



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 3 November 2016

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THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2016



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Mr Speaker (Hon. Peter Wellington, Nicklin) read prayers and took the chair.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Bill 2016



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have circulated a ruling in the absence of a message from the Governor, as required by section 68 of the Constitution of Queensland 2001. As a result of my ruling, the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 13 September 2016, is out of order and will need to be discharged and withdrawn. A message from the Governor will be required before the bill can be reintroduced. I seek leave to incorporate the ruling.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S RULING ABSENCE OF MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR AS REQUIRED BY s.68 CONSTITUTION OF QUEENSLAND 2001

MR SPEAKER: Honourable members

Section 68 of the Constitution of Queensland 2001 provides that the Legislative Assembly must not originate or pass a vote, resolution or Bill for the appropriation of—

- (a) an amount from the consolidated fund; or
- (b) an amount required to be paid to the consolidated fund;

that has not first been recommended by a message of the Governor.

The Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Bill 2016 was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 13 September 2016.

One aspect of the Bill is an insertion of a new section 155A into the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. That provision would enable a regulation to be made providing for a scheme for financial assistance to taxi and limousine licensees. The explanatory notes evidence that the provision is intended to facilitate the government's \$100 million Industry Adjustment Assistance Package announced on 11 August 2016.

The Bill was not preceded by a message of the Governor. The Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games was advised by the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel that no message was required as the assistance package was being funded by existing appropriations and the Bill did not appropriate new funds from the consolidated fund.

Following the introduction of the Bill, the Clerk raised with Parliamentary Counsel the absence of a message and it was agreed that the Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel join to seek legal advice from Crown Law about the application of s.68 generally and its application in respect of the Bill specifically. The Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel later joined to seek further advice from the Solicitor General on particular matters.

The advice may be summarised as follows:

- Section 68 of the Constitution of Queensland 2001 provides that the Legislative Assembly must not 'originate or pass' an appropriation Bill that has not first been recommended by a Governor's message.
- An appropriation for the purposes of s.68 is any conferral of authority upon the executive to pay an amount from the consolidated fund. An amendment which would potentially increase an existing appropriation, extend the objects and purposes of an existing appropriation or alter the destination of an existing appropriation will itself amount to an appropriation.
- The Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Bill 2016 is an appropriation Bill for the purposes of s.68.
- There is an argument that 'originate' is a relic of the bicameral era and now has no practical effect. On that view, s.68 effectively requires only that the Assembly not pass a Bill before it has been recommended by Governor's message. However, the better view having regard to the origins, purposes and precursors of and precedents relating to s.68 is that an appropriation Bill can neither be introduced nor passed before it has been recommended by Governor's message.
- To avoid any uncertainty, the Bill should be withdrawn and reintroduced. Reintroduction after a Governor's message has been given would comply with s.68.
- Compliance with s.68 is not itself justiciable, but the Legislative Assembly should nonetheless follow constitutional procedures.

- Consideration be given in due course to amending s.68 in line with the New South Wales equivalent so that the message requirement does not apply to a government Bill.

As a result of the advice, I rule the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Bill 2016 introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 13 September 2016 is out of order and will need to be discharged and withdrawn.

A message from the Governor will be required before the Bill can be reintroduced.

TABLED PAPER

MEMBER'S PAPER


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

Member for Mount Isa (Mr Katter)—

[1982](#) Nonconforming petition regarding the decision to legalise 'rideshare' and compensation to taxi licence owners.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS


Mount Emerald Wind Farm

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.31 am): The development of a large-scale renewable energy industry in Queensland has taken a massive stride forward. The 180-megawatt Mount Emerald Wind Farm in North Queensland has reached financial close. Queensland currently has only 12 megawatts of wind energy. The Mount Emerald Wind Farm will not only generate clean energy but also provide 150 direct jobs during construction and \$380 million in investment.

Construction is expected to start before Christmas. For example, the towers and the wind turbines will soon be brought through the Cairns port and transported to site. During the process there will also be requirements to employ local professional services. Significantly, the Mount Emerald Wind Farm has a commitment from the government owned Ergon Energy to purchase all of the electricity generated by the wind farm through to the end of 2030. The project now has engineering procurement and construction contracts in place, a long-term operations and maintenance contract, a 25-year grid connection agreement with Powerlink and finance secured.

The wind farm is in addition to the six renewable energy projects supported by Arena being built across the state including in Georgetown, Oakey, Longreach and two projects in the Whitsundays. The wind farm and the six Arena supported projects will deliver over \$1 billion in investment, around 750 direct jobs and hundreds more indirect jobs into our regions. We are harnessing renewable energy and driving new energy into jobs and investment in Queensland.


100+ Club

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.33 am): Tomorrow I will host the 2016 Premier's 100+ Club luncheon here at Parliament House, an annual event that started in 2000. Tomorrow will see 45 centenarians travel from throughout South-East Queensland—Toowoomba, Julia Creek, Ipswich, Mackay and Caloundra—to celebrate this incredible milestone and to come together to share a lifetime of interesting stories. Australia has an ageing population, and putting in place effective policies, plans and frameworks to care for our ageing population is something I feel very strongly about. That is why I am proud to lead a government that continues to provide services for the elderly and funds senior initiatives.

Earlier this year my government delivered on an election commitment by awarding \$20 million to seven community based organisations that provide respite care for Queenslanders living with dementia. All levels of government need to effectively support the needs of our ageing population. I wish to publicly recognise and commend the hard work and dedication of the Queensland Community Care Network for doing such a great job in running the 100+ Club.

One of the things I am excited about tomorrow is to witness the 100+ Club attempting to beat the Guinness world record for the largest gathering of centenarians. I have it on good authority that the current world record is 31 and was achieved by Regency Nursing and Rehabilitation Centre in New Jersey, USA on 19 May 2013. I look forward to reporting back at our next sitting of parliament the result of the record attempt tomorrow. I am sure that everyone in the House today will join with me in congratulating what will be a milestone event tomorrow.

COAG Summit on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children; Domestic and Family Violence

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.35 am): I am pleased to inform the House that last Friday I co-hosted with the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, the Council of Australian Governments' summit on reducing violence against women and their children. This summit was an opportunity for first ministers to meet with the women's safety ministers and more than 150 experts and community leaders from around the country to discuss progress and initiatives to reduce violence against women and their children. I was also pleased that Australian domestic violence campaigner Rosie Batty and the Hon. Quentin Bryce, chair of my government's Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence, were part of the discussion.

During the summit we explored new and emerging areas of violence such as the increasing use of technology to perpetrate violence against women and, conversely, how technology and innovation can empower people and communities to address violence. The summit also focused on how best to support women and children from diverse backgrounds, women from Indigenous communities and women with disabilities. As part of the summit, COAG and women's safety ministers launched the third action plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. The plan is a mechanism to coordinate and guide action across Australia.

Communities are taking action to prevent domestic and family violence and there is much work happening at all levels of government. Last week's summit gave us the chance to profile this work and reflect on the significant inroads we have made to change the way this violence is dealt with. I was particularly proud to highlight the work of the Southport Magistrates Court and the work being done by my Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council. I also outlined Queensland's leadership on the provision of domestic and family violence leave for public servants and called for a national employment standard for all workers across Australia. This is the right thing to do and I urge Malcolm Turnbull to adopt it at a national level. However, there is still more work to be done. Today I am pleased to table Queensland's second action plan which will provide the road map for action until 2019. I table a copy for the House.


Tabled paper: Queensland Government: Queensland says: not now, not ever—Second Action Plan of the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy—2016-17 to 2018-19 [1983].

We have already achieved a great deal. To date, we have put into action via legislation or other programs 37 of the recommendations. We are well advanced on a further 78 while the remaining six recommendations are ready for action. We have passed four priority bills to improve our current legal and justice system response to domestic and family violence and implemented the respectful relationships education program in our schools. We have opened two new shelters, in Townsville and Brisbane, with plans for new shelters in Mount Isa and Charters Towers and simplified processes faced by police for the issuing of police protection notices.

The second action plan will see the development of a communication and engagement program to help change attitudes and behaviours of Queenslanders. In order to have real progress, we need to continue the challenge and transform community attitudes in relation to violence against women. I believe that the summit has been an important step in this process, allowing governments and stakeholders to forge new connections and coordinate national leadership to take our response to domestic and family violence forward.

We have just heard today reports of what police are describing as a domestic related incident that has claimed the lives of two women. On behalf of Queenslanders I send my condolences to the Hervey Bay community. I believe that all honourable members would agree with me that this senseless violence needs to stop.

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.38 am): I, too, want to start by acknowledging the disturbing reports we are hearing of a violent attack in Hervey Bay this morning. While we do not yet have a lot of information, it is a sobering reminder of the challenges we face in tackling violence in our communities. This remains a critical priority for the Palaszczuk government, which is why I was so pleased that our Premier was successful in bringing to Brisbane last week the historic COAG summit to reduce violence against women and children.


Brisbane played host to our nation's leaders, best practitioners, researchers and influencers to discuss how we can all work together to combat violence against women and children. Along with Hetty Johnston, the founder of Bravehearts, I participated in a roundtable discussion on the insidious effects

of domestic and family violence on children. We heard of wonderful programs and innovative approaches across the country, and we heard some heartbreaking stories of the kids who are being supported by these programs. I am pleased that the third national action plan, which was released at the summit, has children as one of the key focuses for the upcoming few years.

I was also very pleased to see that both nationally consistent domestic violence leave and the need for significant reform to the Family Court were both identified as priority areas moving forward, and I do hope that those opposite join us in advocating the Turnbull government to take action on these issues. Having brought our nation's leaders together, I am sure the enormous groundswell of support we have seen in recent years to tackle domestic and family violence will continue. The Palaszczuk government is committed to playing our part. Our most recent demonstration of that commitment is more than \$10 million for new and enhanced domestic and family violence services. This additional investment will deliver services like court support at the Beenleigh Magistrates Court; additional counselling, referring and advice to be delivered in Ipswich; a new service to operate out of the Caboolture Police Station to provide support for women after police attend their home for a domestic and family violence incident; and perpetrator programs in Moreton Bay.

Violence against women is recognised as both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality, which is why I was so pleased yesterday to release the Palaszczuk government's Violence Against Women Prevention Plan, which will drive action against all forms of violence against women, including sexual violence. One in five women will experience sexual violence by the age of 15. This plan brings together actions addressing all forms of violence against women with a particular focus on tackling violence against disadvantaged women and new and emerging forms of violence, and it outlines actions across key themes of respect, safety and justice. The Palaszczuk government is walking the talk when it comes to protecting and supporting women, and we are working towards a future where violence against women is not only unacceptable but also non-existent.

