecting again. The member for Buderim is interjecting again.

**Mr Mickelberg:** You're hiding from scrutiny.

**Mr DICK:** He is saying that I am hiding from scrutiny.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Buderim will cease his interjections.

**Mr DICK:** I see the member for South Brisbane holding up the speaking list. It would have been good to hear the member for South Brisbane—and I do not often say that—rather than the blowhards—

**Dr MacMahon** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** Member for South Brisbane, I am supporting you. It would have been better to listen to you than the blowhards we had to listen to for three hours. That would have been a more nuanced and sensible contribution, but of course the opposition did not want to hear from the member for South Brisbane. They did not want to have her on the speaking list. It would have been a more sensible contribution than all of the members opposite. No-one from the opposition spoke about special disability trusts.

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Treasurer, resume your seat. What is your point of order, member for Everton?

**Mr MANDER:** I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

**AYES, 35:**

**LNP, 30—**Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts.

**Grn, 2—**Berkman, MacMahon.

**KAP, 2—**Dametto, Knuth.

**PHON, 1—**Andrew.

**NOES, 48:**

**ALP, 48—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

Pairs: Howard, Gerber; McMillan, Weir; Power, Last.

Resolved in the negative.

**Mr DICK:** As I was saying, I want to recognise the member for Greenslopes again for his contribution on the important law reform in relation to special disability trusts of which no-one in the LNP bothered to even give a moment's consideration.

Turning to some of the matters raised during the debate, I refer to the member for Toowoomba South's contribution. Despite having it clarified in writing, the member for Toowoomba South continued to suggest that the changes to the RTA funding were somehow the government attempting to use bonds to hold onto the credit rating. Again, there will be no increase to the value of assets or liabilities shown on the general government sector balance sheet as a result of the changes. In short, the debt recovery and compliance program implemented by the government and the efforts of SPER officers have increased collections and stopped the growth of the debt pool, not that you would have known that listening to members of the LNP.

The member also gave us a history of SPER bills in this state. Remarkably, from a member who was incensed when members on this side bring up the actions of the very last LNP government, he is now going back to actions from 2004: three Labor premiers ago, two changes of government ago, seven elections ago. What was the alleged crime? Amending an act. The substance of the claim being made is that because amendments are made to maintain the legislation, it must not be working at all. The LNP, by the member's own admission, collected \$200 million in SPER debt during their three years administering the act.

Since its establishment in 2000, SPER has collected about \$6.1 billion on behalf of Queenslanders. That is progress. It shows progressive amendments to the act are making a difference. That is \$6.1 billion owed to Queenslanders which can be used to build schools, fund hospitals or maintain roads.

The member for Toowoomba South also referred to the government's SPER ICT project. The project actually commenced under the former LNP government as part of its agenda to partially outsource SPER debt collection. We know what the partial outsourcing would have resulted in: ultimately a total outsourcing and privatisation. Following the change of government, ICT requirements were changed to remove this requirement to outsource the partial collection of debts. There is only one party that has sought to use the outsourcing process, the privatisation and the use of private debt collectors, and that is the LNP. A contract was awarded to the preferred service provider in 2016.

The member for Mermaid Beach doubled down on the ICT project 210 days later, since he was first asked to apologise to the State Actuary, and I did that in the House on behalf of the State Actuary. He still has not apologised, but he doubled down on the ICT—

**Mr Stevens:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the Treasurer's comments personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Treasurer, the member for Mermaid Beach has found your comments personally offensive. Will you withdraw?

**Mr DICK:** I withdraw. Again, I can advise the House that it was in fact the former LNP government which attempted to outsource debt management functions to the private fact sector. In fact, \$25 million was set aside by the former LNP government to pursue outsourcing. On 19 May 2015, our government announced that the former LNP government's plans would not go ahead.

I also note that it was the former LNP government who made the decision to automatically refer all tolling fines to SPER. This resulted in an additional \$92.3 million in tolling debt being registered with SPER in the first eight months of 2014-15 which was more than triple the 2013-14 levels.

A number of members have made claims about the intent of the changes to the RTA's funding model. The intent of the change is simple. The current funding model is not providing a reliable, stable return that the RTA needs to pay its staff and suppliers.

Over the past five years, in aggregate, over the period 2016-17 to 2020-21, the Residential Tenancies Authority has run a deficit of \$6.6 million because investment returns have not been sufficient to meet its expenses. Based on investment returns so far, a further deficit is expected to the current financial year.

I note that the member for South Brisbane from the Greens political party has moved amendments to reverse that. Is it the position of the Greens political party that the finances of the RTA should be determined on the stock market, determined by financiers on Wall Street, in New York? That is the current situation. That is not an acceptable position for the Labor government, which is why we want to provide that clear, certain funding to the RTA. That is why we have moved these amendments: to provide consolidated funding to the RTA so that they can get on with the work they do best and not have to deal with investment bankers on Wall Street.

The member for Toowoomba South referred to the RTA's \$43.3 million loss in 2019-20 as being driven by an accounting adjustment. However, the RTA's financial statements are clear that the key issue was a \$41.6 million loss on investments, and this from someone who was a senior banker.

The financial statements note that as at 30 June 2020, the RTA's total net assets were negative-\$312,000. A letter of comfort was provided by Queensland Treasury to provide assurance that financial support would be made available if it was required in order to meet the RTA statutory obligations. This is not a situation that should continue which is why we are moving these reforms.

The member for Toowoomba South also suggested that there would be some improvement in the state's net debt as a result of the change in the funding model. The state budget papers provide a definition of net debt. All members can have a look at page 142 of Budget Paper 2 of the 2021-22 budget. In simple terms, it is the difference between the amount of borrowings and the amount of cash and investments held by the state.

It has already been made clear to members opposite that the changes to the RTA's funding model will not result in a change to the state's level of assets or liabilities—a simple proposition that the LNP deliberately refuses to accept. To reiterate this point, the RTA is already part of the general

government sector. Its assets and liabilities are already included in the general government balance sheet. When the RTA moves from holding investments to instead holding cash in a bank account, there is no change to assets or to liabilities or to net debt.

The member for Mermaid Beach suggested there is some benefit to credit rating metrics from the income on investments currently held by the RTA. Again I make the point that the RTA is already part of the general government sector financial statements. Its revenue is already taken into account in credit rating metrics.

The member for Coomera suggested that the RTA could take a long-term view of investments to the point where it would have such strong returns that it could pass some of these onto its clients. The reality has been that over the past five years the investment returns made by the RTA have not been sufficient to meet its own expenses. There has not even been capacity to fund tenant advisory services out of investment returns.

Tenant advisory services funding was ceased by the Newman government from 31 October 2012. Funding was reinstated of course by the Palaszczuk Labor government in the 2015-16 budget at \$6.6 million per year. That funding has been provided from the Consolidated Fund because the RTA cannot generate sufficient returns to enable that funding to support tenancy advisory services, another reason we have to provide financial stability and security. Going forward, the RTA will also be funded from the Consolidated Fund, providing certainty and stability to the RTA, landlords and tenants.

I also take issue with the matters raised by the member for Maroochydore. The member for Maroochydore talked about a 10-year-old debt. It is exactly why we are implementing these reforms: to ensure debt can be recovered at a faster rate. We know that if debts are recovered—

**Ms Simpson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroochydore will cease her interjections.

**Mr DICK:** I note that this is an old debt. What we need to do is ensure that we can recover debt faster. The faster we get the debt in, the faster we can reach out to people who owe money; we know historically—it is proven—that we will recover more debt, and that is important. That is important to debtors, who will not incur additional costs or penalties; but it is more important to the people of Queensland, who deserve to recover that. If the member for Maroochydore complains about a 10-year-old debt, she should speak to the member for Clayfield, who, for three of those 10 years when the debt was new—

**Ms Simpson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Maroochydore.

**Mr DICK:**—when the debt was fresh, when the debt could have been recovered, did nothing.

**Mr Power:** Failed.

**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection from the member for Logan. The member for Clayfield failed dismally at a time when the debt was fresh and new and there was the highest possible chance of recovering it. This is typical of the LNP: critical of our government but never looking inwards, never reflecting on their failures and, of course, failing to address the principal matters in this bill that were put before the House.

These are important reforms, these are critical reforms and they are necessary reforms. I am pleased to be part of a government that grasps the nettle when there are significant problems facing entities like the Residential Tenancies Authority. The organisation is having difficulty funding its expenditure. That has been a consistent pattern for many years. That is no criticism of anyone in the Residential Tenancies Authority, but it shows the system is broken and needs to be fixed. That is what Labor governments do. We lean into these sorts of problems and we find a solution.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** I hear the members opposite chuckling. That is what Labor governments do. If we had seen more of that during the last nine years, perhaps Australia would be in a better place. That is what we are doing: ensuring we can strengthen the financial security of the Residential Tenancies Authority, making substantial law reform a significant law reform for those people impacted. I want to put on the record I met a parent, one of the parents who advocated to the member for Greenslopes, earlier in the corridor of the parliament. He was here on behalf of his daughter—

**Ms Lauga:** He is in the gallery.

**Mr DICK:**—and I acknowledge Chris, who is here in the gallery. I had the privilege of meeting Chris and it was Chris's advocacy on a street corner with the member for Greenslopes that has now resulted in this reform coming to the Queensland parliament. I want to acknowledge Chris and his advocacy. In our lives we have all been touched by disability in some way or another, but it is not often that loving parents get the opportunity to change the law in Queensland. That is what Chris has been able to do. I say that through you, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for Greenslopes, who took up that advocacy, who took up that argument, because that represents what Labor MPs do: knocking on doors, standing on street corners, not virtue signalling, not doing it to hold up a placard or a sign but to effect real and substantial reform. It is why every member on this side of the House is a member of the Australian Labor Party, because it is the only force for progressive reform in this nation and this state that can deliver for people like Chris and his family. We are very proud and honoured to be able to do that.

I want to focus on that reform again and thank Chris for his advocacy and the advocacy of the member for Greenslopes who regrettably, for a range of circumstances, was not able to contribute to the bill. I want to speak on behalf of the member for Greenslopes. He is a great mate of mine. He is a great advocate for the people of Greenslopes. I recognise his significant contribution in this parliament.

These are important reforms. They are substantive reforms. Members of this House should not be misled by the contributions made by the LNP. We had sterile lessons in history in relation to SPER. This has been a challenge for all governments. However, I am proud that this financial year, thanks to the reforms of our government, we are likely to see a record recovery of SPER debt for the people of Queensland. I am proud of that, and I am proud to work with my colleagues to achieve these reforms, the point of which in relation to SPER debt is to accelerate recovery. The quicker we can recover this money, the more it can be returned to the people of Queensland.

I know the members opposite dismiss quite regularly the reforms we implement as the government. I recall the savings and debt legislation that we passed through the parliament. It would result in \$3 million in savings that we wanted to return to the people of Queensland and the member for Chatsworth said, '\$3 million is nothing. It means nothing to me.' It means a lot to the people of Woodridge. I know the members opposite often make fun of me and the electorates that I have been proud to represent, but I can tell them this: I have never been prouder to represent the people of Woodridge and the money that I can help recover for them, for their schools, for the great Logan Hospital—under pressure for a range of reasons—for our disability support services, our community organisations, all of those organisations that serve the people of Woodridge and Logan.

That is why I am proud to see this bill pass through the House. I am proud of the reforms that we have moved as a government since our re-election in October 2020. We will not be dissuaded from our mission, from our task, by the members opposite or anyone else. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**AYES, 51:**

**ALP, 48**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, MacMahon, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**Grn, 2**—Berkman, MacMahon.

**Ind, 1**—Bolton.

**NOES, 33:**

**LNP, 30**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts.

**KAP, 2**—Dametto, Knuth.

**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

Pairs: Howard, Gerber; McMillan, Weir. Power, Last.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

**Mr SPEAKER:** Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time allocated for this stage of the bill having expired, I will now put all remaining questions.

Question put—That clauses 1 to 62, as read, stand part of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 62, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading

Question put—That the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### Long Title

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## BUILDING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 29 March (see p. 636).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (4.34 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to advise the House that the Palaszczuk government continues to make strides to implement the Queensland Building Plan—a plan that was released in 2017 and updated again in November 2021. We remain firmly committed to ensuring that Queensland's building and construction industry is safer, fairer and more sustainable and that the industry fosters confidence, creates jobs and strengthens our state's economic prosperity.

Our building and construction industry is vital to Queensland as well as the national economy. It is an industry that supports around 230,000 Queensland jobs—230,000 Queenslanders dedicated to literally building this great state. It is an industry that generates \$47 billion for our state's economy each year. It is an industry that sees more than 110,000 contractors licensed with the state's building regulator, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. It is an industry that sees over 17,000 professional engineers and almost 3,000 architects registered with the boards that oversee incredibly high professional standards. Supporting our building industry is more important now than ever as we emerge from the shadow cast by the COVID pandemic over the last two years.

The Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill continues our vital efforts to ensure that the industry, Queensland consumers and home owners remain confident and supported. We have strengthened the framework that supports industry by introducing nation-leading security-of-payment reforms, by introducing nonconforming building product reforms and by modernising plumbing and drainage laws. We have strengthened the minimum financial requirements for licensing. We have enhanced our licensing framework for fire protection and for mechanical services work and we have supported the QBCC with expanded investigative powers and regulatory oversight so that it can do its job.

These key reforms ensure the building industry and Queenslanders are supported, particularly through these challenging times. The bill continues this important work by reflecting contemporary consumer expectations about the efficiency of Queensland buildings. This will occur through amendments to legislative provisions that 'ban the banners'—amendments that support home owners to install solar hot-water systems and solar panels where they are most effective.

The bill allows for greater efficiency by expanding the possible uses of greywater and allowing holding tanks for sewage and greywater in certain circumstances. The bill also aims to enhance the efficacy and transparency of the regulatory framework through amendments regarding head contractor licensing for commercial projects and supporting information sharing about QBCC investigation outcomes and decisions.

The bill aims to improve the operation of building related legislation through minor technical amendments. Improving our building related legislation is an ongoing process. I advise that my department has now received the QBCC governance review report from the independent reviewer, Mr Jim Varghese. It contains 17 recommendations and 77 corresponding actions for implementation, and these are now being considered by the department. This report, together with the government response, will be released as soon as possible and I anticipate returning to the House on that matter again.

I now turn to the details of the bill. I would like to start with 'ban the banners'. Living in the Sunshine State, we have a unique opportunity to build a diverse renewable energy sector. To get there we will adopt strategies such as installing large numbers of solar panels—panels that generate electricity from our most abundant natural resource: the sun. I am pleased to report that this work is, of course, already underway. Existing large-scale solar farms already provide more than 2,000 megawatts of renewable energy capacity. This number will continue to increase, with a further eight large-scale solar farms including the under-construction Western Downs Green Power Hub, the Woolloga Solar Farm and the Blue Grass Solar Farm. Together, these eight new projects will deliver an additional 1,200 megawatts of renewable capacity.