Cross River Rail


 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.42 am): Cross River Rail is a once-in-a-generation, city-shaping project that will be the driver of new jobs, better housing and increased productivity for our region. The Palaszczuk government has been in positive discussions with both the Commonwealth government and Brisbane City Council to deliver the project. I am mindful that there is legislation before the House currently to establish the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority, and I will confine my remarks so as not to anticipate debate on the bill.

I am pleased to inform members that 10 days ago, on 25 October, the Commonwealth government committed \$10 million to the detailed planning of Cross River Rail in addition to the \$850 million already committed by the Palaszczuk Labor government. This joint funding contribution further demonstrates that Cross River Rail is the right solution for Brisbane's South-East Queensland corner and for our state. Not only did the Commonwealth government commit funding toward the project; they have also accepted a seat at the table for planning and delivery of the project going forward. Our governments will now be able to work together to find innovative long-term financing and funding solutions for the project. These commitments demonstrate the willingness of both governments to take the politics out of infrastructure decision-making so that we can focus on what is best for the state of Queensland.

The next step towards realising the full potential of this transformational project is to lodge a request for project change under the environmental impact statement to the Coordinator-General. This document has been prepared and lodgement with the Coordinator-General is imminent. The report reflects the further technical and environmental investigations undertaken since the original EIS was approved in 2012 as well as key feedback from community and stakeholders and seeks approval of the project changes. Once the report has been considered by the Coordinator-General, I anticipate that public consultation will commence soon afterwards.

The Queensland government's No. 1 infrastructure priority remains Cross River Rail. It is the necessary step to transform South-East Queensland's public transport system and our economy, and we are getting on with the job of delivery now in partnership with the Commonwealth government.

State Finances

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (9.44 am): In recent sittings I have informed the House about a series of positive economic data and reputable surveys and analysis which show that the Queensland

economy is strong and growing. Those indicators show that our economic plan is working to transition our state to a post-mining boom economy. Today I can inform the House of the latest Queensland State Accounts produced by Queensland Treasury. Members will note that the former LNP government stopped the regular release of the Queensland State Accounts.

The State Accounts show that Queensland's economic performance continues to improve. Growth in real trend terms was up 1.2 per cent in the June quarter 2016 to be 3.8 per cent higher over the year. The most encouraging sign in this data is that it reflects Queensland's strongest quarterly growth in four years since the March quarter in 2012. The increase in gross state product of 1.2 per cent in the June quarter 2016 was also double the rest of Australia, which was up 0.6 per cent. We have not seen growth like this since the March quarter 2012 before the previous LNP government took office. It was also the strongest growth over a 12-month period since the September quarter 2012. It contrasts with trend growth of only 0.2 per cent in the year to the December quarter 2014 under the previous LNP government.

In addition to the usual quarterly results, the Queensland State Accounts contain preliminary estimates for the 2015-16 financial year. Those preliminary figures indicate that Queensland's gross state product growth in 2015-16 was 3.2 per cent. This is the highest since 2011-12. That is up significantly on the 0.8 per cent legacy growth rate recorded in 2014-15 in the aftermath of the previous LNP government. In fact, it is four times the growth rate under the former treasurer. The 3.2 per cent preliminary figure for 2015-16 is also higher than the rest of Australia's economic growth of 2.8 per cent. This latest positive economic outcome for our state was propelled by a strong contribution from net exports boosted by the ramp-up in LNG exports. Thankfully, our strong export performance and Queensland's diverse economy have helped offset relatively weaker domestic conditions.

State final demand, an indicator of domestic conditions, fell 1.5 per cent over the year in 2015-16. Of course, last year we saw a fall in business investment as construction of the LNG projects approached completion. The result for 2015-16 needs to be viewed in the context of the upturn in state final demand we have seen in both the March and June quarters this year. Despite the anticipated decline in business investment post the LNG boom, other components of the domestic economy contributed to overall growth. Household consumption, the largest component of Queensland's GSP, rose 2.4 per cent in 2015-16 and contributed 1.4 percentage points to GSP growth. A strong housing sector has also underpinned Queensland's economic performance in 2015-16. The facts are that dwelling investment was up 14.3 per cent. This is the strongest growth recorded in 13 years.

Looking ahead, a substantial pipeline of units and apartments, particularly in inner Brisbane, is likely to drive continued growth in dwelling investment in 2016-17. Public final demand rose 2.2 per cent in 2015-16, a turnaround from the previous year's decline of 1.7 per cent, and contributed 0.5 of a percentage point to GSP growth. As highlighted earlier, while overall domestic demand in Queensland was subdued in 2015-16, the state's economy was boosted by the trade sector. Increased resource exports and lower imports resulted in a 4.5 percentage point contribution from the trade sector to Queensland's economic growth in 2015-16. The continued ramp-up in production resulted in LNG exports totalling \$5.1 billion in 2015-16, which is more than a fivefold increase from the previous year.

Looking forward, economic growth in Queensland is expected to strengthen further to four per cent in 2016-17 driven by the ongoing ramp-up of LNG exports and some improvement in domestic activity. Based on the latest budgets of all the states, Queensland is forecast to record the strongest growth of all the states out to 2019-20. What the Queensland State Accounts show is that the Queensland economy is powering. This is no spin and no cherry-picking, just a clear indication that our economic plan is working. In little more than 18 months our plan and the measures taken in two state budgets have seen growth return to our state economy, a drop in our unemployment rate, a rise in business and consumer confidence and more jobs for Queenslanders.

Dental Services, Federal Funding




Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (9.49 am): On 23 April this year the Turnbull coalition government announced that it was abolishing the National Partnership Agreement on Adult Public Dental Services and the Child Dental Benefits Schedule without agreement from the states and against the advice of peak dental groups. The replacement Child and Adult Public Dental Scheme proposed by the Commonwealth seeks to transfer responsibility for the provision of dental services entirely to the state and will for the first time introduce a cap that would effectively deliver a national \$200 million a year reduction on the schemes it has been designed to replace. Should this scheme be implemented, once the cap is reached the full liability for providing additional dental services would fall upon the state budget.

In 2013 the federal Labor government signed the National Partnership Agreement on Treating More Public Dental Patients with the Newman LNP government which delivered funding certainty and drove down the waiting lists in this state. It is regrettable that that certainty has been jeopardised by the decision of the Turnbull government, made on 23 April this year, to introduce the new scheme—a decision that continues the trend of the federal coalition government to walk away from its responsibilities to fund its fair share of the Queensland health system.

This cut masquerading as reform has been botched from the start. Originally intended to be legislated in July this year, the current scheme was extended to 31 December. That date is fast approaching and still we have no clear indication of what dental funding Queensland will receive in the future. Attempts to legislate the new scheme have now failed on two occasions in the Commonwealth parliament, adding to uncertainty. This confusion is negatively impacting on the ability of our hospital and health services to generate service delivery plans to meet the needs of those requiring dental care in the coming year. It is another example of the chaos and paralysis of the Abbott and Turnbull governments' approach to health, which has been distinguished by ill-considered, clumsily crafted policy on the run that appears to have as its single organising principle punishing the patients of Queensland. Fortunately for the people of Queensland, the Palaszczuk Labor government will continue to fund its fair share of public dental services through the provision of annual funding of \$188 million for dental health services.

I have recently raised these issues with my Commonwealth, state and territory counterparts at the COAG Health Council. I can assure the House that I and all members of the Palaszczuk Labor government will continue to fight for Queensland to ensure that the Turnbull government continues to properly fund public dental services in this state.

State Schools, Infrastructure

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (9.51 am): The Palaszczuk government is getting on with the job of rolling out more than \$667 million in school infrastructure projects across Queensland. Last week, along with the Premier I visited Cannonvale State School, where we are building a new \$5 million early learning centre. The project is on track to open for school next year and includes nine prep and year 1 classrooms. More than 100 tradespeople have been involved in the work. I had the privilege of meeting a number of the men who were working on site last week. It was also great to be back in the Whitsundays electorate and catch up with my old mate and meet Cannonvale State School Principal Angie Kelly.

Mr Kelly: She's a great principal.


Ms JONES: She is a great principal. I saw the teaching and learning happening at the school and had a very tough handball battle with year 6 student Tyler Greci. I must report back to the House that I did beat him 5-4!

Ms Trad: You're close to the ground, Kate.

Ms JONES: That is right. The \$10 million stage 2 development of the Highfields State Secondary College in Toowoomba North is also progressing well. The development includes a new performing arts and music centre, a new visual arts centre, a senior industrial technology facility and a catering and hospitality area. I am advised that all new facilities will be ready for the first day of school next year.

A \$7 million construction project is also underway at Bulimba State School. I know that the member for Bulimba is very excited about this project as well. We are building 10 new classrooms and a resource centre to meet enrolment growth that is happening in this inner-city part of Brisbane. In the Indooroopilly electorate a new \$7 million classroom block at Ironside State School is also on track to be delivered for completion in 2017. The new three-storey block includes 10 extra classrooms for one of Brisbane's fastest growing schools. We are also starting construction on new schools in Caloundra South, Coomera, Yarrabilba in Logan and Burdell in north-west Townsville. The new \$25 million Cairns Special School is now well underway and will open on the first day of school next year. Our government will always prioritise our capital works investment to cater for enrolment growth and deliver schools for Queensland students.

Integrated Resort Developments; Queen's Wharf, Traffic Arrangements

 **Hon. AJ LYNHAM** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.53 am): I have previously advised the House that if one of our two regional integrated resort developments were not to progress we may go back to the market. In August Aquis Resort at the Great Barrier Reef Pty Ltd formally notified government that it was withdrawing from the


IRD process. My Department of State Development has begun preliminary research to determine if there is genuine interest in the marketplace in another regional integrated resort development. Officers from the departments of State Development, Justice and Attorney-General and Treasury are to undertake this market sounding jointly. They have prepared a participant's package which provides an overview of the opportunity and government parameters. This process is as happened with Queen's Wharf and ASF.

An important part of the market sounding will be to understand current trends in the international resort and gaming industries. The participants will include casino and hotel operators, property developers, construction firms and financiers who have expressed interest in the past or who are major players in sectors relevant to IRD delivery and operation. As many as 12 different groups over the past 18 months have declared an interest. These organisations and additional stakeholders who can contribute to the process are being approached through a structured process. From this exercise, recommendations will be developed for government to consider in early 2017.