We also need to consider the contribution that is made by roof top solar. Queensland currently has 4,000 megawatts of capacity provided by solar panels that Queensland home owners have installed on their roofs. According to the CSIRO, Queensland leads not only the nation but also the entire world in solar panel installations. One in three Queensland homes has panels, compared to one in four for the rest of the nation.

As we move towards net zero these numbers will continue to increase. Queenslanders understand the critical role that modern, well designed and constructed homes contribute to our unique lifestyle. Queenslanders are looking for modern homes that are comfortable to live in, cost less to run and contribute to emissions reduction. To support these aspirations the bill contains amendments that clarify the original intent of the 'ban the banners' policy that removed barriers to installing rooftop solar.

The amendments respond to a recent court decision which affected the efficacy of the 'ban the banners' provisions. The amendments provide greater clarity around when developers and bodies corporate can limit the installation of solar panels. Essentially, limits will only be allowed in certain circumstances. They are where panels are installed on common property and would affect the structural stability of the building, where they would cause a nuisance to another owner of the building, or where there is not enough space for each owner of the building to install some of their own panels.

The submissions made to the Transport and Resources Committee on the 'ban the banners' provisions were revealing around community expectations on this issue. Eleven of the twelve submitters supported the amendments, including key development industry stakeholders such as the Urban Development Institute of Australia and the Property Council of Australia. Only one submission raised concerns with the amendments, arguing that they went beyond the original scope of the provisions. This submitter suggested that limits should be allowed as long as the efficiency of panels was not affected beyond a certain percentage.

My department's response to the submitter's proposal was outlined in the Transport and Resources Committee's report on the bill. The response identified a number of issues that would make the submitter's proposal unworkable. This included restricting the number of panels that could be installed, adding cost and the potential for arbitrary outcomes where a difference of one per cent in efficiency could determine whether or not panels can be installed in the optimal location. The department also referred to evidence that suggests covenants are having an impact on panel uptake rates.

The 'ban the banners' amendments in the bill reflect this government's active encouragement of renewable energy and solar panels over many years. They meet community expectations by removing barriers to home owners installing solar panels. They demonstrate the government's ongoing commitment to develop Queensland as a renewable and sustainable energy leader. They provide certainty for both home owners and industry. They ensure that all Queensland home owners can install solar panels and play their part in meeting the climate change challenge. Finally, they contribute to the government's modern homes agenda by delivering sustainable and accessible homes for all.

The bill continues to meet community expectations around sustainability by including a head of power to prescribe new uses for treated greywater. It is intended that a regulation will facilitate the use of treated greywater for air-conditioning cooling towers in large building developments. There will be flexibility to allow other uses of greywater as well. The bill also includes provisions that will allow the discharge into a holding tank of untreated sewage or greywater for collection and disposal off-site by a truck. The changes for holding tanks will provide a safe, practical and cost-effective solution—particularly in circumstances where connecting to reticulated sewerage is not feasible or space is not available for a land application area.

Submissions to the committee from the Local Government Association of Queensland sought clarification regarding the expanded use of greywater and changes relating to holding tanks. I am pleased to be able provide the following clarification. As a key stakeholder, LGAQ will be consulted in relation to proposed regulation amendments to facilitate the re-use of greywater. Appropriate regulatory oversight and enforcement will ensure public health outcomes remain at the fore for any additional permitted uses of greywater. This will be achieved by setting the standard to which greywater must be treated for any additional use and it will ensure that system designs will treat water to the required standard. Currently, a local government has a responsibility to monitor greywater use facilities installed in seweraged areas. I can confirm it is not proposed to introduce new monitoring requirements for holding tanks. I can assure the House that local governments will continue to have discretion when deciding an application for a permit. This will apply equally to applications that involve expanded use of greywater and installation of holding tanks.

I turn now to head contractor licensing. Amendments in the bill will also reintroduce the head contractor licensing exemption under the QBCC Act. Many submissions generally supported the proposed removal of an uncommenced provision that would see the repeal of this exemption. However, some submissions raised concerns about the ability to prescribe exclusions from this licensing exemption by regulation. I can advise that the approach in the bill was directly informed by targeted stakeholder consultation. Consultation showed reliance on the exemption in commercial contracting, such as in development agreements and contracts that involve a minor element of building work. If the exemption was to be repealed, consultation showed there would likely be higher costs to businesses to undertake this ancillary work. However, concerns remained that the exemption could allow a way to circumvent Queensland's strong licensing, safety and security-of-payment frameworks.

To address these issues, the approach in the bill balances the benefit of the licensing exemption with the ability to address specific concerns. It provides the ability for a regulation to be made to prescribe certain circumstances where it is considered critical that a head contractor be licensed. It also allows circumstances to be prescribed by regulation where a retention trust is required, even if the licensing exemption is relied upon. This allows the government to respond to issues as they arise, such as security of payment or safety issues.

I note that the approach in the bill was canvassed through the Ministerial Construction Council and there was further targeted consultation, including with stakeholders who had contacted the department to express concerns about the impacts of the repeal. I am advised that these stakeholders reached a consensus about this approach. In applying this approach, business as usual will continue for major projects except where there is a reason a licence is needed. A regulation will give the government the power to deal with this quickly. Appropriate consultation is critical in the development of legislation, whether it is act amendments or regulation amendments. I can assure the House that, consistent with the recommendations of the committee, the department will continue to consult comprehensively with industry before developing any proposed regulations.

The bill also clarifies that the QBCC may disclose the outcome of an investigation to a complainant once the investigation has concluded. This is important to support consumer protections, as well as upholding basic common sense and efficient customer service. One submission to the committee from the Local Government Association of Queensland specifically supported this amendment in the bill. They noted that local governments can also make a complaint to the QBCC in relation to compliance with certain legislation. The submission noted that this amendment will improve clarity and transparency around councils' compliance concerns. Right now, current drafting suggests the QBCC cannot provide this information to a complainant. Instead, the complainant must spend their money and time, as well as the QBCC's resources, to undergo a right-to-information process to find out what happened to their complaint. Finding out what happened to their complaint is important. The complainant may be looking to take the matter further through civil action or there may be structural or safety concerns that will need to be addressed. It is important to note there are also safeguards in place. Only the QBCC Commissioner, or any delegated officer deemed suitable by the Commissioner, can release this information.

There is an existing power for the QBCC to immediately suspend a licence. This is where there are risks of serious harm or financial loss to protect certain people, such as staff of licensees or consumers. The bill extends this power to protect anyone where there are risks of serious harm or financial loss. This is an important change, particularly in circumstances where an immediate response is needed to address significant safety concerns. A number of submitters, including the Plumbing and Pipe Trades Employees Union, Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland and the National Fire Industry Association, told the committee they support this amendment. It is important that the building regulator has the appropriate tools to do its job effectively, and this key safety amendment is one of them. This brings the QBCC in line with other regulators such as the Board of Architects of Queensland and the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland. These boards are already able to immediately suspend a registration if it is in the public interest.

Three submissions received by the committee commented on the amendments to the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Act that are contained in the bill. The submissions from the Property Council of Australia, National Electrical and Communications Association and Wood L&M Solutions generally supported the bill's minor amendments. I note comments from the National Electrical and Communications Association advocating for full implementation of the trust framework as soon as possible to support their members. While swift implementation is indeed desirable, government considered other important factors before extending the start dates for the final two phases of the framework. My department undertook a health check of the readiness of industry for the next phase of the trust framework. This occurred prior to eligible contracts valued at \$10 million and above being included in the framework from 1 January 2022.

The findings indicated that this sector of the industry was broadly ready for the rollout on 1 January 2022 but that smaller businesses face challenges. These include, of course, those driven by the COVID-19 environment including significant material and workforce shortages and price rises, the compatibility of accounting software and awareness of the framework and, of course, the recent natural disaster events. As a result, the government extended the commencement dates for the remaining two phases by nine months respectively. The extension will allow more time for industry to prepare and for the government to support the transition. I am advised that, since the health check, the QBCC has run extensive advertising and social media campaigns, distributed emails and newsletters, and conducted training sessions. The commission will continue to review and expand its engagement in the lead-up to the next trust phase, starting on 1 April 2023.

Turning back to the bill, Wood L&M Solutions did not support the introduction of a head of power to prescribe that some subcontracts needed a project trust account where the head contractor licensing exemption is used. This is not introduced by the bill and a head of power already exists in the building industry fairness act. It is necessary to ensure subcontractors who are pushed down the contractual chain due to these contract structures are protected. A regulation is intended to prescribe certain subcontracts. Industry will be consulted to ensure we get the protections right. My department is also considering other suggested clarifications raised by Wood L&M Solutions separately to this bill.

On the Architects Act and the Professional Engineers Act, both of those professions hold important roles in the industry and are often responsible for key safety construction elements of a building. Those roles are regulated by boards to uphold the standards of practice and protect the public. The bill proposes some minor and technical amendments such as making sure the boards provide certain information online, such as codes of practice. Other provisions are clarified; for example, providing certainty about when a resignation takes effect if a board member resigns by notice to the minister. These genuinely minor amendments reflect current operational, business and drafting practices.

There are several minor and technical amendments to the QBCC Act that are proposed to improve government and regulator processes and clarify existing provisions. Currently, the QBCC can only engage in an information-sharing agreement with state government departments, a health and safety regulator or local government. It makes sense that this should extend to Queensland statutory bodies, especially those in the building industry such as QLeave, the Board of Architects of Queensland and the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland. It is important to note that the QBCC Act provides existing safeguards to ensure information is managed appropriately. The QBCC Act already restricts an information-sharing agreement to that which helps the regulator or agency perform its functions, or if it is necessary to protect health and safety. Minor amendments are also proposed to clarify that both committing an offence and contravening the requirements of a relevant act are grounds for disciplinary action. It is also proposed to amend existing definitions and modernise the drafting of existing provisions to ensure that the original policy intent is achieved.

The bill proposes amendments to the Building Act relating to combustible cladding checklist offences. Those are offences under Part 4A of the Building Regulation 2006, which was preserved when that regulation was remade last year. The combustible cladding checklist process required private building owners to self-assess their buildings. This well-managed process, administered by the QBCC, had a deadline of 3 May 2021 and was an overwhelming success with 94 per cent of building owners completing the process. However, currently, where local governments can initiate court proceedings the QBCC requires express permission from the relevant local government to take that court action. I am pleased to advise more than 20 local governments have now given authority to the QBCC to take action. That includes Brisbane City, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Ipswich, Moreton Bay, Townsville and Cairns regional councils, which represent around 91 per cent of buildings identified with a cladding fire risk. As the administrator of the cladding checklist, the QBCC is considered best placed to take enforcement action for breaches relating to the checklist.

Since May 2021, the regulator has worked closely with noncompliant building owners, with over 850 direct contacts to help them complete their obligations. That includes investigating buildings identified through the online program and undertaking over 6,200 desktop audits where building owners have either not completed the Safer Buildings program checklist or where a significant risk may be present due to incorrect or incomplete document lodgements. This amendment will ensure the QBCC can prosecute checklist related offences that arise due to failures to meet obligations or through physical audits. I understand the QBCC has now initiated 35 prosecutions against building owners whose buildings are identified as very high or high risk, within eight local government areas. The QBCC is working closely with those local governments. However, because those matters are now before the court I can make no further comment on them specifically. I also note that local governments have existing powers and obligations under the Building Act 1975. As administrators of building legislation in their areas, they can still use these powers to take action on dangerous buildings.

I now turn to the committee's recommendations. I start by thanking the chair of the Transport and Resources Committee and member for Kurwongbah, Mr Shane King, and his fellow committee members who undertook a thorough examination of the bill. I also thank the staff who support the committee in its important work.

**Mr Watts:** He's a good chair.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I take that interjection. He is an excellent chair. The committee held public hearings and heard evidence from a broad range of witnesses. It received 12 written submissions from stakeholders. I thank the individuals and organisations that took the time to consider the bill and make those submissions to the committee.

I am pleased to inform the House that the committee report, tabled on 13 May 2022, had two recommendations. Firstly, and most importantly, the committee has recommended that the bill be passed. I welcome the committee's recommendation, which is why we are here today to consider this bill. The committee made only one other recommendation, which is that in developing the regulation relating to the head contractor licensing exemption any work prescribed under the regulation should be clearly defined and the timing of commencement should be considered. This is due to suggestions from stakeholders that participated in the committee's process. I agree that any regulation should clearly prescribe where it is critical that a head contractor be licensed when contracting to procure building work. This is not only good legislative practice but also will support implementation and compliance.

My department will continue to consult comprehensively with industry prior to developing any regulation under this provision in the bill. That consultation will include those who provided submissions during the committee's examination of the bill, members of the Ministerial Construction Council and other interested stakeholders. As the committee has suggested, that stakeholder feedback will be critical to ensure that any type of work prescribed under the regulation is clearly defined to give certainty. My department advises that the Queensland Law Society and other key stakeholders are well informed from their participation in targeted consultation last year. That consultation defined the head contractor licensing exemption issues and resulted in the approach outlined in the bill. I can assure the House that those stakeholders will also be invited to participate in developing any proposed regulation.

I have also asked my department to consider the timing of any proposed regulation due to feedback from the committee process. That includes work in relation to the independent review of the role of developers in the Queensland construction industry. I table the government's response to the committee report.

*Tabled paper:* Transport and Resources Committee: Report No. 18, 57th Parliament—Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, government response [\[700\]](#).

I also propose to move an amendment during consideration in detail and I will conclude briefly on this matter. As previously mentioned, the bill seeks to amend the Building Act to provide the QBCC with the power to prosecute for failure to comply with the requirements of a combustible cladding checklist. The amendment was intended to give the QBCC the same enforcement powers as local governments. However, it has been brought to the attention of my department that others have a view that it could be read in a way that restricts that power to use by the QBCC only. That was not the intention and it is proposed to be amended by a simple amendment, which has been circulated.

I look forward to hearing members' contributions to the debate of the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (4.59 pm): I rise to give my contribution to the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. At the very outset, I state that the opposition will not be opposing the bill. It is a fairly technical piece of legislation in lots of different ways and, for the most part, is uncontroversial. I note the government's explanation of its objectives for the bill are as follows: to support contemporary consumer expectations about efficiency of buildings through amendments to legislate provisions regarding the expanded use of greywater and issues about holding tanks for sewage, which is a good change and something that we support very much; to enhance the efficacy and transparency of the regulatory framework through amendments to the legislative provisions regarding issues such as the sharing of information on investigation outcomes, which the minister has already explained; and to improve the operation of building related legislation through minor technical amendments.

All of that is well and good and, like I said, for the most part the bill is not controversial; however, there are a few issues in this bill which the opposition will not let slide. Those issues go to the very heart of the competency of this government. Behind what is in the bill are issues where the government over a long period of time has not got it right. The very basics have been bungled. That is what is behind some of the amendments included in the bill before the House. The people of Queensland ought to know about them. In other words, this bill corrects some of the government's stuff-ups.

There are three issues that I want the House to take note of and I will highlight during my contribution. The first one is the 'ban the banners' provisions. The second one will be issues around flammable cladding. The final one will be about head contractor licensing exemptions.

Let us start with 'ban the banners'. It is really important to know the backstory here. A lady at North Lakes, Pauline Tyler, was doing the right thing by putting solar panels on the roof of her house. She did that thinking that she was doing the right thing environmentally, which she is doing, and had no consideration whatsoever that that would ever be challenged. But the developer in that area took offence to the aesthetics of the solar panels on the roof and ordered her to remove them. Obviously, she could not understand and was very reluctant to do so. It cost her a lot of money, and it would cost her a lot of money to remove those solar panels as well. The developer continued to push by saying that as part of the covenant this was not acceptable. The developer wanted them on another side of the roof, which would not be efficient. She kept pushing back. Anyhow, this ended up in the courts.

The courts referred to the legislation to which the minister referred earlier, legislation introduced during the Bligh government. I suspect Robert Schwarten was the minister at the time—a recently retired member of the QBCC member of the board.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** It was actually me.

**Mr MANDER:** Oh, it was you. Sorry, I take that back. Sorry, Robert Schwarten.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Lui): All comments through the chair.

**Mr MANDER:** Okay, it was Minister Hinchliffe. That legislation was introduced so that this exact thing could not happen—so that anybody wanting an energy-saving device could not be stopped by some development covenant. This matter went before the courts. Pauline Tyler won that first court case and felt that that was the end of the matter. The developer then looked further at the legislation and realised that there was a loophole. Through another costly court appearance, Pauline Tyler lost the case because the original legislation was not tight enough. There were different interpretations of words used which left her high and dry. This has cost her many tens of thousands of dollars to defend, not to mention the mental anguish of wondering what was going to happen next. It also led to an ex gratia payment from the government. This loophole has cost taxpayers money because of, basically, the Labor Party's inability to get this right from the very beginning.

Pauline Tyler has been put through the legal wringer. Until today, the developer continued to push that she remove not the panels but the tracks on the roof, because this legislation was not tightened until today. It is something that should have never happened. The legislation should have been tight in the first place. It did not meet the Court of Appeal's requirements. We have a Queenslander who has gone through the legal wringer. I hope now that this will finally give her some peace.

The second issue I want to address is combustible cladding. There are components of the bill which relate to the removal of such cladding on private buildings. Clause 21 will enable the QBCC to commence prosecution of those who have committed an offence in relation to the combustible cladding checklist process. Without this amendment the QBCC is powerless to commence prosecutions on this issue. That means that, since the Building and Other Legislation Cladding Amendment Regulation 2018 came into effect, there has been no state government agency that has had the authority to prosecute noncompliant building owners.

The government has had to go cap in hand to local councils seeking their approval. The government is very fortunate in that, through the goodwill of the councils the minister has mentioned, it has sought and won their cooperation. Even with the ability to prosecute a building owner for an action, there may be difficulty compelling the building owner to remove the cladding. This is a really serious issue. Having known about this issue since 2017, the state government has had no clear solution to remedy the problem of combustible cladding on private structures. This has dragged on for far too long.

At the end of April, at nearly 30 government sites flammable cladding is still present. They include schools, hospitals, courts and libraries. It is all listed on the government's website. What is the hold-up? Does the government have a legitimate excuse for why this is taking so long? When it comes to privately owned buildings, there still is no answer to how the problem will be fixed. When it comes to rectification, what is the government's plan? Does it have one? Does the government think it is now suitably armed with this legislation to prosecute and compel the removal of this cladding? Some in the industry believe that is not the case. The government has known about this problem since 2017, but it is now 2022.

Members of the government still seem to be making things up as they go along when it comes to removing combustible cladding. There are people living and working in these buildings every day. This cannot be something that is put in the too-hard basket; it is a real problem that needs a prompt solution. It is the role of the government to get on with fixing this. Every day this problem lingers is another day that people are at risk in these buildings.

I refer to the head contractor licence exemptions. Clause 67 of the bill amends schedule 1A of the QBCC Act to clarify that a head contractor licensing exemption clarifies that the head contractor licensing exemption prescribed in schedule 1A, sections 8(1) and (2), does not apply in circumstances prescribed in regulation. This amendment will omit a section of the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2022 which repealed head contractor licensing exemptions.

Let us again understand what has happened here. If somebody involved in a project where building work is not the prime reason for that project—for example, civil contractors building roads or kerbs and developing some sort of estate where they have to build a couple of bus shelters which require a carpenter or somebody in the building trade—what has always happened is that there have been exemptions to the need for the head contractor to have the appropriate building licence. It makes no sense. That is not the primary aim of this.

What happened two years ago is that this government took away that exemption. That was passed by this House and the Governor signed it off but it is yet to come into effect. We have legislation before us now that is repealing something that went through the parliament two years ago but has not taken effect. This is happening because they stuffed it up in the first place. They obviously did not consult properly and did not understand the implications of that provision, and we are now reverting to what should have always been the case.

If we look at what stakeholders like Master Electricians, the Property Council and the Queensland Law Society have said, we find that they have grave concerns that exemptions will be granted by regulation and not by parliamentary process. This is typical of a government that continues to circumvent the democratic processes of parliament.

The minister talks about targeted consultation. They have targeted consultation with organisations that support the government. He mentioned NFIA—please—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Lui): Excuse me, member for Everton. You used an unparliamentary word so I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr MANDER:** I withdraw. I am not sure what it was, but I withdraw. The minister talks about targeted consultation. I have heard about targeted consultation before and I have seen the outcomes of that as well. I have zero confidence that this government can be trusted when it comes to how these regulations are enacted and so do others who submitted on this bill. This is just another classic example of this government trying to avoid parliamentary scrutiny. It is of grave concern.

As I have said, the LNP will not oppose this bill. However, this House must recognise the mess caused by the Bligh era legislation which left a home owner with excessive legal costs simply for installing her solar panels. We also need to recognise that, despite it being five years since the Grenfell Tower fire, which this minister loves to continue to reference, this state government still has no solution in terms of how to address the presence of combustible cladding that remains on private buildings. The head contractor licence exemption amendment represents another example of the state government relegating very important matters to regulation in an effort to avoid parliamentary scrutiny and reversing something that should never have happened in the first place.

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (5.12 pm): I rise today to contribute to this debate on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which aims to: better support consumer expectations about efficiency measures like solar hot-water systems and solar panels, greywater, and holding tanks for sewage and greywater; and enhance regulatory frameworks around head contractor licensing, sharing information on investigation outcomes and decision-making to increase transparency and efficacy.

When this bill came before the Transport and Resources Committee we held public briefings, hearings and received numerous submissions. As the minister mentioned, the committee made two recommendations. Those recommendations were: firstly, that the bill be passed; and, secondly, that in developing the regulation relating to the head contractor licensing exemptions, the minister should clearly define the type of work prescribed under the regulation and consider the timing of commencement as suggested by stakeholders. It is pleasing to see that the minister has considered this recommendation.

I will turn to the first aim of this bill. I will start with the 'ban the banners' provision which is intended to bring legislation into line with consumer expectations around efficiencies in building. Most people have heard—and the previous member spoke about it—about the legal case where a home owner was sued for having her solar panels placed in a location on her roof that was prohibited by a developer's housing estate covenant. While I respect the legality of covenants, most people, including me, were disappointed to hear about that case. I do not think it passed the pub test. That is why I am pleased to support this legislation which will make clear our government's intention to encourage consumers to install solar products, like water heaters and solar panels, without regard to aesthetics. Efficiency of operation should always outweigh aesthetics. These products are not cheap and they should provide the maximum benefit and not just be put where they look good. They have a purpose and that purpose should be achieved.

The bill will enable treated greywater to be used in cooling towers for air conditioning in large building developments as well as for some other purposes such as flushing toilets. This provision was supported by submitters. It is great news for our environment and for our water supply. The science behind water recycling these days is remarkable, and our innovation means we can achieve and regulate better building and environmental outcomes through measures like these while still ensuring good public health outcomes.

Finally, in terms of consumer expectations around sewage and greywater, this bill addresses some challenges that currently exist around temporary toilet facilities such as those on construction sites or at outdoor concert facilities. The law currently says that where premises are located in an area served by a sewerage system, any sewage there must be discharged into that system. In addition, the law currently says that where premises are not in an area served by a sewerage system, any sewage and greywater must be discharged into a treatment facility before reaching a holding tank for collection and disposal. It is not something most of us give any thought to on the odd occasion we go past a construction site or attend a concert and see all the portaloos, but these requirements can be costly and impractical. This bill will create a permit, issued by the local government, to discharge greywater or untreated waste and water from a toilet directly into a holding tank for collection and offsite disposal. This is a good outcome, providing regulated oversight to again uphold public health outcomes while reducing build costs and complications.

I now turn to the second aim of this bill, being regulatory frameworks around head contractor licensing, sharing information on investigation outcomes and decision-making to increase transparency and efficacy. Under the QBCC Act as it stands, building work is generally only able to be carried out by people who hold an appropriate licence. However, there is provision in the act for a head contractor in certain circumstances to procure work that will be carried out by an appropriately licensed contractor.

During a transport and public works parliamentary committee inquiry that I chaired in the last parliament, we heard feedback about the alleged misuse of this licensing exemption and recommended its repeal in the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020. After further stakeholder feedback showed that this exemption features heavily in commercial contracting processes, particularly those with only minor elements of building work, our government has decided to reinstate the exemption. However, in order to address the remaining concerns about its use in contracting and to allow the government to pivot with new emerging issues, there will be a new regulation in the QBCC Act requiring some head contractors to obtain a licence, including those who engage in high-risk work. The committee's second recommendation was around this.

This legislation also provides more freedom for the QBCC to communicate with complainants about the outcomes of their complaints without being hindered by an inflexible protection of privacy for all parties, including those accused of wrongdoing. This amendment has potential to better inform complainants about the viability of bringing civil proceedings to court, which can be a costly process both emotionally and financially.

This bill also furthers our crackdown in Queensland on combustible cladding. Currently both the QBCC and local governments can issue an infringement notice for combustible cladding checklist offences. However, while councils can commence court proceedings where necessary, the QBCC requires permission from council. This legislation gives the QBCC power to directly commence prosecutions. The minister will move an amendment to clarify this. This bill also expands the scope around suspensions of a QBCC licence to apply a test of broader public safety as well as the existing protections for consumer outcomes, serious harm and financial loss.

Lastly, the bill strengthens our security-of-payment measures introduced in the BIFOLA Act 2020 and expands the rights of consumers for review of QBCC decisions on pool safety management plans. These are good amendments. There is absolutely no doubt the industry is currently facing some of its toughest challenges yet, with the supply chain struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and other global factors leading to increased costs and issues with availability of materials. When we read news articles on a regular basis about the collapse of Australian builders, I am thankful we have put in the work to try to protect subcontractors, consumers and builders themselves from financial ruin by having regulated expectations in place for how much money builders need to stay in the game and keep operating.

I thank the minister, the department, the QBCC and their teams for the work that has gone into this bill. I acknowledge other stakeholders who provided input into these amendments. I also thank our committee for working together to produce this report: the members for Mundingburra, Stretton, Gregory and Toowoomba North. I would have loved to have heard the contribution from our former colleague the member for Callide, particularly on the aesthetics of solar panels, because I know deep down in his heart he loved a good solar panel. He has gone on to better things. His contribution was welcome at the time. I also thank our hardworking secretariat team who always work hard and we work well with them. Deb, Zac and Amanda, thank you. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.20 pm): I will make a short contribution. Firstly, I acknowledge the chairman of our committee and the wonderful work he does. He does a great job. He is a very good chairman and we get on very well.

**Mr Purdie:** You're misleading the House.

**Mr MILLAR:** I am not misleading the House.

**Mr Purdie:** I think you are misleading the House.

**Mr MILLAR:** No. He is an excellent chairman. He listens to all committee members. I also thank the other committee members: the member for Toowoomba North, the member for Condamine, the member for Mundingburra and the member for Stretton. We all do a good job. This was not a controversial bill but a very technical bill. It was very dry in its arguments. I do not think it kept many people watching the broadcast. I am sure that the former member for Callide, Colin Boyce, is listening to us right now.

**Mr Watts:** He'd be tuned in.

**Mr MILLAR:** He would be tuned in. With indulgence, I would like to congratulate the former member for Callide on winning the seat of Flynn. He is a good man. He will do a good job. We will miss him but we will still get to see him. I am sure those on the other side will still try to have a crack at him. He is a decent man and a hardworking bloke and he will do well for Flynn.

This bill is about supporting contemporary consumer expectations about the efficiency of buildings through amendments to legislative provisions regarding ‘ban the banners’—that was a new phrase for me; I had never heard of that before, but now I know what it means—solar hot-water systems and solar panels; expanded use of greywater; and holding tanks for sewage and greywater. This bill is also about enhancing the efficacy and transparency of the regulatory framework through amendments to legislative provisions regarding head contractor licensing, and I want to talk about that.

There has been some concern over head contractor licensing in terms of people being able to get the job done and having the right licensing in place. If you are a plumber and you are doing a major plumbing job on a renovation and there needs to be some building work done, there has been some concern about the fact that the plumber cannot do the building work because they need a licensed contractor to do it. It is a technical issue but it can cause some red-tape issues. We need to have a look at that. We need to make it as easy as possible for people to do renovations. Right now people are finding it hard to find staff, to find contractors, to do the builds and the renovations. I was talking to a builder the other day in Emerald—Peter Davies.

**Mr Purdie:** What'd he say?

**Mr MILLAR:** He said, ‘I’ve got work right up until next year and I cannot find staff.’ As a government we need to be an enabler. When it comes to legislation, we need to make it easier for people to complete their work and service the community. I ask the minister to have a look at this issue. I understand some of the issues behind it. The chairman of the committee has been good at explaining them from where he comes from. I understand that. We also have to look at reducing red tape and allow people to get on and do the builds and the renovations that they need to do. I call on the minister and the government to look at that.

The Transport and Resources Committee provided its report on 13 May. The report made two recommendations—that the bill be passed and that, in developing the regulation relating to the head contractor licensing exemptions, the minister should clearly define the type of work prescribed under the regulation and consider the timing of commencement as suggested by stakeholders. That is important. Stakeholders did have a bit to say on that. I call on the minister and the department to have a look at that and see if we can fix that.

Something that I do have a concern about that we need to get on top of is the combustible cladding issue. There are components in the bill which relate to the removal of combustible cladding on private buildings. Clause 21 of the bill will enable the QBCC to commence prosecution against those who have committed an offence in relation to the combustible cladding checklist process. Without this amendment the QBCC is powerless to commence prosecutions on this issue. This has meant that since the Building and Other Legislation (Cladding) Amendment Regulation 2018 came into effect, no state government agencies have had the authority to prosecute noncompliant building owners. Even with the ability to prosecute a building owner for inaction, there may still be difficulty in getting the building owner to remove the cladding. That is a serious issue. We need to get on top of this right away.