Let us be clear: if a decision is made to seek expressions of interest in a new regional IRD, the strict criteria I announced in March will apply. Those criteria include that a project would need to be in or in close proximity to a major population centre with a catchment of no fewer than 150,000 people and within a 70-kilometre radius from the city centre. This government understands that IRDs can be an important catalyst for boosting international tourism. This will be aimed squarely at increasing international visitors as we are only interested in developments that will draw international tourists to Queensland and, importantly, create jobs.

While I am on my feet, I advise the House that roadwork and traffic related changes are taking place around the Queen's Wharf Brisbane project site in readiness for the 1 January handover. This includes proposed part closures of Queens Wharf Road and William Street. More detail on this will be released in the coming weeks. I encourage drivers and pedestrians to keep an eye out for the signage.

First Start

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.56 am): I am very pleased to inform the House that the Palaszczuk government recently released the allocation of trainees to local government authorities under the First Start initiative. The First Start program provides support for up to 300 trainee placements in council areas right across the state, with funding of up to \$12,500 available to place people into traineeships for 12 months. We hope that a large number of these trainees will go on to complete their traineeships and apprenticeships with these councils. Importantly, priority is given to areas of high youth unemployment, with the trainees being placed in 62 councils right across the state. This shows that the Palaszczuk government is committed to training and skills right across this state and particularly in regional Queensland.

Last year this program had a very high level of demand across the state. As a result, the Palaszczuk government made the decision to increase the number of places available from 250 to 300. It is very pleasing to inform the House that, even with the increase in places, there is still a very strong demand for places and all 300 have been filled. Importantly, First Start encourages local jobseekers, who in many cases are young people, to remain in their local communities while providing councils with a valuable source of labour for council activities and delivery of important community services.

First Start provides a \$12,500 wage subsidy to local councils to employ an additional trainee while studying to gain a nationally recognised qualification. This funding can also be utilised to support a first-year apprenticeship position. Importantly, these individuals come directly out of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program.


The Department of Education and Training works very closely with the Local Government Association of Queensland, which manages the First Start allocation process, to ensure that traineeship places go to councils with the greatest need. One of the 14 Indigenous councils receiving a boost this year is Aurukun Shire Council. The council has been awarded \$100,000 for eight traineeship positions. This means that eight new positions are being created that will provide 12 months of stable employment, skills development and a qualification for eight local people in the community.

Throughout 2015-16 across Queensland council areas more than 87 per cent of First Start trainees and apprentices are young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years, 20 per cent are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and male and female groups are equally represented across the total recruitments.

Qualifications are being undertaken across 15 different industry areas including business, primary industry and construction. Some of the councils that have allocations of trainees under the First Start program include Ipswich City Council with 23 trainees, Townsville City Council with 20, Mackay

Regional Council with 18 and the list goes on, with councils from Logan to the cape taking part. It has been very rewarding to hear the successes of First Start, which has been brought back as part of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, and how it is allowing local councils to grow their own talent locally and build career pathways.

Back to Work Regional Jobs Package

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.59 am): Jobs are the No. 1 priority of the Palaszczuk government and we are delivering a dedicated regional jobs package supporting real employers and real jobs in the regions. Our two-year \$100 million Back to Work regional jobs package is already a great success. Employers know it, jobseekers know it and Queenslanders living in the regions know it as well. The only ones who do not know about it are those opposite. I am pleased to inform the House that Back to Work is already supporting more than 800 Queenslanders in new jobs in regional Queensland—812 jobs to be precise, which is a fantastic result in just three months after eligibility applications opened and we have been making payments over the last 12 weeks. Already the first instalments have provided 314 regional employers with over \$2.7 million in support payments, and these numbers are growing every day. It is happening in a wide range of industries—health care, agriculture, building and construction, and retail and community services to name just a few.

These jobs are coming in each of the regions covered by the program. It is being led by North Queensland with 165 jobs, Far North Queensland with 160 jobs, 111 in the Wide Bay area, 75 in Central Queensland, 73 in Mackay and the Whitsunday area, there are nearly 50 combined in north-west and south-west Queensland, and there are further draft applications in the system as more and more employers become aware of the great benefits that this program delivers—employers such as the Bundaberg Motor Group, which I visited last month to meet with Rob and Robbie who have both been hired as car detailers at the car dealership. It was absolutely tremendous to see the huge smiles on the faces of these two workers who are being supported through this program. They were so proud. Regional communities are increasingly aware of the benefits Back to Work offers to local employers and jobseekers. The Whitsunday Coast Chamber of Commerce—we know the struggles in North Queensland—in a column in today's *Whitsunday Times* outlines its support for Back to Work. The column states—

We encourage our members to take advantage of funding available through the Back to Work initiative or to contact the Chamber if they are in any need of guidance.


That is a stamp of approval and a great endorsement for a great initiative that is delivering for employers and jobseekers all over regional Queensland. These are early days, but already we are meeting targets of this great Back to Work \$100 million two-year regional program.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Minister for Housing and Public Works, member for Whitsunday and member for Kawana, you are both warned under standing order 253A for your interjections. They are disruptive.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Logan, you are also now warned under standing order 253A.

Homelessness

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (10.03 am): Over recent years the Commonwealth government has had a dismissive attitude to issues of housing affordability. We had Joe Hockey as treasurer telling Australians that the key to housing affordability was getting a better job, and the House will recall the Prime Minister's great housing intervention suggesting that kids should go and get rich parents. Last week I welcomed Treasurer Scott Morrison finally joining this debate. However, Mr Morrison's approach is to suggest that the states have not done enough. Queensland is already doing the heavy lifting when it comes to housing affordability which is reflected in the work that is already being done by our Treasurer and the Deputy Premier that will be backed in by our forthcoming housing strategy. If the federal LNP is serious about addressing affordability, there are steps that it can take immediately. Tomorrow I will be attending a meeting of state and Commonwealth housing and homelessness ministers and high on the agenda is the need for certainty around the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness which established matched funding. This agreement is set to expire in the middle of next year and, as yet, the homelessness sector has no certainty around what its long-term funding will be.

Homelessness is a complex issue and, through the national partnership agreement, we fund specialist homelessness services that deliver a helping hand, a safe place to sleep and somewhere to get something to eat. There are a range of responses that helped almost 45,000 Queensland men, women and children last year. We helped them find security and dignity whilst they are experiencing homelessness. I want to make sure that organisations like Micah Projects headquartered here in Brisbane, St Vincent de Paul and the Gold Coast Project for Homeless Youth can plan for the long term. They need to be given the space and the funding to provide innovative responses to homelessness.

Tomorrow is the day for the federal government to come to the table with a concrete plan. That plan has to be to commit to providing the men and women working at the pointy end of social assistance with security around their own jobs and around their very important work. Genuinely increasing genuine affordable housing supply is important, which is why we are developing a comprehensive housing strategy that looks at the needs of the whole housing market. Unless the LNP in Canberra can work with us to give support to the homeless workforce here in Queensland and around the nation, we will go backwards in our efforts to assist people living through homelessness. Queensland's position is clear. I know Queenslanders care about their community and I know that they demand certainty for funding in the homelessness space. I am calling on their behalf for a new Commonwealth-state partnership to improve outcomes for vulnerable Queenslanders over the long term. Thousands of Queensland workers should not have to fight for funding for their important work on this important issue every three years. I call on all members of this House to back Queensland's call for certainty in homelessness funding.

Small Business, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships Program



Hon. LM ENOCH (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (10.06 am): The Palaszczuk government knows how vital small business is to the Queensland economy. That is why we are supporting small business to innovate through our \$405 million whole-of-government Advance Queensland initiative. One program in particular is putting critical technical expertise directly into small businesses to help them take their innovative ideas and turn them into tangible commercial outcomes. This program is the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program—an \$8 million program that is all about building collaboration between our talented researchers and Queensland small businesses. Recently I approved funding under round 3 of the Advance Queensland Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program to seven small businesses. Each of these enterprises will receive up to \$50,000 to employ a top university graduate who will work on an innovative project to help their business grow. The Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program works by funding up to two-thirds of the cost of bringing an honours, masters or PhD level university graduate into a business to work on an innovative project.

Like A Photon Creative, one of the round 3 recipients, is a content creation company specialising in the development of content for children. It is employing a graduate to help develop and implement an app for children that delivers books, videos and games. I recently visited Like A Photon, and business owners Kristen Souvlis and Nadine Bates were vocal in their praise for the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program. With their KTP funding they have employed a graduate from Griffith University to help grow their dynamic and diverse content creation business. I was fortunate enough to get a sneak peek at some of the work this incredibly creative company is producing. It is nothing short of amazing and it is happening right here in Queensland. Most importantly, with the help of Advance Queensland funding, this Queensland small business is committed to staying in our state and employing locals while continuing to compete in global markets. Like A Photon has already provided content for *Sesame Street* and early next year will release *Balloon Barnyard*, an animation series commissioned by Disney Australia which I am sure will be a great success.

Other round 3 grants will support innovation across the health, mining, energy and waste disposal sectors. So far the Palaszczuk government has provided KTP program funding to 38 innovative small businesses and seven universities. This investment is having an immediate impact on small businesses right around the state and helping them to grow and employ into the future. Put simply, the KTP program is helping to spur innovation and create jobs now and jobs for the future.


Wolston Correctional Centre



Hon. WS BYRNE (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.10 am): Reports in the media today in relation to Wolston Correctional Centre taking part in the 1,000 cranes project and the million stars project are false, full stop. I have been advised by the Corrective Services Commissioner that not only will these items not


be donated, a decision was made last week to not even make them in the first place. No-one expects prisons to be holiday spas and Queensland prisons are not holiday locations—they are primarily about deterrence and rehabilitation—but locking up prisoners and throwing away the key will only result in more reoffending. Prisoners need to be kept occupied and in meaningful activities, including rehabilitation activities, but these activities are not a right for prisoners to undertake. Any breach of prison rules and regulations can result in exclusion from any kind of activity. The Palaszczuk government is firm in its strong and coherent commitment to effectively address all elements of crime in this state.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.10 am): I wish to advise the House that the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and the Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply is absent from the House today as he is attending a ministerial council on road safety.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

 **Hon. LE DONALDSON** (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (10.11 am): I rise to make a personal statement. Yesterday I advised the House that the rates on my family home had been in arrears and that the amount owing to the Bundaberg Regional Council had been paid. I further advised the House that there has been no deliberate attempt to avoid paying the rates on my home.


I apologise to council for this oversight in not settling the account earlier. I apologise, too, to the people of Bundaberg. On this matter I have not met the expectations I set for myself as your representative. I have taken steps to ensure this does not happen again and that future bills are paid promptly. There is no excuse for this and I offer none. Instead, I offer my sincere apologies for letting you down.

Yesterday I became aware that while I listed a bank savings account, I inadvertently omitted listing my mortgage account on the Register of Members' Interests. This was not a deliberate omission and I apologise for this error. As soon as this matter was brought to my attention, I moved to rectify my records. I wrote a letter of explanation to the Clerk and submitted an Update of Members' Interests form.

In 2014, as a single mother and at the time looking for work and eventually only working part time, I fell behind in some of my mortgage payments. The nonpayment was for a relatively small amount and it was settled quickly. This was a very difficult time for me and my family. I know what it is like to do it tough. This is why I wanted to be a part of a government that is putting the interests of everyday Queenslanders first. This is why I strive every day to deliver for the people of Bundaberg and Queensland. I again unreservedly apologise to the House.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE


Report

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (10.12 am): I lay upon the table of the House the Finance and Administration Committee report No. 33, *Portfolio Subordinate Legislation tabled between 15 June and 30 August 2016*. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 33—Portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 15 June and 30 August 2016 [[1984](#)].

TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr KING** (Kallangur—ALP) (10.13 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 28 of the Transportation and Utilities Committee titled *Subordinate legislation tabled between 15 June 2016 and 16 August 2016*. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Transportation and Utilities Committee: Report No. 28—Subordinate legislation tabled between 15 June 2016 and 16 August 2016 [[1985](#)].

NOTICE OF MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance



Mr NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.13 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House expresses its dismay at the litany of failures of the Palaszczuk Labor government and the harmful effect of those failures on the Queensland economy and Queenslanders.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Premier of Queensland's Export Award



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.13 am): Recently we have witnessed some of the more disgraceful faux pas from this Palaszczuk government. There have been a few. The Premier could not even be bothered to attend her own trade awards. They are called the Premier of Queensland's Export Awards and the Premier did not even bother to attend. One would think that there would be someone else over on that side of the chamber who could be bothered to attend the Premier's export awards recognising some amazing businesses across Queensland. Obviously that other person would be the trade minister; however, the current trade minister also could not be bothered to attend the Premier's trade awards. Here we have the Premier and the Deputy Premier, who happens to be the trade minister, not even bothering to attend. What a snub for all of those good businesses across Queensland. It just goes to show their clear contempt to any form of business across Queensland.

The LNP has always recognised the importance of export and small business right across Queensland. A great local business from Kingaroy, Access Innovations, were semi-finalists. More importantly I think, one of the actual winners of the award, a South Brisbane business, Cutting Edge, a leading film and TV digital business—and Labor Party fan—would have loved to have had their award presented to them by the Premier or at least by the Deputy Premier, their local member, but she was not there. Minister Lynham, the nice guy of the Labor Party, was sent in to present the awards.

That brings me to a very successful trade mission led by TSBE, the Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise, the first ever private trade mission out of Queensland, with some 200 good local businesses from all across Queensland showcasing agriculture and primary production across Queensland. We need to congratulate Shane Charles from TSBE and the Wagner family from Wagners' airport who also sent off the first commercial flight out of that airport with over 200 delegates, a highly successful trade mission showcasing businesses such as Kialla Pure Foods, Sunnyspot Packhouse, Australian beef exporters, PB Agrifood and the Australian Mungbean Company to name just a few. They know that it is only the LNP that will support export businesses here in Queensland.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance



Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (10.16 am): At the outset I have to say that that was one lazy motion from the Leader of the Opposition. The growth figures that I released earlier this morning are more good news for the Queensland economy. It shows again how strongly our economy is performing in light of some very challenging and difficult circumstances. A preliminary figure of 3.2 per cent for GSP in 2015-16 is a tremendous outcome. I know it will not stop the negativity of those opposite. One can put money on them saying this is a bad outcome. Let us look at how it compares to the final year of the former government.

The Leader of the Opposition as Treasurer delivered GSP in 2014-15 of 0.8 per cent. I will repeat that: 0.8. This was a direct result—just like the lazy motion—of the lazy approach that was taken by having no economic plan, job cuts, cuts to front-line services and, let us not forget, spending \$100 million of taxpayers' money trying to get our assets ready for sale. Absolutely shameful! Let those opposite try to peddle an argument that 0.8 per cent is better than 3.2 per cent. The member for Indooroopilly will speak next. He will give it a good crack. We know that 0.8 per cent is lower than 3.2 per cent. Just in case he needs some assistance, that is where we are at. We also know that the member for Indooroopilly as shadow Treasurer likes to massage the figures so that he squeezes all of the good news out just leaving the bad news. We also know the Leader of the Opposition loves a good massage. Members will remember his overseas trip. That was an absolute corker.

A government member: He charged the taxpayers.

Mr PITT: Yes, at the taxpayers' expense. There is no massaging the record of the LNP leader when he was treasurer. In September state final demand figures came out showing 0.3 per cent in trend terms for the June quarter 2016, following growth of 0.2 per cent in the March quarter. This is a rebound in domestic activity in the first half of 2016. It follows eight consecutive quarters of negative state final demand growth. That means that someone was in the driver's seat as treasurer during that time. Who was it? It was the member for Clayfield, of course.

Ms Trad: Feet up.

Mr PITT: Feet up in the hammock, lazy as, just doing nothing.

Ms Trad: On autopilot.

Mr PITT: On autopilot. The June and March quarter results are very good. Let us put this into further perspective and compare the two recent consecutive quarters of positive state final demand growth and the worst result in recent years. When was that worst result? It was in the September quarter 2014, at minus 0.9 per cent. Who was the treasurer? It was the Leader of the Opposition and member for Clayfield. Yesterday I said that, despite his fondness for movies, he could never make one for all of the obvious reasons, but we know that if he did star in a movie it would be *Honey, I shrunk the economy*.

We know that under the former treasurer growth was not high enough. We know that he had a deliberate plan of getting everything ready for asset sales. We know that he cut too deep into the economy, hurting local economies. We know that after 18 months they are still without an economic plan. At the moment for them it is all about getting back to the future, with asset sales, job cuts—

(Time expired)

Queensland Economy



Mr EMERSON (Indooroopilly—LNP) (10.20 am): It gives me great pleasure to follow the person who has been branded the Captain Risky of this economy. Finally we heard some truth from the Labor Party at its state conference. Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk told the conference—

They say things are too slow, things are not happening.

How true that was. We have seen report after report after report. No matter how much the Treasurer wants to spin the numbers we know that he has no substance and no credibility. Let us look at today's figures. What he does not want to mention is that forecast growth in Queensland has again been revised down. Under this Treasurer, yet again it is down. We did not hear him mention that word then. He tries to spin it to show that he has some credibility, but in fact growth has been revised down. In the 2015-16 budget, growth was forecast to be 3.5 per cent. Just a couple of weeks ago, the 'Captain Risky' of Queensland politics was still talking about growth being forecast at 3.5 per cent. What figure did he say today? He said that growth is now forecast at 3.2 per cent! It is not 3.5 per cent; it has gone down again, to 3.2 per cent. When the Treasurer came to office—

Government members interjected.

Mr EMERSON: They do not want to hear it. They do not like the truth. We have incompetent minister after incompetent minister after incompetent minister. They do not want to hear it.

When the Treasurer came to office, 2015-16 growth was forecast to be 5.75 per cent. It was then revised down to 4.5 per cent, then to four per cent and then to 3.5 per cent. What do we have today? It is now at 3.2 per cent. This Treasurer has no credibility. However, he does like to shoot the messenger. He says CommSec is not accurate and should not be believed. I table this statement from when he was shadow treasurer, about CommSec.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 20 October 2014, by the member for Mulgrave, Hon. Curtis Pitt, titled 'Latest Commsec data bad news for Queensland' [1986].

At that time, he said that they had credibility, that they were accurate and that they should be believed. He was quoted as saying that Queensland lagged behind other key states in the latest *State of the states* report. He said—


Ignoring the problem will not make it go away. The Government needs to listen to experts ...

At that time, the experts were CommSec. Now he says that they are not the experts, that they should be ignored and that they should not be listened to. When he was shadow treasurer he said that CommSec was right; now that he is Treasurer he says that CommSec is wrong. When he was shadow treasurer he said that they should be listened to; now he says to ignore them. The Treasurer has no credibility. Today he comes into the House and does not admit that he has revised down his growth forecast. Like the Minister for Transport—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Deputy Premier, I urge the Treasurer to be careful with your interjections. You may have felt you were being baited by the member for Indooroopilly, but I urge you to be careful.

LNP Opposition, Performance

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.23 am): I am following the man who came into this House and personally presided over the sacking of almost 2,000 state government employees—1,700 in Queensland Rail. He came into this House and issued the pink slips through a dixer. That is the record of the member for Indooroopilly.

Last night in this parliament, we bore witness yet again to just how weak and lazy is the Leader of the Opposition. When faced with the choice of making a hard decision or caving in to the extremists in his party room, what did he do? He caved in! He took the easy option and the lazy option, and he caved in. Instead of voting to modernise our adoption laws, what did he do? He caved in to the old Nats. He chose to go backwards in time. He chose hate. Instead of defending John Howard's gun laws, he backed the old Nats and voted for extreme gun policies. The Nats who dominate his caucus are calcified in time. They look backwards to the good old days in Queensland when you could win an election on an antigay pro-gun campaign. That is those opposite. It reminds me of when Paul Keating referred to another opposition leader as 'Old Jellyback'. We know that the Leader of the Opposition stands for nothing and does not have the backbone to stand up to the extremists in his party room.

Let me talk about cuts, the member for Indooroopilly and his track record in this place. He personally presided over almost 2,000 sackings. The member for Indooroopilly likes a bit of social media. He has been talking a bit about social media in this place this week. I remember on 10 October 2014 when he posted on Facebook, 'Something exciting is coming to public transport. Can you guess what it is?' The people of Queensland were full of great ideas.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Deputy Premier to continue, Deputy Premier, I believe during your earlier contribution you referred to a member in what I think was an unparliamentary manner. Whilst the member did not take offence, I think it is unparliamentary. Will you kindly withdraw the words that I find unparliamentary?

Ms TRAD: I withdraw.


Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you are now warned under standing order 253A. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

Ms TRAD: Eleanor Chandler-Dady said, most succinctly, 'More split shifts and driver sackings'. Even two years ago, the people of Queensland knew what those opposite were doing: sacking train drivers in Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Before I call the Leader of the Opposition, member for Indooroopilly, I realise this morning you may feel provoked, but I feel those comments are unparliamentary. You are now warned under standing order 253A. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.28 am): What a week it has been for Australia's worst transport minister. Should we call him the minister for red herrings or should we call him the minister for not knowing? First he said that new generation rolling stock had so-called design issues that meant they were not ready. That excuse did not last terribly long. It came off the rails on ABC radio yesterday, when the minister's new acting CEO, Neil Scales, said that last year he had, in fact, sorted out any design issues. When Steve Austin asked, 'Were you aware of any issues?', he said—

Oh yeah. I fixed them ... as far as the new generation rollingstock trains are concerned, all the issues in the cab have been ironed out.