This has been a known issue since 2017, yet the state government still has no clear solution for the problem of combustible cladding on private structures. This has dragged on for far too long. We need to get on top of this. As at the end of April, there are nearly 30 government sites where flammable cladding is still present. That is an issue. That is a concern. I call on the minister and the department to find a solution to this. We all remember what happened in the UK. It was frightening to see the TV images of that building on fire. When we have cladding issues in state government buildings—we have hardworking public servants working in these environments—we have to make sure that they are safe if something happens. I call on the minister and the government and the department to come back to us with a solution. We will support it. If you can find a solution, we will support it and make sure that we get on top of this issue.

These buildings include schools, hospitals and libraries. They are all listed on the government website. We cannot continue to have these cladding issues in primary health care, primary education and libraries. We have to make sure that we get on top of this issue. I call on the minister to find a solution and bring it back to parliament. I am more than happy to talk to him about it. What is the hold-up? Does the government have a legitimate excuse for why it is taking so long? I am looking forward to the minister’s response at the end of this debate to tell us what has happened. Where are we with this? What is the solution? How are we going forward with this? I look forward to hearing his response.

When it comes to privately owned buildings, there is still no answer for how this problem is going to be fixed. When it comes to rectification, what is the government's plan? Do they have one? Does the government now think that this legislation to prosecute and compel the removal of cladding is the solution? Some in the industry think it will not cut the mustard. Come back to us at the end of this debate and tell us how it does cut the mustard. We are talking about a problem we have known about since 2017. It is now 2022, yet this issue is still around and we need to fix it. There are people living and working in these buildings every day.

Finally, I pay tribute to the hardworking secretariat of our committee—Deb and Zac. Zac has been off this week. They do an enormous amount of work for us. They play a critical role in making sure we have every piece of information. Deb Jeffrey, Zac and Amanda, thank you so much for what you do. Once again, I thank the committee—our chair and our committee members. We are working through quite a number of issues at the moment. We have the review into the islands and we have a couple of issues about roads that we have to look at. I think we work well together. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (5.29 pm): I rise to support the proposed amendment to clause 21, which will ensure that the Queensland Building and Construction Commission can commence prosecutions against building owners who fail to comply with the combustible cladding checklist.

All of us in the House today remember the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire in London in 2017. We also recall an earlier fire in Melbourne at the Lacrosse building in 2014. Thankfully, all of the people in that building were able to evacuate without harm or loss of life. The culprit in both cases was the highly flammable combustible cladding material aluminium composite panel, or ACP as it is commonly referred to. Governments across Australia and the world looked at buildings in their own jurisdictions to see if they had similar problems. In Queensland we established the Non-Conforming Building Products Audit Taskforce under the stewardship of the late Hon. Terry Mackenroth. It looked at government buildings and recommended that Queensland establishing the Safer Buildings Combustible Cladding Checklist.

The checklist process required private building owners to self-assess their buildings. This well-managed process administered by the QBCC, which ended 3 May 2021, was an overwhelming success, with over 94 per cent of building owners completing the process. This means that those building owners who have completed the process have either been cleared or now have a detailed report from a fire engineer detailing the type of cladding, the extent of the problem, and what actions to take to mitigate any cladding fire risk before rectifying their buildings. The comprehensive checklist process also captured all building types and materials where the Building Code of Australia, part of the National Construction Code, requires them to be non-combustible. This includes external cladding materials and attachments to the building. These in-scope buildings included apartments, hotels, office buildings, shopping centres, car parks, warehouses, factories, schools, assembly buildings, aged-care facilities and laboratories. They also generally require high levels of fire-resisting construction and fire safety requirements.

This was the first step of the Queensland government's three-phase overarching approach to combustible cladding involving identification, fire risk mitigation and rectification. Identification required in-scope private building owners to complete a three-part online checklist to determine the extent of potentially combustible cladding and raise awareness with building owners about the associated risk. The system is administered by the QBCC. The period for complying with the checklist process finished 3 May 2021, but the offences under the former Building Regulation 2006 have been preserved under the Building Regulation 2021. Only a relatively small number of building owners have not completed the process, and the QBCC has continued to work closely with those building owners to assist them to complete their checklist obligations. The QBCC has investigated buildings identified through the online program and undertaken initial desktop audits where building owners have either not completed the Safer Buildings Program Checklist or where a significant risk may be present due to incorrect or incomplete document lodgements.

As noted in the bill before the House, local governments have the power under the Building Act 1974 to commence prosecutions for failure to comply with the checklist. This recognises the long-term and valuable contribution that local governments make to administering building legislation in their areas. As the administrator of the checklist process, the QBCC is well-placed to take action. This bill proposes to allow the QBCC to have the same powers to commence prosecutions for combustible cladding checklist offences under part 4A of the Building Regulation 2006. Local governments also have existing powers and obligations under the Building Act 1975 and, as administrators of the building legislation in their areas, can still use these powers to take action on dangerous buildings.

The QBCC can commence prosecutions if the local government gives it authority. I am aware that over 23 local councils have given authority to the QBCC to commence proceedings. I also understand that the QBCC has already commenced 35 prosecutions; however, as these matters are now before the courts I can make no further comment on these specifically. Although the time limit for commencing a prosecution for failing to complete the checklist by 3 May 2021 has now passed, the proposed amendments will ensure the QBCC can prosecute other checklist-related offences that arise in future as a result of ongoing obligations or physical audits. It has been suggested that the current wording proposed in the bill will limit the power to just the QBCC. This ACiD proposes to put beyond doubt that the power can be exercised by both local governments and the QBCC, as was originally intended. I noted the minister's intention to move an amendment during consideration in detail, and I applaud providing clarity. I commend this bill more broadly to the House.

While I have the floor, I would also like to thank the secretariat for the great work they do preparing the facility, taking the minutes and giving us good advice—especially myself as a new member of the House—on how to perform in those committees. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.35 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I will start where the previous member left off: I thank the committee and the secretariat. The committee chair is a good chair. He lets us speak pretty freely and gives us plenty of opportunities. I look forward to going through estimates with him as our chair. Also thanks to Deb, Zac and Amanda. They obviously keep us in line and make sure that we have all the information we need.

There are principally three parts to the bill: 'ban the banners', combustible cladding and head contractor licence exemptions. Just before I get to that, the parts of the bill that address sewage and greywater, particularly for festivals and temporary toilets and everything else, are a good thing. As someone who has organised and used those facilities in a past life, it can be a painful and expensive experience. I think it is a good thing to modernise the legislation and get it in a sensible way, particularly with the ability to use greywater. I think that is good.

Let's start with 'ban the banners'. As we heard from the shadow minister, this principally comes from the North Lakes issue where a particular resident was dragged through a legal process to do with the solar panels on their roof. When a developer builds an estate and wants to put certain things in place to ensure the standard of that estate and to make sure that everything looks nice when other people are buying blocks of land and building their homes, I think those are all good things for developers to put in. When it comes to things like solar panels that is a little bit difficult because there are really not that many options as to how a solar panel might look. There are really not that many options for where a solar panel might be positioned. Nobody wants to go to the expense of fitting solar panels and facing them in the wrong direction, because that is an expensive and inefficient way to put them on. It is an issue that has come up. The legislation that was originally put forward in the Bligh era did not do its job properly, and that is a shame. I would like to think that we might now have some legislation that can improve that, although it has been mentioned that maybe we need to be cautious and if there is something else that needs to be done, that would be there.

I do note that the minister made an ex gratia payment to help cover the very expensive legal bill of the lady from North Lakes, although it did not cover all of it. Ultimately, the consequence of not getting the legislation right is that we have had to make an ex gratia payment and someone has gone through all that mental anguish as they have tried to deal with their home, when all they were simply trying to achieve was a better outcome for their power supply, their power bill and the environment. It is good that we have done that now. I hope it acts in the way that the minister has proposed because we would hate to see someone else dragged through a similar court process.

I want to talk about the Grenfell Tower in West London, where 72 people lost their lives and more than 70 people were injured.

**Mr Healy:** A tragedy.

**Mr WATTS:** It was an absolute tragedy. That happened on 14 June 2017. It was caused by highly combustible cladding which basically jumped around the various fire separations in the building. Our own Building Code and our own structure and evacuation procedures and everything else also found themselves unable to be effective with this kind of cladding on the externality of a building. It is of concern that five years later people are still living in these buildings and working in these schools, hospitals, courts and libraries where this cladding exists. If we do have a fire outbreak and it does ignite this cladding, people's lives will be in danger because the fire protection system and the other fire separation in the building will be nullified as this material is combusted.

It is really important that we deal with this. Providing some additional powers to the QBCC to commence prosecution for those who commit an offence in relation to this checklist process is a good thing. It is also important that we recognise that maybe more needs to be done to get this job done in a timely fashion before we have a tragedy in our community. We would certainly support the minister bringing forward other methodologies to deal with this so we can get on with making sure our community is safe, particularly in private buildings. How are we going to get those buildings rectified? Who is going to pay? What is the time line? What are the processes and procedures? I think it is important that that is clearly laid out and addressed. This bill unfortunately does not address some of that in the depth that I would like to see.

In the interests of time, I am going to jump to the head contractor and if I have time at the end I will come back to the combustible cladding. Clause 67 of the bill amends schedule 1 of the QBCC Act to clarify that the head contractor licensing exemption prescribed in schedule 1A, section 8(1) and (2), does not apply in circumstances prescribed in regulation. It is a little bit wordy. The main issue I have here is that that regulation can be changed without the scrutiny of this House. It is important that we get some reassurances from the minister that any regulatory changes will be put through a process of transparency and that stakeholders will be given the opportunity to have input into that regulation. I am talking about all stakeholders. I am not necessarily concerned about right now; it is in three, four or five years time where a regulation might get changed and it has outcomes that we may not anticipate.

To that end, when the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Act was put forward it repealed the head contracting licensing exemptions, and that was two years ago. Now we are repealing the repeal. It concerns me that we have gone through a process that has made life difficult for people. If there was wider consultation and more extended debate, we may be able to avoid these kinds of legislative outcomes where we find ourselves having to come back into this place to tidy up things that were missed, that had unintended consequences or that just have not followed good parliamentary process and application.

I am concerned about phrases like 'targeted consultation'. I think consultation should be wide ranging and should include all people who may be considered a stakeholder or have some interest. If not, unintended consequences may be missed. The evidence for that is that we are here repealing a repeal that was enacted two years ago. The reason this House exists is to make sure that legislation is well drafted and does not have unintended consequences. That is the reason I do not support the guillotine. I believe that everybody should be heard. Certainly, if parts of the legislative framework are going to go to regulation, then that regulation needs to have an open, transparent and accountable process when that regulation is changed, not targeted consultation.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (5.45 pm): I rise to speak on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill amends a range of building legislation to strengthen and modernise our building laws. Importantly, it supports Queensland's \$47 billion building and construction industry. The Palaszczuk government supports this industry and, importantly, the 230,000 workers it employs. These reforms also aim to improve consumer protections and meet community expectations about sustainability and efficiency of our buildings. It also aims to ensure that our building and construction industry is safer, stronger and fairer. Some of the key amendments in this bill ensure home owners are allowed to install solar panels or solar hot-water systems in their preferred location without regard to aesthetics and also allow treated greywater to be used for a range of industrial purposes.

This government has always promoted the installation of solar photovoltaic, or PV, energy systems. We support solar. On that, I want to congratulate the minister for his commitment to renewables, including 50 large-scale renewable energy projects. When combined with rooftop solar, that is 7,200 megawatts of renewable energy capacity. I also want to congratulate the Minister for Education for her commitment to solar, with the Advancing Clean Energy Schools program installing solar panels on state school rooftops to assist to offset all of the air-conditioners we installed. This has been very popular in my community, and residents know that the Palaszczuk government has air-conditioned every classroom in Queensland.

Locals in my community have also been very pleased to see that, in addition to the air-conditioning units, there are solar panels being installed on classroom rooftops. Just last Friday I visited Kuraby State School and met with the principal, Tom Cameron, and Gina from the P&C. They were both very happy to point out their new solar panels. Importantly, these panels are installed on the basis of the best location to generate power—not for aesthetics. This is as it should be. Like a school, when a home owner installs solar panels on their roof, they reduce their energy bill and the energy generated by the panels contributes towards the government's 2030 renewable energy target.

I applaud the government's commitment to restore the original intent of the 'ban the banners' provisions in the Building Act. The 'ban the banners' provisions were introduced back in 2010. They were intended to prevent developer covenants from restricting the installation of solar hot-water systems or solar panels on roofs of homes because the systems or panels would affect street appeal. A recent court decision reduced the effectiveness of the 'ban the banners' provisions, whereby the court ruled that, as long as a covenant did not completely prevent the installation of panels, it was lawful. In this case, a covenant aimed at protecting the appearance of a housing estate prevented panels being installed on the northern part of a roof that faced the road. The location where solar panels are installed on a roof is important. This is because north-facing panels capture much more energy from the sun than south-facing ones. North-facing panels capture 20 to 33 per cent more energy than south-facing panels.

Putting aesthetics ahead of energy efficiency is inconsistent with the original intent of the 'ban the banners' provisions. It is also inconsistent with current community expectations. That was made clear during the committee process.

One in every three houses in Queensland also has solar panels installed. Solar panels are now so common that most people do not even notice them. Ironically, covenants that require panels to face south increase the potential for glare, affecting neighbouring properties. Through this committee process, I learned that this is due to the lower angle of incidence in which the sun strikes the surface of south-facing panels, whereas north-facing panels reflect sunlight back towards the sun and are less likely to reflect glare towards neighbouring properties.

Not only are more home owners installing panels but also the systems they are installing are getting bigger and better. Most systems include around 20 panels with a total capacity of around six kilowatts. These systems require at least 40 square metres of space. Restricting panels to the southern part of a roof is likely to result in smaller, less productive and less efficient systems being installed.

The government is concerned that covenants are having an impact on solar panel installation rates. We are also concerned about the impact that the court decision has had on home owners who relied on the original 'ban the banners' provisions. The bill will address these issues by strictly limiting the validity of developer covenants and body corporate by-laws for solar infrastructure. The covenants and by-laws can only restrict the installation of solar infrastructure on a roof that is common property such as the roof of an apartment building. Such covenants and by-laws can only restrict the installation of solar infrastructure in limited circumstances and have nothing to do with aesthetics. For example, they can restrict the installation to the extent necessary to preserve the structural integrity of the building. This is a commonsense approach that acknowledges the shared interests that arise in apartment and strata title buildings.

To protect owners who relied on the original 'ban the banners' provisions to install panels with optimal orientations, the amendments will also apply to existing covenants. Developers will not be able to withhold consent and home owners will be empowered to install panels on the part of the roof that makes the most sense.

The committee heard from a range of stakeholders and listened to their concerns. I want to take this opportunity to thank the secretariat and all the members of the committee for working collaboratively, thanks in large part to the hard work of our chair, the member for Kurwongbah, who I believe could perhaps be the most popular chair in the history of Queensland parliament.