Excuse No. 1 was shot down.

If it was not enough to have his own spin exposed by his acting CEO on live radio, after just one phone call to Queensland Rail we can advise the House that the minister's constant grandstanding about driver training is wrong. This week we have heard the Premier and her train-wreck minister again

make the claim that the LNP dismissed 66 members of the driver training unit and had somehow contributed to the problems that this Labor government has had almost two years to fix. Information provided to us after just one phone call clearly shows that not one tutor driver was dismissed by QR under the previous LNP government—not a one. Just 10 of these trainers left between 2012 and 2014, and all of them voluntarily.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Whilst we pause for a moment, I am informed that we have students from Redeemer Lutheran College, in the electorate of Callide, observing our proceedings. Welcome.

Mr NICHOLLS: They left—one via age retirement, four via resignation and five through the standing voluntary separation arrangements of Queensland Rail. The tutor drivers were not—I repeat, not—dismissed by the previous government as the union, the minister and the Premier have claimed. We also know from last February's damning Indec report that there was no shortage of tutor drivers at Queensland Rail but a shortage of trainees. Within QR the pool of 31 tutor drivers is more than twice the pool of 12 trainee drivers, the report reveals. This is a government that makes up the facts to suit itself.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Question time will finish at 11.31 this morning.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries



Mr NICHOLLS (10.31 am): My first question is to the Premier. I refer to the ministerial statements made by the Minister for Agriculture to this House yesterday and this morning, and I ask: was the Premier aware of these issues when she appointed Minister Donaldson to the ministry or when did the Premier become aware, and what action did she take to ensure the minister's position was not comprised by her unpaid debts?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition very much for the question. We have heard very clearly in the House today that the Minister for Agriculture, Leanne Donaldson, last night made a statement in the House stating very clearly that she had paid those outstanding rates notices. Frankly, it is unacceptable not to pay your rates notices. She apologised for that and she has fixed that up. She has come into this House and apologised to this House. She has apologised to the people of Bundaberg.

Have we heard an apology from the member for Broadwater? Have we heard an apology from her? We have heard no apology. At least this minister has the guts to stand up in this House and apologise.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Everton, you are warned under standing order 253A for your continual interjections. If you persist I will take the appropriate action. That applies to anyone else who tries to talk over the top of a person who is answering a question or a person who is asking a question. I accept reasonable interjections, but not a rabble.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Now I expect her to get on with her job. The Deputy Premier and I have made it very clear to the minister this morning that there will be no more chances. She needs to ensure that everything is in order and she gets on with her job of delivering for the people of Queensland in the agriculture sector. The Minister for Agriculture is doing exactly that. In our most recent budget we saw one of the best budgets ever for the primary industry sector in this state. She has been travelling the length and breadth of this state. She has been out there talking to farmers—something that we do not see those opposite doing.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The question to the Premier was about what she knew when she appointed the minister. The question is about the Premier's integrity. It is not even so much about the Minister for Agriculture; it is about the Premier's integrity, what she knew and what she did.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you member for Callide, I hear your point of order. I ask the Premier to make her answer relevant. Do you have anything further to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: No.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Ministers

Mr NICHOLLS: My second question is also to the Premier. Under the Premier's regime Queensland has a transport minister who cannot run our trains and knows nothing, a child safety minister who cannot run her department, a housing minister who prefers to take houses away from Queenslanders over building new ones and now an agriculture minister who does not pay her bill for three years. When will the Premier enforce standards for her ministers that Queenslanders deserve and expect?

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. There are clear imputations in the question being asked by the Leader of the Opposition. He has not framed the question in a way that will allow the Premier to answer it in any other way. I ask for your ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: I have the option of either ruling the question out of order or allowing the Leader of the Opposition to rephrase the question. I will ask the Leader of the Opposition to rephrase the question.

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is still to the Premier. Given the record of performance of her cabinet, when will the Premier enforce standards for her ministers that Queenslanders deserve and expect?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I am very happy to talk about standards because I do expect high standards from my cabinet. What I have asked all of my cabinet to do is get on with delivering for the people of Queensland, which the Queensland public voted us in to do. We were elected with a very clear mandate to restore front-line services and to—

Mr McEachan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Premier, I know I am interrupting your thoughts. Member for Redlands, you have had a pretty good go this morning. You are now warned under standing order 253A.

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Albert, you are also now warned under standing order 253A. If you persist I will take the appropriate action.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We were elected to restore the front-line services that were savagely cut by those opposite. When we talk about standards I only have to look opposite to see the standards that were inflicted by the former government when they were in office. Let us talk about a few of those standards. The standard of the former attorney-general, the member for Kawana, was picking fights with the legal community right across this state.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Premier, I would urge you to keep your answer relevant to the question and not to debate the issue.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Of course, we have seen Queensland's worst treasurer, the Leader of the Opposition, and his waste of taxpayers' money—\$2.6 billion—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Premier, I do not find that relevant. The question is in relation to your ministers. Do you have anything further to add?

Ms PALASZCZUK: No.

Biofuels Industry

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is of the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on the biofuels industry in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Maryborough for that very important question. On this side of the House we are determined to grow the Queensland economy and create jobs for Queenslanders. One of the clearest ways we can do that is by developing a brand new industry in this state which is a biofuels industry. We heard today from the Treasurer that our LNG exports are up. Who created the LNG industry in this state? It was a former Labor government. We talk about standing on our record, creating new industries and developing jobs for Queenslanders—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide, you are now warned under standing order 253A. If you had already been warned, you would have been the first to take a walk. That warning applies to everyone.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Interjections—

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Premier, I apologise for interrupting you. Member for Burleigh, you are warned under standing order 253A. If you persist, you will take a walk.

Ms PALASZCZUK: When it comes to interjections from the member for Callide, let's talk about standards and the wasting of taxpayers' money on charter flights when he was the deputy premier of this state. I am happy to talk about his waste of taxpayers' money—nearly \$600,000 for charter flights to and from his electorate. He could not catch commercial flights. He was too lazy to catch commercial flights.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We could also go through the audit report for the Royalties for the Regions. That was another doozy. Getting back to biofuels, as we know, we were very lucky to have the US Navy come to Parliament House and sign a memorandum of understanding with the Queensland government. Today I can advise the House that on Tuesday, 6 December the US Navy will be coming back to Queensland to further facilitate the development of a biofuels industry in this state. They did not want to wait until next year. They wanted to come back and get on with the job and continue to work with us because we know how important it is to have a biofuels industry for this state.

I can confirm that Thomas Hicks, the Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy, will be attending. We will also have a keynote speaker in Professor Ian O'Hara. We want to see industry as well as members of the banking community come along because now is the time to progress this to the next stage. We have already been able to attract Southern Oil up here to Queensland—I think they are renaming themselves Northern Oil as we speak—once again creating jobs in Gladstone. I am very pleased the member for Maryborough asked that question because we know how it can create jobs in Maryborough as well as Gladstone, as well as Townsville and, of course, Mackay. On this side of the House we are 100 per cent behind the biofuels industry. I hope those opposite will get on board as well because it is very important that we have bipartisan support when it comes to developing a new and emerging industry right here in Queensland.

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. I refer the minister to her ministerial statement made in this House yesterday regarding her overdue debts to the Bundaberg Regional Council. Can the minister assure the House that her position as minister is not compromised by any further outstanding debts that should have been paid long ago?

Ms DONALDSON: I thank the member for the question. I have made a statement on this matter and I will refer to the statement that I have already made.

Southport Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Court

Mr POWER: Mr Speaker, as you may know, the people of Logan are very interested in preventing domestic and family violence. My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier inform the House of the government's progress regarding the nearby-to-Logan Southport Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Court trial?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Logan for that very important question. As I mentioned in the House this morning, both the minister, Shannon Fentiman, and I attended the COAG summit—the first of its kind in Australia—that was held here in Queensland. It is fantastic that Queensland was able to host that summit. We had practitioners from all around Australia come to address very important issues. At that summit I had the privilege of being able to speak to the Prime Minister in front of all of the other premiers about our trial of the specialist court at Southport. I want to thank Minister Fentiman and also the Attorney-General for their cooperative efforts in making sure that that court is actually working.

We allocated \$6.1 million to that trial. What we have seen in the first year is that some 3,548 applications for protection orders were lodged. In fact, the volume of cases coming before that court has meant that we have had to put on a second magistrate. We were able to showcase how this works because not only do we have magistrates who understand the issues of domestic and family violence but we also have an integrated support service, which is very important.

I believe that if we continue to roll out these courts across our state we will change women's and families' lives for the better. My government has allocated \$40 million to look at rolling out these courts across the state. We have an evaluation trial happening at the moment. Everybody in this House should be proud of the work that we are doing. I know there is bipartisan support for domestic and family violence and we need to continue that now and into the future.

I want to end by saying that I did have the opportunity to speak to Rosie Batty personally about this very important issue. What she said very clearly to me when I first met her at a COAG meeting was that women get lost in the maze of legal processes. Why do they get lost in the maze? Because they have to keep retelling their story to new people. That is not only emotionally draining but also a very complicated matter that they have to keep telling to new people. To have the integrated service working together at Southport has been a testament to the work of the magistrates—Magistrate Strofield, who is there at the moment doing outstanding work, and the other magistrate. I think everyone should be pleased as we roll this out across our state. Hopefully other states will also trial this because it is making a change for the better.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Indooroopilly to ask his question, I am informed that we have students from the Caningeraba State School in the electorate of Burleigh observing our proceedings. Welcome.

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

Mr EMERSON: My question is to the Premier. Given the Minister for Agriculture was unable or unwilling to answer the member for Nanango's question, is the Premier aware of any other debts or obligations of the minister?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. I am not advised of any other outstanding debts. If there are any and you have them, please let us know, because she has advised both the Deputy Premier and me that there are no further outstanding debts. She has made a statement, and I have told her very clearly that I want her to get on with the job of her ministerial responsibilities of focusing on agriculture in this state.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, you are now warned under standing order 253A. If you are being provoked by someone on the other side—is it the member for Gladstone? You are now warned under standing order 253A. If you both persist, you will both take a walk together.

Cross River Rail

Ms PEASE: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier please update the House on the public support for the Cross River Rail and if there are any alternative views on this matter?