I also want to acknowledge that the committee did hear from developers who were opposed to reducing their ability to apply covenants or restrictions on the locations of solar panels. Whilst I understand their concerns, ultimately these concerns are outweighed by public interest in this case. I note that 11 of the 12 submissions to the committee supported removing restrictions to home owners installing solar panels and, further, this change will apply to all developers so they will all be operating and selling their homes that they build under the same rules.

As Queensland prepares for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, it will be vitally important to have a fit-for-purpose, globally modern building practice and regulatory framework, and that is what this bill will deliver. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (5.53 pm): It is my pleasure to rise and speak to the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I want to thank the shadow minister, the member for Everton, and the members of the Transport and Resources Committee for their report.

As members on this side have mentioned, the LNP is not opposing this legislation, but there are several key points I want to bring to the attention of the House.

The bill is supporting contemporary consumer expectations about efficiency of buildings through amendments regarding 'ban the banners' relating to solar hot-water systems and solar panels, expanded use of greywater and holding tanks for sewage and greywater.

It took me back to the 53rd Parliament because that is when these provisions first came in under 'ban the banners'. The first two-thirds of the 53rd Parliament was a time when the opposition was at its zenith, back in 2009-10. As I recall the government at the time, the then member for Stafford, now the member for Sandgate, was quite proud about the fact in identifying to the member for Everton that he brought in 'ban the banners'. I then went back and had a look at it and it came in under something the government at the time brought in called Toward Q2 when Anna Bligh was the Premier. There were a number of different aspects to it. I had a look back at the Toward Q2 document which had buzzwords like, 'We see Q2 as the Queensland you love today, only better.' It had a five-point plan. I remember being here when people had to read them to remember them. We have seen that recently as well. The plan was about being strong, green, healthy, smart and fair.

Here is the regulation sheet that came from the department of infrastructure and planning. I know the minister would have seen it, as would the former minister. Under the section 'Solar hot-water systems and photovoltaic cells', it says—

A by-law or covenant cannot prohibit or restrict the installation of a solar hot water system or photovoltaic cells merely for the purposes of preserving the external appearance of a building.

Of course, that did not hold up, unfortunately. We have heard other members mention that.

In that 53rd Parliament, we also saw electric hot-water systems banned and water tanks were mandated. We know that electric hot-water systems run off excess photovoltaic energy during the day, which makes economic sense and is an incentive to install solar. We overturned these things in 2012 in the 54th Parliament, which was another zenith for the Parliament of Queensland, as the New South Wales minister Chris Hartcher had done there.

After that little history lesson, the bill aims to enhance the efficacy and transparency of the regulatory framework regarding head contractor licensing the sharing of information on investigation outcomes and to improve the operation of building related legislation through amendments.

For the benefit of those who may not have been in the 53rd Parliament, I will table a copy of 'Ban the banners: new covenant and body corporate by-law rules—Sustainable housing laws. For the greener good.' Apart from the member for Maroochydore and a number of others who are here, there are not that many. Many of those opposite may have been staffers at the time, I suspect.

*Tabled paper:* Department of Infrastructure and Planning document titled 'Ban the banners: New covenant and body corporate by-law rules' [701].

It should be noted that the bill will also protect Queensland home owners from expensive legal battles as a result of flawed legislation from previous Labor governments. We have heard others talk about the case involving Ms Pauline Tyler and the battle through the Supreme Court with the developer over where she could place solar panels on her property.

With an average of over 300 days of sunshine a year, the state government should be listening to home owners and encouraging them to take advantage of solar power. For three years this tired government has failed to fix its own legislation. We know that, as reported by Hayden Johnson in the *Courier-Mail* in October 2021, this government had run out of ideas. I table a copy of that article.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Courier-Mail* online, dated 26 October 2021, titled 'Palaszczuk Government "runs out of ideas" in chaotic parliament' [702].

This government has been too slow to act on this issue and left individuals exposed to lengthy legal battles with developers over where solar panels or solar hot-water systems can be placed on properties.

The Property Council of Queensland have advised that they support the measures aimed at removing obstacles to owners who wish to install solar panels on their residential property, as does the National Electrical and Communications Association, NECA, which also supported the proposed amendments to ensure that developers and body corporate by-laws do not inhibit the installation of solar panels and hot-water systems based on aesthetics.

The 'ban the banners' provisions of this bill correct the state government's failure to support and protect Queensland home owners and provide further encouragement to use solar energy.

In this bill, it is important to note that the government is omitting a section of the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020. The exemption may allow entities to circumvent Queensland's licensing system, including the minimum financial requirements

and security-of-payment protections, and allow unlicensed persons to assume the role of head contractor, even though they may not have the sufficient skills and experience to administer and manage complex projects or high-risk work.

This amendment has drawn criticism from stakeholders given the criteria for exclusions from exemptions will be prescribed by regulation. Many stakeholders also argued that it is premature given that the developer licensing review instigated by the state government is still underway. The Property Council advise that—

This exemption is relied on extensively by members of the property industry in commercial contracting, including development agreements and lease agreements, or by businesses undertaking projects that involve a relatively minor element of building work. Its repeal would have resulted in a range of businesses incurring increased costs to secure a licence to undertake work they have no intention to themselves undertake or purport to be qualified to undertake. This would be on top of the already escalating material and labour costs.

Little is known about the developer review. It is another version of the cloak-and-dagger games in which this government engages.

The head contractor licence exemptions amendment is yet another example of the state government relegating an important matter to regulation in an effort to avoid parliamentary scrutiny. I have heard the minister's reassurances, but I am not convinced. However, we all know that if this government can find an opportunity to absolve itself of blame but make sure that its union masters are pandered to, it will take it.

Throughout my electorate of Surfers Paradise and the wider Gold Coast, in 2019 the QBCC, the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, declared 677 buildings needed to undergo an independent audit as part of the crackdown on combustible cladding. While it is my understanding that private building owners had until 3 May 2021 to submit their combustible cladding checklist, it is now May 2022 and the state government still has no real solution as to how to address the presence of combustible cladding remaining on private buildings. I have been to see some of these buildings. I have met with some of the owners. They are concerned about the costs they will incur and the uncertainty of the process. I strongly support this bill, which will finally enable the QBCC to commence prosecution against those who do not adhere to the combustible cladding checklist process and commit an offence.

As others have mentioned, it has been five years since the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy in which 72 lives were lost. The problem has been on the government's radar since 2017, yet they are still making things up as they go along when it comes to removing flammable cladding. The state government continues to act too slowly on this issue.

I understand that as at the end of April this year there are some 30 government sites where flammable cladding is still present. Furthermore, I represent an electorate with one of the largest numbers of privately owned high-rise buildings in Queensland, so I call on this tired, third-term Labor government to stop dragging their feet, stop putting people's lives at risk and address the matter now.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (6.02 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill amends a range of building legislation—eight acts in total—to strengthen and modernise Queensland's building laws. These acts provide the statutory framework for building industry practitioners and important consumer protections to support Queensland's \$47 billion building and construction industry and its 230,000 workers. These reforms aim to meet contemporary community expectations about the sustainability and efficiency of our buildings and promote a streamlined, efficient and highly transparent regulatory framework. As we prepare for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, it is vitally important that we have a fit-for-purpose and modern building practice and regulatory framework. That is exactly what this bill and the reforms that are contained in it will deliver for Queensland.

The key amendments that I propose to address relate to ensuring home owners are allowed to install solar panels or solar hot-water systems in their preferred location without regard to aesthetics, more commonly referred to as the 'ban the banners' provisions. If time permits I will turn to amendments and provisions that relate to allowing treated greywater to be used for a range of industrial purposes.

Throughout this bill we are reaffirming our commitment to helping more home owners install solar panels, among a suite of reforms to help both consumers and industry. Queensland now boasts 50 large-scale renewable energy projects since 2015. This represents over \$10 billion of investment, almost 8,000 construction jobs alone and 5,774 megawatts of clean energy. Combined with almost 1,500 megawatts of rooftop PV solar, we now have 7,200 megawatts of renewable energy capacity. That means now over 20 per cent of electricity use in Queensland is produced from renewable energy.

It was very interesting to listen to the contributions from LNP speakers such as the member for Surfers Paradise, who took us on a lovely little trip down memory lane in which he applied his own rose-coloured glasses, and also the member for Everton in speaking in relation to the 'ban the banners' provisions. Listening to their contributions, one would be forgiven for forgetting, although it is almost impossible to forget, that this is the same government that strangled investment in renewable energy here in Queensland to the point where when the Palaszczuk government was elected in 2015 there was not one new large-scale renewable energy project, they abolished the office of clean energy in Queensland and they scrapped our clean energy investment and clean energy strategy. When we talk about the extreme popularity of solar PV here in Queensland and the fact that we are now a global renewable energy superpower, this is thanks to the work of previous Labor governments and schemes like the Solar Bonus Scheme for feed-in tariffs and the solar hot-water schemes.

The Palaszczuk government has always promoted the installation of solar photovoltaic, or PV, energy systems. When a home owner installs solar panels on their roof, they reduce their energy bills and the energy generated by the panels contributes to our 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030. However, developers commonly use covenants in the contracts of sale, by-laws or community title schemes to effectively control designs in residential estates and unit complexes. These covenants and by-laws can restrict or prohibit the use of energy efficient or sustainable building features and the initial buyers are typically required to pass on these requirements or prohibitions to later buyers. This can obviously have an extremely large impact on home owners who wish to have solar PV or solar hot-water systems on their homes.

It is important to note that the location of the solar panels on a roof is vitally important. This is because north-facing panels capture much more energy from the sun than south-facing ones. In fact, north-facing panels can capture 20 to 33 per cent more energy than south-facing panels. That is a huge difference. Putting aesthetics ahead of energy efficiency and potential solar and renewables coming into our energy mix is inconsistent with the original intent of the 'ban the banners' provisions. I for one certainly applaud the fact that the amendments in this bill restore the original intent of the 'ban the banners' provisions in the Building Act when they were introduced in 2010, because they were intended to prevent developer covenants from restricting the installation of solar hot-water systems or solar panels on roofs because the systems or panels would affect street appeal.

That is inconsistent with current community expectations, especially when you consider that one in every three houses in Queensland has solar panels installed. We are the solar PV capital of the world. We are also the large-scale solar capital of the world. Solar PV panels are now so common that most people do not even notice them. Ironically, the covenants that require panels to face south actually increase the potential for glare to affect neighbouring properties. Not only are more home owners installing panels; the systems they are installing are also getting bigger. Most systems include around 20 panels with a total capacity of around six kilowatts. That is wonderful, bringing more solar onto our grid. Restricting panels to the southern part of a roof is likely to result in smaller and less productive systems being installed.

Population growth and climate change are driving greater recognition of the need for more sustainable buildings. We need to find more responsible and innovative ways of using our precious resources, such as solar energy.

I acknowledge the work of the minister in bringing this bill before the House, the work of his department and staff and, of course, the work of the committee in preparing what is an excellent report, which I note has no statement of reservation. I offer my congratulations to the committee chair, the member for Kurwongbah, and to every committee member. I thank all of the stakeholders who took the time to participate in the committee process. They ranged from unions to industry bodies, community strata title schemes and the Property Council. Extensive consultation was done in that inquiry. That is certainly reflected in the quality of the content in the committee's report. I place on record my acknowledgement of the workers in the building and construction industry as well as the ever-growing numbers of workers in our solar PV installation industry. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.12 pm): How much of this bill is about fixing up all of the blunders of the past by this government and its Labor predecessors? It is quite a substantial amount. I note that there are Labor members on the backbench laughing, but constituents relied on this government and its Labor predecessors to give them protection. They promised people they would have protection, but they stuffed it up. Now, people had had to pay tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars out of their own pockets because of the mistakes of this Labor government.

The measure before the parliament to provide certainty around the right of constituents to install solar panels on their properties in a strata situation or under a development covenant addresses what was previously promised. We have heard of the lady north of Brisbane who installed solar panels in good faith, believing that the Labor government legislation would give her protection. It did not. She has ended up in a legal situation, having to defend herself with respect to this failed measure.

When governments promise that legislation will provide a constituent with protection, it should do exactly that. We have to ask: how good is the consultation process under Labor governments, be it on legislation or the regulations that sit under legislation? Unfortunately, as we are seeing with this bill before the parliament, it is not good enough. In the parliament we should have the opportunity to raise these issues.

I come to the issue of the proposed regulatory power that will remove some measures that should be in primary legislation, which would be scrutinised appropriately by parliament, rather than in a regulation, which does not have the same level of scrutiny. I will come back to that in a moment.

I want to address the issue of combustible cladding. It is a serious issue. We certainly agree about how serious the matter of combustible cladding is. The destructive and tragic Grenfell Tower disaster that occurred in the UK and that resulted in loss of life sent shock waves not only around the UK but also around the world, and certainly here in Australia, when people realised that faulty building materials had the potential to result in great loss of life because of their flammability.

We know that the building industry has recently had issues with regard to the procurement chain and access to quality materials. This particular material failure—it had been used quite extensively here in Australia—is still having a great impact on those who have it upon their buildings and on others who are trying to find the appropriate rectification.

I note the contribution of the member for Surfers Paradise, who presented the situation in his own electorate, where there are a great number of high-rise buildings, and outlined the difficulty that constituents have in that process of rectification—to be able to live safely and know that their buildings are compliant.

The government's website lists some of the affected government buildings. There is, in fact, one in Maroochydore—the Mike Ahern Centre, which is listed as a building that has an issue with combustible cladding. I want to quote from this website. I will table a printout of this website as it has been updated in only the last few days.

*Tabled paper:* Department of Energy and Public Works webpage, titled 'Safer Buildings Taskforce' [\[703\]](#).

**Mr Skelton** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Member for Nicklin, are you in your correct seat to be interjecting?

**Ms SIMPSON:** This website was last updated on 17 May 2022 and it lists the Mike Ahern building, which is a government owned high-rise in Maroochydore. I note that risk management procedures have been put in place and that there are a number of buildings that are still to be rectified, or there is a process in place. I acknowledge that this list is on the website. It says—

Interim risk mitigation measures have commenced with staff and building occupants notified. The facility is subject to potentially modified Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) response. Where rectification works have been completed to the satisfaction of a specialist fire engineer, such facilities will be removed from the schedule of notified government building sites. It is the government's priority to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of Queensland residents and visitors where they live, work and visit.

This issue has obviously had an impact on a number of significant government sites, and I would welcome any update from the minister with respect to the Mike Ahern Centre, which houses government departments in Maroochydore, so that we can continue to have eyes on the work that is being undertaken in that particular location.