Ms TRAD: I thank the member for Lytton for the question. I know that, like all members on this side of the House, we actually do believe in driving nation-building infrastructure for Queensland and Queenslanders. I know that the member for Lytton understands what Cross River Rail will mean for the people in her electorate for their commute from Manly to the CBD—14 minutes shaved off their journey. When going two ways, it will mean half an hour more with their family every day. That is what public transport infrastructure delivers—great opportunities for Queenslanders to be connected to places where they work, where they visit and back home to their families.

This is our No. 1 infrastructure project. It will remake our region, remake our city, and this side of the House is completely dedicated to it. It has more money allocated to it than any other government in Queensland has ever allocated to it. We are moving ahead. We have now seen the Commonwealth jump on board with a \$10 million allocation as well as a commitment to partner with us in the delivery of the project. Even at the council level, the Brisbane City Council, led by the LNP, has jumped on board. In fact, Deputy Mayor Adrian Schrinner said in relation to Cross River Rail, 'Yeah, look, it's never been a question. We support the project.' What you have is the Palaszczuk Labor government driving this project ahead. You have the Turnbull LNP government partnering with us to do it. You have the LNP Brisbane City Council saying they support it. They will work with us. The only people not supporting this project are those opposite.

We saw the LNP when in government do exactly what they are doing now but with more devastating consequences. This project stalled for three years because Campbell Newman and his then treasurer and transport minister—the member for Clayfield and the member for Indooroopilly—decided not to support Cross River Rail. In fact, they tore up an agreement with the federal Labor government to move this project forward. We would be building Cross River Rail today had they honoured their commitment to the people of Queensland and to the federal Labor government at the time.

I am reminded that when the member for Indooroopilly, the transport minister at the time, put out his call on Facebook about something exciting coming to Queensland, not one of the comments was about Cross River Rail or the Bus and Train tunnel. In fact, Kirk Von Rostock said that he thought the minister was bringing a time machine to Queensland so we could all travel back and get rid of the government.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the member for Burnett, I am informed that we have students and teachers from the Loganlea TAFE in the electorate of Logan observing our proceedings. Welcome.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Mr BENNETT: My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. I refer the minister to the over \$550 million in loans to Queensland farmers through the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority and the various fees and charges administered by the department, and I ask: what are the expectations of the department in regard to non-payment of fees and charges and outstanding loans? Do these expectations create a double standard in regard to the issues referred to in the minister's statement yesterday?

Ms DONALDSON: I have already made a statement on this matter this morning. As I said earlier, I refer to the statement I have made. I am very happy to talk about an unrelated issue around my department's budget, because the financial management of my department is something that we have turned around since the previous government took to it with a hatchet. I am very happy to talk about their financial management of my department. In the 2016-17 budget we have allocated—

Ms Simpson interjected.

Ms DONALDSON:—more resources and more spending, and we have stabilised employee numbers after three years of cuts and disruption under the LNP. If those opposite want to talk about budget management—

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Minister, I apologise for interrupting. Member for Maroochydore, you are warned under standing order 253A for those interjections. Member for Chatsworth, you have had a good run this morning. You are also warned under standing order 253A. If either of you persist, you will get the appropriate action. I call the minister.

Ms DONALDSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is clear that the financial management under the LNP that led to severe cuts to personnel and programs led to a reduced service to farmers, and those on that side of the House pretend to be the friend of farmers. Our food and fibre producers have been talking to me about the cuts that they made to this department—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the minister.

Ms DONALDSON: No organisation can function to the same standard that is expected by producers and food and fibre producers while they have lost almost a quarter of their staff. The previous government argued that they cut non-essential office workers, but that is just nonsense.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for Ferny Grove and Leader of the Opposition, you are both warned under standing order 253A for your interjections. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action under standing order 253A. Minister, do you have anything further you would like to add?

Ms DONALDSON: Yes, I do, Mr Speaker. As I was saying, between July 2012 and June 2015, the workforce in Biosecurity Queensland was reduced by over 26 per cent which was a result of the cuts made by those opposite. As I travel around the state I have representations from members—

Mr BENNETT: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. It is all very interesting, but we are talking about \$550 million in loans and the expectations of the department for its recovery. If I could have that answered, that would be appreciated.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have not been able to concentrate on all of the minister's contribution. I will allow her some latitude. Minister, do you have anything further you would like to add?

Ms DONALDSON: I would like to finally say that I find it interesting that those opposite are suddenly interested in the budget of the department and what is going on in my department when they slashed so much—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You are not to debate the question. We will now move on. I call the member for Townsville for his question.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Hinchinbrook, you are also warned under standing order 253A for your interjections. They are unnecessary and provocative, and if you persist I will take the appropriate action.

Public Service

Mr STEWART: My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer advise the House of any alternative approaches to managing Public Service numbers?

Mr PITT: I thank the honourable member for the question. We know that the LNP have done little more in 18 months than throw a few rocks over this side. They have not come up with an economic policy let alone an economic plan. The Leader of the Opposition, as we know, always talks about people as numbers. We all remember his very arrogant and dismissive attitude as Treasurer when he said the only real job is in the private sector.

Who can forget the member for Clayfield talking about a 'right sized' Public Service based on the year 2000? The House has to give some consideration about what happened in the year 2000. Let us go on a trip down memory lane to remember what was going on in the year 2000. Peter Beattie was the then premier of Queensland and Santo Santoro was the member for Clayfield. IT consultants were sunning themselves on the beach after making an absolute fortune getting everyone ready for Y2K. Nicole Kidman was married to Tom Cruise, not Keith Urban. Caitlyn Jenner was still Bruce Jenner. President Clinton left the White House—amazingly, on his own terms. George W Bush won the presidential election and began a long career reading children's books upside down.

In 2000 the member for Callide was an angry young man. Well, he is still angry—you know where I am going with this, Mr Speaker. In the year 2000 the average television screen size was 76 centimetres and most screens were not flat. The shadow Treasurer was still working at the *Australian*—dealing in facts as opposed to the cherrypicker he has become. The *Courier-Mail* was a broadsheet and the *Brisbane Times* had not arrived yet, and that is only because Malcolm Turnbull had not invented the internet yet.

In the year 2000 the first iPod was released and proudly boasted that it could hold 1,000 songs. Justin Timberlake was still a member of the boy band 'N Sync. The big hit on the music charts was *Who Let the Dogs Out*—and that is what they said about the last government over the last three years.

Mr WATTS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. We have seen magic tricks and now stand-up comedy from the Treasurer.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Treasurer, can you come back to relevance and answer the question.

Mr PITT: I will, Mr Speaker. The question was asking about any policies on the size of the Public Service. We know it is a deliberate policy of the member for Clayfield to have the 'right sized' Public Service. At the same time we know Graham Quirk was only in his second decade at the Brisbane City Council, and Caloundra State High School accidentally elected the member for Kawana as school captain. There was no Twitter or Facebook, and Lance Armstrong was still a cycling hero, not a drug cheat. Saddam Hussein was still in charge of Iraq. Airport security was far more relaxed pre 9/11. The point of this is that a lot has changed since the year 2000, and it is absolutely galling for the member for Clayfield to say that the 'right sized' Public Service existed in the year 2000. If he did that today, that would mean sacking 8,000 people to get to the same size it was in the year 2000. We know that when it comes to the Leader of the Opposition the more things change, the more things stay the same.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the member for Glass House, I understand the member for Maryborough has been disorderly in his interjections and behaviour this morning. I warn the member for Maryborough under standing order 253A. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

Queensland Rail

Mr POWELL: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport. We understand that Queensland Rail has already advised TransLink that more services are set to be cut tomorrow. Given the minister's promise to be open and transparent, why has the minister not informed Queensland commuters whether it is 50, 75 or 100 services being cut tomorrow?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for Glass House for his question. What I want to be clear about, as I informed the House yesterday and I informed the House on Tuesday, is that I am very keen to ensure that the House continues to be updated about the challenges that the interim timetable is facing and the pathway that we have to a sustainable timetable. That is very important. What I can report, as I have been advised this morning while I have been in the House, is that we have had an on-time running performance in the peak this morning of 97 per cent. That is good news. However, I have equally just been advised that we are facing the prospect of a less than perfect level of service tomorrow. Announcements will be made around that through the normal courses today.

Where we are all headed to, frankly, is the most important thing. That is what we are doing in relation to the implementation of a reliable timetable—a timetable that people can rely upon. That is why I want to table a letter to the Premier of the state from the acting CEO of Queensland Rail. It has also been copied to me as minister and to the Treasurer as the other shareholding minister. In the letter, there are commitments made around the publishing of a timetable tomorrow, operational from Monday to Sunday, that will be the working timetable until early in the new year. I table that document for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Letter, undated, from the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Rail, Mr Neil Scales, to the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, regarding the Queensland Rail timetable [1987].

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, you have not stopped interjecting. They are repetitive. You are warned under standing order 253A. If you persist, I will take the appropriate action.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: In relation to the timetable tomorrow, we are acting and operating currently under the interim timetable that was recommended to me by the former CEO and the former chair. As I have made clear, that timetable is unreliable. It is not up to scratch. That is why we are going through a vigorous process and I am working very closely with the acting CEO to develop, deliver and announce tomorrow the reliable timetable that we can see being in place, based upon the crewing challenges that we currently experience.

Dental Services, Federal Funding

Mr BROWN: My question is directed to the health minister. Will the health minister please advise the House of any anticipated consequences for Queenslanders of the federal government's decision to change the funding model for dental services?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Capalaba for his question. I know he appreciates the importance of delivering good dental care, not only because of the benefits that come from dental care directly but also because of the general health benefits that come to individuals if their health care is kept up to speed. One of the great disappointments I have had since becoming the Minister for Health is that I have continually seen the Commonwealth government—whether it be the Abbott government or now the Turnbull government—walk away from their responsibilities to properly fund health care in this state.

What do they do? They fail to properly fund and adhere to the National Health Reform Agreement. The net effect of that is that \$10 billion will come out of the health system in Queensland for public health care. What do they do, as the Premier so ably pointed out yesterday? They fail to renew the national partnership agreement on mental health, cutting \$10.4 million out of services to some of the most vulnerable people in Queensland who are facing serious mental health issues. Now the cuts come to dental care. The proposal by the Commonwealth government to replace the National Partnership Agreement on Adult Public Dental Services and the Child Dental Benefits Schedule with the Child and Adult Public Dental Scheme is designed to do two things—firstly, to cut \$200 million nationally from the Commonwealth's commitment to public dental health care across Queensland; and, secondly, to transfer responsibility for dental health care to the states. The Commonwealth is moving away from it altogether, from something it has been a part of for decades. The net effect for Queensland is a cut on our calculation of \$22 million a year.

The Commonwealth have no idea about what they are doing. They think they are going to get this bill through the Commonwealth parliament in three sitting weeks. The Commonwealth Senate is in complete disarray. The Commonwealth health minister, Sussan Ley, continues to tell the states and territories, 'We'll get it through.' It is a farce. No-one believes that can happen.

What have we heard from the members opposite? I am pleased to say that the crickets are back. We have heard nothing from them—complete silence—including those members who represent distant communities, rural communities and regional communities, those who need public dental health care

because that is the only dental health care they get in Queensland. The silence is deafening. No-one in the LNP is willing to stand up. They did try to send the member for Callide down to Canberra to stand up for Queensland. There he was, logging on, trying to get the nomination form—‘Sorry. Access to the website denied.’ He rang up and was told, ‘Sorry. This number is disconnected.’ He could not be nominated because he is contributing so much to the Queensland parliament that they did not want to let him go!

This is a very serious matter that our state faces. The waiting lists will blow out. They took credit for the federal money that Labor put in. They claimed a reduction in the long waits that was funded by the federal Labor government, and now when the money goes they say nothing. I give notice that this will have a huge impact on the health care of Queenslanders and it will have a huge impact on dental health care. We will not be able to fill the gap. It is not possible for the states to do that. Waiting lists will go up. Now is the time for the Commonwealth to extend the current scheme to work with the states and get proper funding for dental care back on track.

(Time expired)

Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games

Mrs SMITH: My question is to the Premier. I refer to media reports today that Helen Gluer lost her job as CEO of Queensland Rail because she failed—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I cannot hear the question. I ask the member for Mount Ommaney to repeat the question.

Mrs SMITH: My question is to the Premier.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister for Industrial Relations, you are warned under standing order 253A for those unnecessary interjections. Member for Mount Ommaney, will you start again please.

Mrs SMITH: I refer to media reports today that Helen Gluer lost her job as CEO of Queensland Rail because she failed to see the report about critical driver shortage. If the CEO lost her job because of such a failure, why shouldn't the embattled transport minister lose his job for the same failure?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As we know, the CEO of Queensland Rail and the chair of the Queensland Rail board resigned. The CEO of Queensland Rail has responsibility for the operational aspects of the train network in South-East Queensland. They failed to act on reports that were not given to the government. Let me also make it very clear that we have heard the Leader of the Opposition stand up in this House today and admit that people left their jobs at Queensland Rail, that they were sacked. He may call them voluntary retirements but they lost their jobs.

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Premier is misleading the House. I ask that she withdraw that false claim.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I withdraw but I want to get to the—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I withdraw. The Leader of the Opposition has outlined today that there were cuts, and I want to see the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Premier is misleading the House. I did not make the statement the Premier is quoting. She is misleading the House. I ask that she withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Will you withdraw, please, Premier?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I withdraw. Today I am asking the Leader of the Opposition to cooperate fully with the Phillip Strachan investigation. That means very clearly that the people of Queensland and this parliament have the right to see the documents that the former government considered when they gutted Queensland Rail. I want to know for sure. I want to see the truth about what happened in relation to the train drivers under their term of government. The Leader of the Opposition has failed to state on Tuesday, he has failed to state on Wednesday and today he can finally say once and for all whether he is going to produce those documents. We want to see what impact the former treasurer had on the functioning of Queensland Rail.

This is a former government that has a record. We only have to go back to the person whom they employed to run the transport department, Michael Caltabiano. How much taxpayers' money was Michael Caltabiano paid out?

Ms Trad: In total.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In total for seven months work it was \$720,000! In relation to Queensland Rail and the train network, I clearly tasked the transport minister and the acting CEO with fixing it up and providing certainty for customers across our network. Let us contrast that very clearly with the member for Indooroopilly. If honourable members recall, in his day the member for Indooroopilly wanted to cut around a hundred bus services from the network. Did the former treasurer fix that up? Did the former deputy premier fix that up? No, they did not. What did they do? They outsourced it to the Lord Mayor to fix up their mess. That is what they did. I have tasked the transport minister with fixing it. He is working diligently to do it. I have confidence that he will deliver.

(Time expired)

DestinationQ

Mrs GILBERT: My question is for the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. I ask: will the minister update the House on the recent DestinationQ forum held recently in the beautiful city of Mackay last week?

Ms JONES: I thank the member for Mackay and the Mackay community for welcoming us so warmly to Mackay for the DestinationQ forum, which was well attended by more than 330 delegates only six weeks after our Connecting to Asia forum in Cairns. It is wonderful to talk about the great work that happened at DestinationQ. I do want to get on the record my particular thanks to the Whitsundays mayor, Andrew Wilcox, a great mayor; Mackay mayor, Greg Williamson, also someone who has a passionate interest in tourism; the Tourism Whitsundays CEO, Craig Turner, a great guy working so collaboratively with everybody in the industry up there and seeing improvements; and Mackay Tourism's Tas Webber, who is also doing a fantastic job. What we are seeing in that region—and the member for Mackay is nodding—is a collaboration that has been unprecedented in recent times and this is delivering results.

Why are we on this side of the House so passionate about tourism? Because we know that tourism growth delivers jobs for Queenslanders no matter where they live in this state. It does not matter what part of Queensland I go to, members of this side of the House are out there working with their local mayors and local tourism organisations to deliver tourism jobs and new opportunities in this industry. The reason they have been able to do that—

Mr Springborg: They have to work harder to get their rates.

Ms JONES: We hear interjections about rates. Let us talk about how the people of Queensland rate the LNP here in Queensland. Let us talk about how they rated them after kicking them to the kerb after one term, which was bitterly disappointing for them because they all thought they had 10 years clocked up. It was because of that arrogance in thinking they were going to be there for 10 years that the people of Queensland rated them by kicking them into opposition after one term. What we are doing and what the Premier has said very clearly is in contrast: we were elected to deliver jobs and restore the front-line services cut by the Leader of the Opposition when he was 'Toecutter Tim', the Treasurer of Queensland. That is what we are doing.

In the tourism space what did we see of the Leader of the Opposition? What was his record in tourism? Apparently, he was building a pillar, but he cut \$188 million out of future funding for Tourism and Events Queensland. This means funding cuts for every single regional tourism organisation in Queensland right across this state. That meant job cuts in the tourism industry at a time when we know we can deliver real jobs growth in this industry.

They can come in here. They can carp from the sidelines. They can sledge from across the chamber. However, what we will do is get on with the job of creating work for the people of Queensland. We saw the Leader of the Opposition deliver a record high unemployment figure in Queensland—the highest in 11 years—and he comes into this chamber and lectures us about our record of delivering jobs for the people of Queensland. I will stand by the Premier of Queensland and our record on jobs any day of the week.

(Time expired)

Cairns Hospital and Health Service

Mr PYNE: My question is of the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. I ask: in the wake of the highly controversial resignation of the Cairns health board, has the minister considered that the current budget application may not be enough to meet the needs of the CHHS area?

Mr DICK: We are confident that we are working through the issues relating to the deficit at the Cairns hospital and health service. The interim administrator, the director-general of Health, is working through those issues. We are looking at how we got to this point and the E&Y report, which was released. As I undertook to the House, it was tabled in the House so all members could look at it. That report makes it clear that there were services that were initiated by the hospital and health service and staff who were employed who were not funded under the funding agreement that we have with the hospital and health service. We are looking through that carefully and methodically. We are working with representatives of employees. I am pleased to report to the member for Cairns that we are working through unions that represent employees. The consultative process that the administrator is adopting is a very open one, which is what I expect of all hospital and health services. I made it very clear to all hospital and health services that the local consultative forums with the unions and representatives of workers are very important to the effective administration of health services across Queensland.

The history of this is that the government does increase funding to services in Cairns. We increased funding by 16 per cent over two years. The budget of the Cairns hospital and health service went up \$110 million over two years—nine per cent and seven per cent in two financial years. That is a significant increase, well above the rate of inflation and well above the growth of government expenditure generally. That is because we see the need for those services in Cairns and we work closely with them.

I say to the member for Cairns that what we must do in our health system is manage to budget and manage to performance because if we do not, the budget will blow out. If we allow the 10 per cent deficit in Cairns to be extrapolated over the entire \$12 billion or thereabouts that we provide to hospital and health services each year, it would be a \$1.2 billion deficit at the end of the financial year, and that is not what we expect of hospital and health services. They are required under the Hospital and Health Boards Act to be accountable financially for the delivery of services and they are required to be accountable publicly for performance. We are going to continue to monitor that.

As I said at the time, there will be no slashing and burning, and that has been the case. We are working progressively through that. We think we can get the \$80 million deficit down without disturbing too many services in Cairns. We are confident of that. We will work forward now through the administrator and the executive about building service planning for the future but within budget and within the service agreement we have with them.

Justice System, Resources

Mr FURNER: My question is to the Attorney-General, the Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. I ask: will the Attorney-General please inform the House about this government's commitment to resourcing the justice system and compare it to any alternative practices?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Ferny Grove for his question. In common with those on this side of the parliament he understands the vital role that our justice system plays in Queensland and, sadly, those on the other side do not. In listening to the questions over the last few days and the issues raised in relation to ministers of this government, we have to at least acknowledge the hide of those on the other side—the number of own goals knowing who they had sitting in their cabinet in government such as the former attorney-general, the member for Kawana, who was one of the worst attorneys-general that this state has ever seen. They did not just put him into cabinet; they retained him and when things got really bad for him they just put him in witness protection. We have even heard from the member for Ashgrove a number of times that those of us on this side should show a bit of gratitude to the member for Kawana. We do have to acknowledge that, in part, it is because of him and his efforts over three years that we sit here in government today, and we thank the member for Kawana for that.

More seriously, that former attorney-general did so much damage to the reputation of our courts and the justice system in this state while in government, did so much damage to the reputation and the relationship with the legal profession—in fact, the LNP in government picked fights with everybody. It is not just the member for Kawana who, as attorney-general and minister for justice, saw significant cuts to the justice system; it is the Leader of the Opposition as treasurer in that government who oversaw and supported those cuts through those budgets. What were those cuts? In their term in government they cut over \$170 million from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, a total of 510 full-time-equivalent jobs.

As part of these savage cuts \$70 million was ripped from the courts and court services and \$9 million in planned funding for the Court Diversion Program and more than 20 jobs were gone; 195 court support and admin support staff were thrown on the scrap heap, ripping out another \$35 million;

\$26.5 million was cut from youth court diversion programs and 65 dedicated staff who were set aside for court ordered youth justice conferencing were sacked. The record of the LNP is shameful. In contrast, this government has overseen the biggest investment in our courts and justice system in decades. It is legacy that we are proud of, as opposed to those opposite and what they left behind.