There are also a lot of affected buildings in the private sector. There are still major concerns about how to see those buildings rectified. I understand that the process of doing that technically has to be married with bodies corporate, with individual owners, with certifiers and with fire engineers. Certainly there are a range of professional people who have to provide that pathway, but government has to play a lead role. I seek the minister's advice as to when we will see a resolution of this issue. I ask the minister to advise how many buildings are still in the situation where people are living the nightmare of owning homes that need appropriate rectification so they can be safe but also so they can sell their properties knowing it is no longer encumbered by this blight on the building.

I will come back to the regulatory issue and the matter of this government avoiding scrutiny. There has been much legislation brought into this House by this government and its predecessors that has had to come back to be fixed. At the heart of that is a lack of appropriate consultation. The parliamentary committee referred to its concern around measures being taken out of legislation and put into a regulatory provision and that there were stakeholder groups, such as the Law Society who submitted to the committee process, which said this is not appropriate. We agree it is not appropriate.

I support there being appropriate mechanisms in law to keep people safe and to ensure people are paid, but I also support the scrutiny of this parliament and not having matters put into regulation that should be in primary legislation. This comes back to the issue of consultation. The minister said in his response that he will be undertaking targeted consultation. In his tabled response to the committee he talked about having a relevant regulatory impact assessment. That is not a RIS, a regulatory impact statement, that is understood under regulatory practices. It is something different again. I looked at it and thought that it was not an accident that they are not going to have a proper regulatory impact statement.

There is a problem with the consultation that this government undertakes. They rush legislation through and often the people who pay the price are constituents who are faced with legal bills for having trusted this government to get it right. The building industry and all those who need a home, who need affordable housing, whether it is private or public sector housing, need to have a pipeline where there is transparency and regulation that supports safety and a fair go. There has been a flaw in the way this government has done its consultation and it is putting more pressure and cost back on consumers.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (6.22 pm): Thankfully the yelling has stopped. It is wonderful to be able to rise this evening and speak to the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and support this bill as it supports our building industry. We know how many homes are needed here in Queensland for the future. It is so vital—it is so critical—that our building sector has confidence and that they are supported. It is support here in the Palaszczuk government that they will find.

Last week I had a meeting with Peter Flannery, the Mayor of Moreton Bay Regional Council. It was in that meeting that he raised with me the focus that the council has at the moment in relation to having home and living guides for the region. Our region in Moreton Bay is absolutely booming. We are one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. By 2041 we will need an additional 88,000 houses to cater for the 690,000 people that will call Moreton Bay home. That is 4,500 new homes that we will need in our region each year.

It is important that we have a building sector that is supported and that has the confidence that it needs. It is also important, as the mayor highlighted to me in our conversation, that people are designing homes in our region that can reduce the amount of energy that they use and also reduce the on-costs that they have throughout their time in their home. We are looking to be a livable and sustainable region. I love that there are so many components of this bill that support that.

I want to turn my attention to some of those particular components. In Queensland we love our rooftop solar. While one in four homes nationally have rooftop solar, here in Queensland it is one in three. Our community is hungry to get this infrastructure. I acknowledge the member for Bundamba, who is here in the chamber with us this evening. Recently he came with me to visit one of my local businesses, Springers Solar.

**Mr McCallum:** A great family business!

**Ms BOYD:** Springers are a great family business. They have just turned 20 years old. They have been providing this important infrastructure in our community for 20 years. They have ensured that local families can reduce their power bill and that we can all reduce our household emissions. I acknowledge the work that the assistant minister is doing, as well as the fantastic local family business of Springers Solar in my electorate.

There are a couple of components that I would like to delve into a little bit of detail around. One of them is the key amendment that supports consumer expectations with the efficiency of buildings and being able to ensure that home owners are allowed to install their solar panels and their hot-water systems in their preferred locations, not having to heed to bodies corporate or other pressures that we have seen around covenants and other restrictions placed on builders and home owners in the past. The 'ban the banners' legislation will continue to promote the uptake of rooftop solar—which is fantastic for the Sunshine State—and it will also ensure that bodies corporate by-laws are not placing unreasonable restrictions on where householders may install those solar panels and solar hot-water systems.

The other key amendment that I am a big supporter of is allowing treated greywater to be used for a range of other purposes and allowing the home owner of the premise to discharge toilet waste and greywater into a holding tank for collection for disposal offsite. There are amendments in this bill that will allow for treated greywater to be used in cooling towers for air conditioning in large building developments or for treated water to be used for other purposes such as the flushing of toilets.

I built a home in the time when a water tank and the connection of greywater was mandatory here in Queensland. Shortly after I constructed that home the laws changed. I remember having a conversation with people who were saying, 'Isn't it a shame that you built just before those laws changed?' I said, 'No, actually I am really pleased that we did connect the greywater back to toilets and laundries because we can ensure that we are reducing our footprint and recycling a precious resource for future generations.'

There are other key amendments in this legislation around head contractor licensing and the sharing of information on investigation outcomes and decision-making which will enhance the efficacy and transparency of the regulatory framework here in Queensland, which is important. The minor and technical amendments in this bill are much needed.

On the whole, these amendments improve confidence and certainty in the building industry by ensuring that there is a really robust regulatory framework in Queensland. We want to ensure that we have one of the strongest regulatory frameworks in the nation. Certainly the amendments in this bill will provide that. I thank the members of the committee: the committee chair, the member for Kurwongbah; the deputy chair, the member for Gregory—

**Mr Millar** interjected.

**Ms BOYD:** Well done; congratulations—and the members for Stretton, Mundingburra, Toowoomba South and Condamine. What a shame it is that we do not have the former member for Callide here to celebrate the passing of this historic bill. We know how much the former member absolutely loves renewable energy. It is a real shame that we will not be able to share this historic moment with him as we continue to promote renewable energy through the great state of Queensland.

**Mr Harper:** I'm sure he would have backed it.

**Ms BOYD:** I take that interjection from the member for Thuringowa. I am sure he would have backed it, too. Instead, he has been busy giving us one of the more marginal seats in Queensland and we thank him for that.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Thuringowa, I remind you that you are on a warning. It is probably not a good idea to take his interjections at the minute but I will let that one slide by.

**Ms BOYD:** I thank those who made submissions on this really important bill: the Property Council of Queensland, the National Electrical and Communications Association, the Master Electricians Australia, the Plumbing and Pipe Trades Employees Union Queensland, the Master Plumbers' Association of Queensland, the National Fire Industry Association Australia, the Strata Community Association of Queensland and, of course, our wonderful friends at the Local Government Association of Queensland.

I think there is an appreciation from all of those submitters that we have a really big piece of work to do in Queensland to ensure not only that we have homes for our booming population but also that those homes are considered and will continue long into the future with minimal running costs for residents. This is a sensible framework that absolutely meets community expectations whether those be around nonconforming building products, accessible housing or low-emissions buildings. Queenslanders expect modern buildings that reflect our community's climate and lifestyle. They expect safe buildings as well. This will absolutely deliver for Queenslanders well into the future. I congratulate the minister on a wonderful job in bringing this forward. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (6.32 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. We take no issue with this bill. We support it broadly. It is particularly welcome to see the provisions around the expanded use of greywater. It might not feel like it at the moment, but it is incredibly important for this region to be as well prepared as we can be for any future droughts that we have to contend with.

One other element of the bill that I want to comment on reasonably briefly is the provisions that limit the circumstances in which a body corporate can prohibit the installation of solar panels. Again, these are good amendments. It is good stuff. It makes sense that we should not allow aesthetic concerns to be the basis on which home owners or unit owners are prevented from installing systems—

whether they be solar PV or solar hot-water systems—on their roofs. Others have spoken to this. There is no doubt about the popularity of solar PV, particularly in South-East Queensland, and there is no reason why residents in strata title arrangements or unit owners should not be able to enjoy the same benefits, whether they be the environmental benefits that we get from renewable power or the cost savings that are increasingly available to people installing solar PV.

The bill articulates some circumstances in which bodies corporate will retain powers to prohibit such installations on common property. Again, we take no issue with that. Some sensible limitations must exist, for example, where it is necessary to maintain structural integrity or where there is insufficient space for every owner in the complex to install that kind of generation infrastructure. We might assume that there are circumstances where you could potentially make it available on a first in, first served basis, but I do not think that is really the key point.

I would say that these remaining limitations highlight the need for further reform to empower communities and simplify the processes around establishing community-owned and decentralised renewable energy generation at a small or a medium scale. I believe there is a very important role in our renewables transition for virtual power plants. I have spoken to folks in my electorate who are very keen to get those kinds of medium-scale installations together and to run their own virtual power plant. However, there are very real obstacles that exist in the bureaucracy around shared ownership and the licensing requirements for generation.

We can look to the example of the Community Power Hubs Program in Victoria. I understand it began with a relatively small trial that was very successful and the program has now expanded to provide lots more opportunities for those kinds of community power hubs. There are certainly other steps that the state government could take to support low-income and social housing residents to access solar and energy efficiency, including supporting the COAG framework for energy efficiency minimum standards, although that is getting some way away from the issues addressed in the bill.

The final point I make is around the role of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management. In recent years I have heard concerns raised repeatedly by stakeholders around the need for additional resourcing for the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management. The work of the BCCM Commission is the envy of lots of other jurisdictions. They do very important work. However, if they are not resourced properly it will be difficult for them to perform that function as well as they could and as well as strata title owners might expect them to. This additional regulation around solar installations does risk adding to an already unmanageable workload. That was raised directly by the Strata Community Association in their submission. They raised the capacity and resourcing problems of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management.

It would be of value to the House if the minister could address that issue. I note that the BCCM Commissioner sits within the Attorney-General's portfolio so it may not be an appropriate question, but I welcome any additional information about how the commissioner might be additionally resourced to deal with the existing backlog, resourcing and capacity constraints and how that might flow on to the bit of additional work that will come through this regulation. As I said at the outset, this is a welcome suite of reforms. We will be supporting this bill.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (6.38 pm): I was not going to speak to the bill but I did not think I could let it slide by that the Minister for Housing had a free kick on this—from me in particular. This bill is mostly about fixing what is, quite frankly, government stuff-ups and I will get to those shortly. As a starting point, I will do something unusual and praise the minister for something that he has done.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr HART:** I do not feel too bad. I have not heard any other members mention this tonight. I think something that the minister has done right in this bill is to allow people to seek information about the outcomes of particular investigations carried out by the QBCC into issues that they personally have had or their companies have had without having to do an RTI.

Before this change, people had to submit an RTI, go through that long, drawn-out process to find out information about their own company—what they did wrong, right or indifferent—and why the QBCC reached its decision. Making this change makes a lot of sense. I congratulate the minister for putting this to the parliament. That is the one matter he has done right in here and that is the only one. That is the end of the nice stuff.

As for other issues concerning this bill, we will talk about 'ban the banners'. Basically, as we heard, that is something the government put in place years ago. When the matter was challenged in court, the government apparently got it wrong. We are here tonight to rectify that situation revolving around areas that have covenants put on them. I support the use of covenants to make sure that

buildings are built to a certain specification that encourages people to go to that particular area, to buy into that estate and to build a home for the rest of their lives in that sort of place. When a covenant gets in the way of sensible matters such as putting solar panels on one's roof, it needs to be rectified.

Unfortunately, when the government did this years ago, it got it wrong and the courts said it needed to be tightened up. We are here tonight to fix that. In this case at least one person went to court, won on one occasion and then lost in the appeals court. That is why we have to fix it. That person was given an ex gratia payment by the government because the government had stuffed it up. That is why they received an ex gratia payment. Other members said that this meets community expectations. It certainly does meet community expectations but, unfortunately, the government failed in terms of those community expectations.

I also refer, as the committee chair mentioned, to the crackdown on cladding. This is an issue that this government has been dealing with for five years. It started with the government putting out a checklist with which people had to comply. That was delayed and extended and has just dragged on and on. We have already heard from other members that 3 May 2021 was when everybody had to have all these checklists completed. The government had 12 months to commence prosecution of people who did not do the right thing in terms of not having the checklists done. That 12 months expired on 3 May this year. It expired three weeks ago, but we are only just getting to this legislation to fix something that has already expired. We are fixing that.

Apparently, the government tells us, the only body that can approve the QBCC taking someone to court is local government. Some local governments said, 'Yes, we will do that,' and some said, 'No, we will not.' My understanding is that only a number of cases were sent to court. Some were up for mention only a few weeks ago and I think only one is anywhere near finalisation. Having said that, we have been waiting five years for this problem to be fixed. I recall that the minister at the time said that this was urgent and that we needed to take urgent action to fix this problem because of the fires that we have seen in other countries with flammable cladding. Flammable cladding, I must point out to members, was approved by the government. There was nothing to stop people putting this on their buildings. In fact, it was the government's fault that some of these materials were installed because there was nothing in the Building Code that prevented people from doing so.

**Mr de Brenni:** That's wrong.

**Mr HART:** If that is wrong, I want the minister to outline exactly why this cladding ended up on people's buildings to start with if it was not allowed to be on buildings. Perhaps the minister could explain that to us. This is another of those stuff-ups that we are fixing for the government. The government has been caught out. I understand that 30 government buildings, as other members said, have not yet had their cladding replaced. If the government cannot fix its own buildings, what is happening with some of these unit owners who possibly do not even know that they are living in a building that has problems with cladding on the outside? At the very least, they do not know that they are probably responsible for replacing this cladding and that they will have a massive bill to fix some of these problems that they should never have faced to start with, apart from the fact that the government got it wrong.

We also are looking at changing the conditions around the particular licensing that some head contractors had to have. This was something that the government repealed two years ago. It has always been the case that a head contractor did not necessarily have to have a builder's licence. For instance, if they were a civil contractor having to put a small shed on a building, that would require a building licence, but the head contractor did not need a building licence. He could hire someone with a building licence to do that work. At the time two years ago, the government said, 'Oh, no, the head contractor needs that particular licence to do that particular work.' It has not actually come into force. The government told us at the time that this would not work. The government was warned by the industry that it would not work, yet it went ahead and did it anyway. Lo and behold, it did not work. We are back here trying to fix that tonight.

We hear that in fact this will be enforced by regulation. Perhaps the minister can tell us whether a draft of that regulation is available. I have not seen that regulation. If that regulation is not available to the parliament tonight to look at as part of this legislation, why? What may be in there that the parliament may not like? The problem with regulation is that the minister can change that regulation at a whim after consulting the people important to him.

We all know the people important to the ministers of this government. It is their union mates: the CFMMEU, the ETU and people such as that. There is no real consultation that takes place in this respect. This is consultation with their union mates. We do not need to look much further than the

people on the board of the QBCC to see who are their mates. We have a prime example of Jade Ingham sitting on the board. To his great credit, Rob Swarten said that he will not stand for re-election the next time the board is put up. That is my understanding. I read it in the paper. If that is incorrect, maybe someone could tell us.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HART:** Well, that is where we get most of our information from.

**Mr de BRENNI:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. There is nothing in the bill that goes to the composition of the building commission board. I ask you to rule on relevance.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Thank you, Minister. I will ask the member to return to the long title.

**Mr HART:** I am talking about consultation. The only consultation is with union members of the board. To Rob Swarten's great credit, he is not standing again. I suspect that some other board members of the QBCC will be the scapegoats when the Varghese report is released.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.48 pm): I rise to speak briefly on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 as a former member of the committee. I am always happy to talk about solar. This government has always promoted the installation of photovoltaic energy systems. When a home owner installs solar panels on their roof, we know that they reduce their energy bills and that the energy generated by the panels contributes towards the government's 2030 renewable energy target.

Under the leadership of this government we have increased the uptake in solar on rooftops in Queensland to roughly one in three homes. Queensland is indeed the solar state. Roughly 21 per cent of our energy in Queensland comes from renewable sources. Rooftop solar—the solar panels on the rooftops of people's homes—is a massive contributor to that. I think we all remember that the former energy minister was fond of saying that rooftop solar is the largest source of energy in Queensland. We are now at the point where one in three homes in Queensland has solar on their rooftops. Most of the solar popular postcodes are in Queensland. I know we have a few in regional Queensland too. I seem to recall Bundaberg being one of those places.

This rate is up from about seven per cent or so when we came to government in 2015. The huge uptake of solar in our communities since 2015 sees us at the point where one in three homes has solar. That is incredible. We are the solar state. In the years since solar came on the market, the cost of a unit has dramatically decreased. People can make their money back on their energy bills in much less time now. When purchasing a unit 20-odd years ago it was a substantial financial outlay and it could potentially take years for people to get their money back. It costs a lot less now. People are paying \$3,000 or \$4,000 for units. That means people are making their money back quicker, they are saving money on their energy bills and they are also contributing to our 2030 renewable energy target. People can save even more if they are savvy about how they use that energy. They can optimise their daytime usage to save even more money and draw down on their solar even more.

I applaud the government's commitment to restore the original intent of the 'ban the banners' provisions in the Building Act. As other speakers have elucidated, the 'ban the banners' provisions were introduced in 2015.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms PUGH:** It is a big word. The 'ban the banners' provisions were intended to prevent developer covenants from restricting the installation of solar hot-water systems or solar panels on roofs because the systems or panels would affect street appeal. A recent court decision reduced the effectiveness of the 'ban the banners' provisions. The court ruled that as long as a covenant did not completely prevent the installation of panels it was lawful.

In this case, a covenant aimed at protecting the appearance of a housing estate prevented panels being installed on the northern part of a roof that faced the road. As members of this House would know—I am sure a lot of us have panels on our rooftops—the location of the panels is critically important. If they are put on the wrong side of the house they are not as effective. They need to be exposed to sunlight. They cannot be in the shade. In this particular case, the panels were less effective.

We know that north-facing panels capture much more energy from the sun than south-facing panels. North-facing panels capture 20 to 33 per cent more energy than south-facing panels. That could be a lot of money off someone's power bill. Putting aesthetics ahead of energy efficiency is obviously inconsistent with the original intent of the 'ban the banners' provisions. It is also inconsistent with current community expectations.

One in every three houses in Queensland has solar panels installed. As I mentioned earlier, I believe a big part of the reason for that is the dramatic decrease in the cost of these units. Solar panels are now so common that most people do not even notice them. That is unless people are like me and drive through their neighbourhood counting all the houses that have solar panels. I think the Mount Ommaney community might have a bit higher than one in three houses with solar panels, but maybe I am biased.

Ironically, covenants that required panels to face south increased the potential for glare to affect neighbouring properties. This is important. Obviously we need to consider the neighbouring amenity. It might sound peculiar, but my office has dealt with this issue. It is certainly very frustrating for neighbours if they have glare coming into their house. It can significantly brighten the interior of a person's home if those solar panels are not correctly placed on a person's rooftop. That is why it is important that people have a reputable person install those solar panels—someone who knows what they are doing. I am sure the member for Kurwongbah would agree with me on that because he is passionate about this subject.

Not only are more home owners installing panels, the systems they are installing are also getting bigger. Most systems include around 20 panels—that is roughly the size of the unit I have at home—with a total capacity of around six kilowatts. These systems usually require at least 40 square metres of rooftop space. Restricting panels to the southern part of a roof is likely to result in smaller, less productive systems being installed. That is a waste of money for the home owner.

The government is concerned that the covenants are having an impact on solar panel installation rates. We are also concerned about the impact that the court decision has had on home owners who relied on the original 'ban the banners' provisions. This bill will address these issues by strictly limiting the validity of developer covenants and body corporate by-laws for solar infrastructure. The covenants and by-laws can only restrict the installation of solar infrastructure on a roof that is common property such as the roof of an apartment building. Such covenants and by-laws can only restrict the installation of solar infrastructure in limited circumstances that have nothing to do with aesthetics. For example, they can restrict the installation to the extent necessary to preserve the structural integrity of the building. This commonsense approach acknowledges the shared interest that arises in apartments and strata title buildings.

Finally, to protect owners who relied on the original 'ban the banners' provision to install panels with optimal north-facing orientations, the amendments will apply to existing covenants. Developers will not be able to withhold consent and home owners will be empowered to install panels on the part of their roof that makes the most sense. These are commonsense provisions.

As I said earlier, I was previously a member of this committee. I know all members of the committee are incredibly passionate about energy. I know that the chair is incredibly passionate about all forms of energy, but especially solar on rooftops. When I was a newly elected member of this House he talked me through some of the finer points of PV, and I thank him for that. I know that it is a subject close to his heart.

Roughly 21 per cent of energy in Queensland comes from renewable sources. The largest single source of power in this state is our state's rooftops. It is absolutely fantastic to see the gains that we have made in solar in such a short time. It is up from roughly seven per cent in 2015 to over 20 per cent now. We cannot stop those gains now. We are at one in three houses with solar. I think we can do even better. We are Queensland. We are the sunshine state. There is room for more solar panels. This government will be adding solar panels to schools to ensure we have smart cool schools. We will be encouraging Queenslanders to take up PV panels wherever possible. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (6.58 pm): I rise to speak in the debate on the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The Queensland building industry is one of the largest employers in the state. Around 230,000 people are directly employed in the industry and it contributes up to \$50 billion a year to the state's economy. The explanatory notes state that the purpose of the bill is to: firstly, support contemporary consumer expectations about efficiency of buildings through amendments to legislative provisions regarding the 'ban the banners', solar hot-water systems and solar panels, the expanded use of greywater and holding tanks for sewage and greywater; and, secondly, enhance the efficacy and transparency of the regulatory framework through amendments to legislative provisions.

The bill is also about protecting home owners who want to install solar panels on their properties. This will ensure that the property owners are not ordered in the future to remove solar panels simply because developers do not consider them attractive to the housing development. Home owners must be encouraged to install solar panels to their homes to reduce power costs and generational usage.

I want to talk about the focus on combustible cladding used in the building and construction industry. This has been highlighted ever since the tragic 2017 Grenfell Tower fire in the UK which took over 24 hours to contain mainly because of the use of combustible cladding. When it comes to the building industry, we always support good changes to legislation.

I believe it is important that we look after the solar industry. Many people in the grazing industry have benefited so much from solar power. They have been able to get rid of their generators and petrol pumps. It has been of great benefit to that industry. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Knuth, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

### Ninderry Electorate, Small Business; Volunteer Week

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (7.01 pm): I take the opportunity tonight as we approach the end of Small Business Month to give a shout-out to the thousands of small businesses in my electorate. As we all know in this place, particularly on this side of the House, the majority of them are made up of mum-and-dad family businesses who work hard every day to improve their lot, to employ people and to give back to the community.

I want to highlight an initiative that my local businesses embraced earlier this month when I launched the 'Made in 4573' campaign with a number of local businesses. Collectively we are putting together not only some local produce to showcase and support their local produce—there is fantastic local produce being produced in my electorate—but also hampers that we are then donating to local volunteer groups which they can raffle off or do whatever they want to do with them to help support them. Some of the businesses which have been working with me to help put these hampers together are: Pleasant State, Eumundi Brewery—I want to give a special shout-out to them; they are a great local brewery—Flying West Coffee Roasters, The Soap Bar, Planet Organic, the Shop, Belladotti, Sweet Az Popcorn, V by Ven Foods and Go for Zero. As I said, we have been putting together hampers with those local businesses that we then donate to volunteer groups. That takes me to point No. 2.

Since we were here last sitting, I believe last week was the annual Volunteer Week—this week's motto being 'Better Together'. That is one thing we have been doing with local businesses, putting these hampers together which, as I said, not only supports and showcases our local produce but also helps volunteer groups. One volunteer group I had the chance to meet with last week who I want to give a shout-out to while I have the opportunity tonight is the Bli Bli Community Association, who have been together for many years. They do amazing work not only managing, maintaining and restoring the historical Bli Bli hall but also working on other local products and programs like the Bli Bli community garden, which they are just starting to look at organising at the moment.

I also want to give a shout-out to the Coolum Men's Shed and the Coolum Women's Shed, who I have had the pleasure of donating some of these hampers to recently. I know both of those groups put them to great use selling raffle tickets for them at their recent open day. At the end of Volunteer Week, I want to give all our volunteer groups across the Ninderry electorate a shout-out.

Finally, Friday was the annual P&C Day. I know all of us in this place have some amazing hardworking P&C organisations. Again, they are volunteer organisations who work tirelessly to raise money to invest directly back into schools. I am looking forward to soon—probably before I see you all in budget week—attending a comedy night being held by the P&C at Coolum State School and also a trivia night at Kuluin State School which my wife and I will be attending. I cannot guarantee that we will add to any successful answers, but we will do our best.

### Stafford Electorate, Investment

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (7.04 pm): I rise to give an update about the fantastic investment in our local community that the Palaszczuk government is already delivering. I want to start with an issue close to my heart—social housing. Just last week we had an important milestone with the delivery of a great new housing complex in Kedron. Seeing the property as a flat patch of dirt a year ago to seeing it rise out of the ground has been brilliant, creating housing in our community and of course delivering real jobs on the way through. It includes single and two-bed quality apartments, as well as accessible housing on the ground floor for those with disability or mobility issues.

It was with great pride that I represented the minister last week to join the regional housing department staff for a final inspection. Local residents have already started to move in. It is just fantastic. This is on top of recent completions from 2019 to 2021 and, as announced a couple of weeks ago, there is more on the way, including in the suburb of Chermside.

In education we are also delivering for our local school communities to give our students the best possible start in life. Across the last two state budgets we have invested \$300,000 for the expansion and improvement of the hall at Wavell Heights State School. It has been fantastic being at school assemblies and at the Anzac ceremony to see how great the space looks, to provide cover not just for students but for parents and visitors as well. It is a real asset to the school.

Likewise, we promised \$250,000 to improve the outdated quadrangle at Kedron State School, to create modern and innovative outdoor spaces. That promise has already been delivered. The various outdoor spaces are fantastic for the students and I know they are already enjoying them.

We have also committed \$8 million for the Wilston State School hall. I have enjoyed working with the school, the P&C and department representatives as designs are progressed through the appropriate approval processes. On the border in my good friend the member for Aspley's electorate we are delivering \$500,000 for the refurbishment of K block at Craigslea State High School.

To support our community sporting clubs, in just the last 18 months we promised new water infrastructure for Grange Thistle—delivered; improved lighting for Newmarket FC—delivered and in use; and improved lighting for Wilston Grange Gorillas—being delivered right now and about to be completed. We have been working with the stakeholders on the fantastic upgrade for Somerset Hills State School which is a win-win for students and community sport.

Then we have the extra doctors, nurses and allied health workers who have been delivered in Metro North. We have the wonderful new carpark at the Prince Charles Hospital—a win for staff, patients and families, as well as for neighbouring residents.

The Northern Transitway is already under construction. People are out there on the tools as we speak—jobs for Queenslanders and better public transport for northsiders. That is what a Labor government does. It actually delivers for education and housing, invests in our community, delivers for health and supports public transport.

### **Horton, Mr I; Schembri, Mr P; Rowan, Mr I**

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (7.07 pm): I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the service of Inspector Ian Horton with the Queensland Police Service who is retiring from our Mackay district. During his service, Ian certainly had breadth of experience: from the casino crime squad on the Gold Coast right through to serving in Ayr and also at the police academy in Brisbane back in 2000 before returning to North Queensland in 2002 where he remained until 2015 when he transferred to Mackay, where he has just recently finished his QPS career.

He has served for 15 years as an inspector of police. I have had the absolute privilege to work alongside Ian as the deputy district disaster coordinator in relieving the DDC when he was responsible for the response to flood events and cyclones in North Queensland. Ian has also been an active community member entrenched, in particular, in the basketball community with playing and coaching. He is known across the state for coaching junior teams and for having success at a state level, having won gold at a national championship with the Queensland North side in 2018. I know I will see Ian plenty courtside at the Meteors.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Paul Schembri, Chairman of Canegrowers. Tonight we will be joining him. He is from Maltese migrant grandparents, farming in Farleigh as a local farmer but also my constituent. I also am very proud to call Paul a mentor of mine in the sugar industry. His leadership, the way in which he has contributed to the conversation around technological change, innovation and the regulation of the sugar industry, is second to none. Certainly he will be missed across the industry.

I would also like to acknowledge what I think has been a significant achievement for Paul, which was the federal code of conduct that was passed for the sugar industry. He also held the position of vice-president of the World Association of Beet and Cane Growers. He has travelled extensively in that role, coming from a farming family of 40-plus years. I wish Paul, Sally and his son Paul Jr all the best for the future.

I would also like to acknowledge another great man in my community, Ian Rowan, who has just served five years as CEO of CQ Rescue. Ian's passion for emergency services and the way in which he took the organisation forward has just been outstanding. He is very proud of their achievements in

the last five years, including the Building Better Regions Hannah extension, which extended and expanded operations and the service of the critical care doctor that we have 24 hours a day. We thank Ian for his service and wish him well in retirement.

### Townsville Electorate, Matildas

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (7.10 pm): On 8 April our Matildas played their first game ever in North Queensland. More than 10,000 people packed into Townsville's Queensland Country Bank Stadium to watch on as Matildas captain Sam Kerr and Emily van Egmond scored in the dying minutes to win the game 2-1—sorry, bubby—against New Zealand's Ferns. There were some unbelievable performances, with both teams putting on a fantastic showcase of the world's game. The match generated more than a million dollars for Townsville's visitor economy, showing that is why my hometown is the events capital of north Australia. In fact, in July Queensland Country Bank Stadium is on to another international winner, with Brisbane Roar set to play English Premier League team Aston Villa again in Townsville.

As we all know, the Matildas are one of Australia's favourite teams and it was fantastic to be at the game. What is really important to me is that I received a letter a few days after the game from Evie Wilson, an 11-year-old girl who travelled up from the Gold Coast with her mum to attend the game. These are her words—

Before I watched some play, I knew the basics of the game, that the team captain was Sam Kerr, that she was one of the best female soccer players in the world.

During the game I felt excited because I got to sit in the fifth row that allowed me to watch the players from very close, and that I was even more thrilled when the Matildas scored two goals and won the game in the last few seconds.

I was overjoyed that the players got to sign my water bottle and I also discovered that female soccer very entertaining to watch.

Evie's 15-year-old cousin, Calea Staieg, travelled five hours from Eungella outside of Mackay to watch the game live. A state football player herself, Calea had the opportunity to meet Sam Kerr, get a selfie, and have her Matildas shirt signed by Sam and many other Australian players. Words cannot describe what the impact of meeting her hero had on that young woman.

Our government knows the importance of women's sport. As we know, historically men's sport has received more exposure, which has often meant higher participation. There are barriers facing women and girls such as time constraints due to competing priorities, the suitability of facilities and programs, and their own levels of self-confidence; however, Queensland is seeing tremendous growth in women's sport and the number of girls playing football. We know by that by bringing international football to Queensland we can show young Queensland women what is possible, inspire them to bring their best game and, of course, stay active.

### Federal Election

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (7.13 pm): I want to start by congratulating the LNP's Henry Pike, Ross Vasta and Bert van Manen for winning their seats in Saturday's federal election. Bayside and south-east Brisbane remain blue federally despite campaigns from the far left and far right and shows that we have the balance right in our region. Every day quiet Queenslanders, workers, families, multicultural communities, women and young people, among others, continue to strongly support the LNP in south-east and bayside Brisbane.

In Bowman, the Redlands coast liked what they saw and what Henry Pike committed to do on their behalf, and they chose him over other good candidates. I look forward to Henry Pike being sworn in as the next LNP member for Bowman, and I wish him well in what I believe will be a long and successful career in federal parliament. Across the state the LNP achieved a strong result, holding 70 per cent of all seats. This strong result for the LNP in Queensland is even more significant given the growing number of political parties and alliances that ran candidates.

Let me take a moment to congratulate Anthony Albanese on becoming Prime Minister. He has a big job ahead of him and big shoes to fill. In the campaign he made a lot of promises, and I look forward to seeing them delivered on in the Redlands coast and Cleveland district. To start with, the Redlands community would like him to confirm the federal commitment of fifty-fifty funding with the state to upgrade Redland Hospital with an ICU and a ward of 32 new beds. The Redlands community will not accept anything less than the ICU and new beds being fully funded and built on time. I say to the health minister: no more excuses—give us the beds and the ICU.

While there are other several other issues I will come to as time allows and budget week approaches, can I finish with Mr Albanese's commitment to helping Indigenous Australians. I welcome it on North Stradbroke Island. I invite Mr Albanese to visit North Stradbroke Island with me and Henry Pike to observe the situation of the Quandamooka people under state Labor management—to see the lack of housing, the hardship and the unemployment caused by the discredited 'Tradbroke Island' ETS plan. The Palaszczuk government's recently announced TLPI is meant to deliver housing and opportunities for the Quandamooka people, yet the draft plan is being questioned by Quandamooka elders themselves, their leaders and other community members.

There are serious questions about the suitability of some parcels of land for what the draft plan proposes. In one case, some locals have described the situation of a conservation area and a duck pond being earmarked for residential development. The Quandamooka people deserve to be treated better than that. The draft plan could also dramatically increase the size of the island's population without a plan for infrastructure and services, and who pays for that? We do not need a repeat of the chaos on southern Moreton Bay islands caused by a large increase in residential development—

*(Time expired)*

### **Federal Election; Dakabin Railway Station**

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (7.16 pm): I rise tonight with both hope and sadness after last weekend's federal election: sadness because two of my good friends—Ali France in Dickson and Rebecca Fanning in Longman—are unlikely to be representing my constituents in the federal parliament, but I am hopeful for the future under an Albanese Labor government, hopeful for better housing outcomes, better health outcomes and better job outcomes. Finally we have a government that will back us here in Queensland on health, training, renewables and job creation. It is what Australia needs and we thankfully now have.

I want to congratulate both federal members who serve my Kurwongbah electorate constituents in their capacity as the members for the Dickson and Longman federal electorates on their likely re-election. While I am obviously 'team red' and would have loved to see our local members form part of a federal Labor government, I know that my constituents hold a high benchmark for their representatives. I will always give credit where it is due, and I will always try to work productively where I can with both of these guys to achieve the best possible outcomes for our shared communities.

Dakabin station is finally being opened. I have not spoken about it for quite some time, so I thought I might take a minute. Before the member for Thuringowa's Riverway Drive there was Dakabin station. Dakabin station was basically a rail siding that serviced the quickly growing Dakabin and Kurwongbah communities. There was very little shelter, no toilets, no disability or pram access across the track, and very little car parking. When I was elected in 2015 as the member for Kallangur I heard loudly that this was unacceptable. As the new peninsula rail line was being finished there appeared to be very little appetite from Queensland Rail to upgrade the station, so my lobbying work started. We pushed very hard and finally got the funding in 2017, from memory, and the planning and work began. It has taken a long time as the supply of utilities, construction during COVID and bad weather have plagued the job, but we are finally there.

I would like to thank past transport ministers for their help; Minister Hinchliffe for the planning study; former minister Trad, who secured the funding; Minister Bailey, who oversaw the project and put up with my niggling about what was not right and what was; and my neighbour and Deputy Premier Steven Miles, who came on board and helped to also secure a magnificent car parking facility for the station. I will have the pleasure of opening the station with the minister soon. Minister Miles' advocacy to enhance what has been a difficult project cannot be understated.

A large degree of thanks and admiration must go to the community and Gemma Gale and the Dakabin Station Action Group for their support, tenacity and hard work. When you have a group like Gemma's behind you, you certainly know you have your ducks in a row. It is not over yet as we still need more parking on the Narangba Road side of the station, but we are working on that. The Palaszczuk government has delivered again for my community and we could not be happier.

### **Chatsworth Electorate, Small Business**

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (7.19 pm): I rise this evening to highlight some fantastic small businesses in the Chatsworth electorate which work day in and day out to provide outstanding customer service for people in our community. As the shadow minister for customer service, I launched my outstanding customer service awards last year which aim to highlight small businesses which have made a huge impact in our local community.

Given this month is Queensland Small Business Month, I was busy last week visiting and congratulating round 2 small business award recipients and presenting them with a special golden plaque they can display in their stores. This is just a small token of appreciation to thank businesses which have made a positive contribution to our community and economy. The last few years have been an incredibly challenging time for small business, and it has been inspiring to see their strength and resilience adapting to the many challenges they have faced. This spirit and consistency is something that I know the Chatsworth community appreciates.

Without further ado, it is my pleasure to acknowledge the following small businesses on their exceptional customer service and contribution to the Chatsworth community. In the cafe and bakery category, awards were presented to the Gumdale Bakery and the Flour Monkey Bakery at Carina. I must especially mention the Gumdale Bakery, which donated bread rolls to assist in feeding the volunteers, workers and flood victims at the Chandler evacuation centre during the South-East Queensland flood event earlier in the year. This was a true display of community spirit.

In the restaurant category, Thai Antique were awarded for their fantastic hospitality and delicious Thai food. I know they are very excited to move into their newly renovated space in Carina Heights soon. I was pleased to present awards in the fresh produce category to Fresh Sensations and Gumdale IGA. I give a special mention to Nick and his team at Fresh Sensations at Westfield Carindale. This business is family owned and it has been inspiring to see the tradition being passed on to the next generation. They have fantastic customer service and fresh produce that is impeccably displayed. In the specialty retail category, we have Tingalpa Mower & Small Engines, Engraving Plus Carindale and Flowers by the Bay at Gumdale.

The final recipients have been particularly important given the challenges we have faced with COVID-19. In the healthcare category, I am pleased to present awards to Carindale Medical Clinic and Belmont Village Dental. I want to mention Carindale Medical Clinic, which have provided health care for locals for 43 years. When they opened in 1979, a medical centre in a major shopping centre was a revolutionary idea. It is safe to say that they have never lost their pioneering spirit in providing a personalised healthcare experience. Congratulations to Dr Noela, who established the clinic in 1979 and has been there ever since. This just proves the passion and dedication that family owned businesses show on a daily basis.

Owning a small business can be relentless, so to hear that these awards have given both owners and staff the confidence to keep pushing through is truly heartwarming. I congratulate every recipient in round 2 of the customer service awards.

### **Mansfield Electorate, Small Business**

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (7.22 pm): Small businesses are the backbone of our local community, so I am delighted that the Palaszczuk government celebrates small businesses in May every year. This month it was a pleasure to have the small business minister, the Hon. Di Farmer MP, visit and listen to some of our small business owners' successes and challenges during the past two years.

Hosted by Vince Dickson, owner of the very popular Cenzo's Cafe and Bar in Upper Mount Gravatt, the minister heard from: Raymond Mak from Accounting Intelligence; director Larissa McCrea from Portable Room Solutions; LESI music education owner, Rachel Zheng; CEO of Fun Over 50 Holidays, Toni Brennan; Jasmine Kaur and Asma Sultana from Migration Avenue; Computer Alliance's Troy Radloff; and Toni Boydston from George Hartnett Metropolitan Funerals at Mount Gravatt.

These diverse small businesses are reflective of the growing Mansfield electorate community that has a unique range of small business hubs where locals go to shop and catch up with family and friends. These hubs include Mount Gravatt Central, Lumley Street, Aminya Street, Wishart Shopping Village, Civic Fair Shopping Centre and Palmdale Shopping Centre. New hubs at Rochedale Village Shopping Centre and Rochedale Central also join our unique cluster of business networks. We are also fortunate to have the infamous Garden City, an ever-evolving institution supporting small, medium and large businesses.

It was also a pleasure to attend Minister Farmer's small business reception at Parliament House earlier this month with David Wu and Diana Miao. David and Diana's diverse small businesses are part of the growing Asian business community that straddles across the Mansfield and neighbouring electorates of Toohey and Stretton, led by my esteemed colleagues Peter Russo MP and James Martin MP. I was also honoured to present my May Business of the Month Award to Wishart small

business Portable Room Solutions. Directors Daniel and Larissa McCrea have created a unique tiny house model which is one of many solutions to address our housing shortage that the recently booted LNP government has neglected to address across our nation for a very long time.

Finally, I acknowledge the Women Supporting Women in Business Network that I established in 2018. This network is a wonderful opportunity for like-minded and astute local businesswomen to discuss issues affecting their businesses in a fun and supportive environment. I look forward to the Palaszczuk government working with the new federal Labor government to support the needs of our local small businesses and, in particular, supporting women as key decision-makers and leaders in these businesses in my community.

### **Lockyer Electorate, Flooding**

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (7.25 pm): I genuinely wish I did not have to stand tonight and speak once again about floods that have devastated our region, but it is important that the community know just how badly impacted we were. Every flood is different, and this one showed us how Mother Nature can destroy lives. Many are shattered; some are just debilitated. People had water through their houses. There was inundation through hundreds of houses. Hundreds of acres were swept away with the water because fields were ready for planting or had recently been planted. Those farmers have suffered through successive floods in November, February and May, and some have just said enough for this year. For those who are able to plant again, I know they are trying to get on the ground even up to this Thursday and Friday to see crops planted. What is really terrible for the farmers is that the floods in February caused many early plantings to be wiped out, and we are seeing hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent on farms to repair landscape and return soil.

What is really hurting us is not being able to get a crop to market, and the farmers are just at a loss. For those who have seen water through their house, the smell and the dampness lasts with you for a long time. I recognise Brad, Jo, Georgie, Ayla and Ben in the gallery here tonight. They had water through their house in February and fortunately dodged a bullet in May.

The QRIDA scheme is good but it has to be better. It is not scalable. We are seeing some farms with 10 acres receive \$75,000, while others with hundreds of acres only qualify for the same amount. I ask the minister through the review of this flood to ensure that QRIDA is adjusted so it is scalable so that farmers can get their farms repaired.

The combination of the drought, the bushfires in past summers and now the floods following the COVID market problems is just the last straw to break the camel's back. I give a shout-out to our Laidley Community Centre, the Lockyer Community Centre in Gatton and the Lowood Community Centre for the wonderful job they are doing with mental health in the community. I call on the minister to provide funding for additional support workers for at least another six months in those communities. The community of Lockyer will get through it and the community of Somerset will get through it, but it is going to be a tough challenge.

### **Federal Labor Government**

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (7.28 pm): This is the first chance I have had to be on my feet and pass my congratulations on to the new Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese. How wonderful is that. Albo has very strong ties and connections to Bundaberg, and we have seen that reflected in the booths within the Bundaberg electorate and how competitive our candidate was. In fact, the current Prime Minister came to the Bundaberg region multiple times last year—unlike the former prime minister who did not come at all. Anthony Albanese has come to the Bundaberg region multiple times. He even did Christmas in Bundaberg—that is how much he loved the Bundaberg region. His first Queensland visit on the campaign trail officially was in Bundaberg. That is how much he cares for the Bundaberg region. He absolutely loves it. It was at the end of the first week, which was a bit of a challenging week, but after coming to Bundy he went from strength to strength. It is fair to say that Bundaberg gave him the Bundy bump that he needed to get on and win the election.

We love Anthony Albanese. We love democracy in Bundaberg as well. I have to say a big congratulations to all of the candidates who put up their hand for Hinkler. They showed respect to one another and they really led the way on how you run an election campaign. They shook hands at the end of the day and also showed leadership for their volunteers. I really want to credit all of the volunteers across all of the parties. Every time I turned up to pre-poll, they would say g'day, they were friendly to one another and they shook hands when they left. In Bundaberg we showed the way to conduct an election; you do it by respecting other people. You might not agree with other's ideas, but you respect everything they do.

I have to say a big credit goes to our volunteers who helped Matt Burnett and Jason Scanes in the Bundaberg region. I will mention some of those wonderful volunteers: Anne Gouge and Pam Liddel, who not only did fantastic work handing out flyers but also held a fantastic fundraising event. They make wonderful mocktails and cocktails, that's for sure. Unfortunately I do not participate in cocktails, but everyone else enjoyed it and we raised a lot of money for Jason Scanes. Thank you to those two ladies.

Thank you to Sue and Margaret Phee, who has the best confit steak production line you will see—an outstanding effort and still going strong. To Mary and Graeme, who show up every single day on pre-poll and do all the hard yards, thank you so much for everything you do for Jason. Michael Chadbone, one of the absolute true believers, for whom it was not enough to campaign on one campaign; he campaigned on the Flynn and Hinkler campaigns as well. Well done to him. Thank you to Keith Krebs, who is always out at the markets with me. To the iconic Cheryl Dorron, the greatest pikelet producer you will ever meet and also life member who kicks you into gear: you are absolutely fantastic. Well done. Thank you to Terry Rees, another outstanding campaign manager. He was my campaign manager. He said, 'I will never do another one.' He backed it up and did another one. To Chris Piante, who is absolutely unstoppable: you are an absolute legend.

The House adjourned at 7.31 pm.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Camm, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Janetzki, Kelly, King A, King S, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, MacMahon, Madden, Mander, Martin, McCallum, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Watts, Whiting