Domestic and Family Violence, Shelters

Ms BATES: My question without notice is to the Minister for Housing. I table an email from DVConnect CEO Di Mangan which confirms that the government is pushing domestic violence victims away from specialist private shelters.

Tabled paper: Email, undated, from the Chief Executive Officer, DVConnect, Ms Diane Mangan, relating to demand for shelter placements [1988].

Minister, why is this government pushing vulnerable victims into motels instead of providing these victims with the support they need?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for the question. I am advised there is no directive not to refer women to private shelters; however, the safety of every woman in Queensland is paramount to this government. I want to extend congratulations to the Premier and the minister for the work they have done in this space. We know that the most dangerous time for women who are fleeing domestic and family violence is when they make the difficult decision to leave that relationship. Often what they are seeking is a safe place to call home. You cannot deliver a safe place to call home when you fail to deliver a housing program in this state.

At the height of the leadership of former minister Mander and the Newman-Nicholls government those opposite built 31 houses across this state. This Labor government has a \$452 million program this year which is delivering 400 new homes for women and children escaping domestic and family violence. DVConnect will always assess the safety, potential placement and most suitable accommodation for women escaping violence and direct them—

Ms Fentiman: As they should!

Mr de BRENNI: As they should; I take the interjection from the minister. They should always assess the most appropriate place to send them taking into account their individual circumstances. It is difficult when the options have been limited after three years of the LNP government failing to deliver a safe and secure place for those women to call home. This Labor government has built new domestic and family violence shelters for women fleeing domestic and family violence right across this state. There are many reasons why women and children are placed in temporary motel accommodation. Our priorities are to find a safe place for those women and children as quickly as possible—

Ms BATES: I rise to a point of order on relevance. I asked the minister if he can explain why his department is directing DVConnect to not refer. I also refer to the email that I tabled from Di Mangan which clearly identifies that.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister is answering the question. Whilst you may not like the answer, his answer is relevant. I call the minister.

Mr de BRENNI: Thank you for the opportunity to continue to answer the question. For the member for Mudgeeraba I will repeat that there is no directive not to refer women to private shelters. Our aim is to find a safe and secure place for these women to call home as quickly as we possibly can in their time of desperation and need. We will send them wherever we can to make sure that they are not at risk of further harm from perpetrators of domestic and family violence. There is no directive not to do that. Our commitment to the women and children of this state is to find safe places for them as quickly as we can, and that is exactly what this Labor government is doing.

Housing and Public Works

Mr HARPER: My question is also to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. Will the minister please advise the House of the government's approach to the delivery of housing and public works and how this differs from previous approaches?

Mr de BRENNI: This is an opportune time to follow up those comments, because the member for Thuringowa knows that the approach of this Labor government is to build. We build things. We are building a stadium in North Queensland, we built some of this nation's most significant transport infrastructure and we are building homes for vulnerable Queenslanders. In fact, we are supporting a pipeline of construction work in local communities from the Gold Coast through to Far North Queensland and out into our regions valued at \$452 million this year, so that is the housing and public works capital program.

Our approach is to maintain responsibility for those vulnerable Queenslanders who are seeking a place to call home, and this year we assisted over 100,000 households find a safe, secure and affordable place to call home. The approach of those opposite was to slash, hack and prepare to give it all away. Then they wreaked untold damage, making all of the work that the staff in the Department of Housing and Public Works do that much more deserving of our recognition. I want to talk for a moment about their record on QBuild and our approach. They cut 1,654 jobs from QBuild, one-third of them in regional communities, which included around 40 per cent of the workforce in the BAS depot at Bundaberg where the shadow minister—who had the audacity to commit to them that he would protect their jobs and then ensured that 40 per cent of that workforce lost their jobs—was formerly employed. That is why we have taken this approach and supported the workforce, because the QBuild workforce are the people that the member for Dalrymple would know quite well when they attended after Cyclone Larry to clean up that community. The member for Barron River will remember when the QBuild staff turned up in droves to clean up after Cyclone Yasi, and the member for Bundaberg knows quite well that after Cyclone Oswald they were there on the ground restoring essential services.

We are investing in local communities; they made cuts. In GoPrint 53 jobs were cut; SDS, 98 jobs; procurement transformation, 44 jobs; Townsville accommodation office, five jobs; and they cut the public housing program to 31. When Labor was last in government we built 2,604 homes in one year. Queensland became the only jurisdiction not contributing to the National Housing Research Program through the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute when funding was stripped by the Newman-Nicholls government. Today I conclude by announcing that the Palaszczuk government will establish Queensland as a key contributor to a new era in housing and homelessness policy. I announce that we are rejoining the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute because if you really want to make a difference you have to have a way of measuring—

(Time expired)

TAFE, Information Technology Contracts

Mr PERRETT: My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. I refer to the report in the *Gladstone Observer* on 22 September 2016 and ask the minister to explain how the termination of hundreds of TAFE IT contractors across Queensland and the outsourcing of positions to the Philippines supports the development of the IT industry and small business in Queensland.

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I am happy for him to table the article that he is relying on so that I can give a thorough answer in relation to the details he is talking about. I believe that is a more appropriate way to address this particular issue. I know there have been issues in relation to the IT contracts that TAFE has been dealing with, and they have been keeping me informed of the progress in relation to those contractual arrangements. To give the member a more thorough answer, I would ask that he table the article he is referring to.

Research and Development

Mr WHITING: My question is of the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy. Will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting research in Queensland?

Mr SPEAKER: I call the minister. Two minutes.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. I know that he has a strong passion for ensuring that Queensland is ready for the economies of the future, and that is the commitment from this side of the chamber. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that Queensland is ready for the economy of the future—the knowledge economy. That is why we have our \$405 million Advance Queensland initiative—a whole-of-government initiative—understanding that we need to be moving very quickly to ensure we are prepared for what is on the horizon.

I am very pleased to announce that today I am opening the second round of our Research Fellowships and PhD Scholarships programs. The four different categories are: research fellowships, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research fellowships, PhD scholarships, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander PhD scholarships. In just over 12 months we have seen 41 research fellowships under our Research Fellowships and PhD Scholarships programs. This is a commitment to understanding that research will be an important part of where we see our future. In very stark contrast, in the entire three years of LNP government we saw no more than 14 research fellowships supported. We have

supported 41 research fellowships in just over 12 months. Also, the first budget of the former government cut \$50 million from science and innovation. Some 950 staff were cut from the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation—the very department we are relying on to ensure we are prepared for the future. We have committed \$59 million out of our Advance Queensland funding to support 748 jobs. That is eight times the investment of the former LNP government and 18 times the number of jobs in that time.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Further Answer to Question; Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (11.30 am), by leave: I wish to clarify that I was advised yesterday by the member for Bundaberg about the issue of outstanding rates. As the member indicated last night, those outstanding rates were paid yesterday.

PETITION

Motion to Take Note



Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (11.32 am): I move—

That the House take note of a paper petition from 15,016 petitioners requesting the House to support the Queensland government's efforts in lobbying the Turnbull LNP federal government to guarantee that the current School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities in Queensland will continue to be made available under the NDIS from 1 January 2020.

In addition to the 15,016 signatures on the paper petition there were also 5,119 signatures on an e-petition. The total number of signatures on the paper and e-petitions is 20,135. This is one of the largest petitions I have seen in my time in this House. It is right that this petition is the subject of the first debate in this House under new standing orders for petitions with over 10,000 signatures. This history-making petition and the 20,135 signatures emphasise the critical importance to so many Queenslanders of the current School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities. I am very proud that I am able to stand up with other members of this House to support kids with a disability in Queensland.

Located in the Morayfield state electorate is the Caboolture Special School. The Caboolture Special School is Queensland's largest special school, and I acknowledge the outstanding role the teachers, staff and supporters of this magnificent school play in the lives of so many local young people. For many years I have worked very closely with the special school community. I know the students and the staff very well. I also know that so many students and their families rely on the current School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities.


Disappointingly, I have heard some negative commentary from the opposition about this petition. I am sure that we will hear some more negativity from the LNP in this debate today. What this negativity highlights is a fundamental ignorance of the importance of this program and a heartless disregard for the severe consequences which will flow if this program is not continued beyond 2019 by the Turnbull LNP government.

For those who do not know, the current School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities is a critical part of a student's daily routine, and the bond between the bus drivers and the students is strong and genuine. Bus operators like Rob and Jane Stevens from Ace Buses and the Townsend family from Townsend buses truly care for the students. They know the students by name and the students know them. The bus drivers know each student's personality, they know the healthcare needs of each student, they know each student's disability and they have a genuine passion for ensuring that each student receives the support, attention and care they need as a result of his or her disability. It is this relationship that makes the difference for these students. Without this relationship, many students would miss an important part of their daily routine and many students would not be school-ready as a result.

Daria Ward attends Caboolture Special School. Daria's mum, Trinna, says that the program has been a godsend for her family. Trinna says that Daria loves the buses because the bus operators always greet her with a smile and are friendly towards her. Trinna says—

They miss her when she's not on the bus. They have a companionship, which means leaving her parents but in a safe way. It gives her routine and teaches her life skills, because she knows she has to be ready by a certain time ...

Like me, many Queenslanders—over 20,000 signatories on a petition—are deeply concerned about what the current School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities will look like under the National Disability Insurance Scheme. From 2020 the responsibility for the program transfers to the Turnbull LNP government under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and the Turnbull LNP government is yet to provide any clear information regarding the program. As a result, many parents, school communities and transport operators have serious concerns about how the assistance program for students with a disability will be delivered post 2019. Anyone who cares to look into this program will quickly realise how important it is and how a user-pays system will not work. Please stand up for kids with a disability in Queensland and support this program.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.37 am): This week in the House we have seen yet another exceptional display of buck-passing and fearmongering from those opposite, this time in relation to the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This is the most significant reform of a generation when it comes to disability services, but, sadly, those opposite could not resist when they saw an opportunity to play politics and create an issue out of thin air. It is a shameless attempt to blame the federal government for all of their woes and distract from their obvious failings as a government to deliver in the area of disability services.

In a bizarre campaign fuelled by misinformation we have seen the member for Morayfield as the principal petitioner and the member for Ashgrove as the sponsoring member start a petition in relation to school bus funding under the NDIS. The rallying cry of their petition calls for certainty from the federal government that the School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities in Queensland will continue to be available under the NDIS from 1 January 2020.

In typical Labor fashion, we see a Labor government willing to spread misinformation to people in our community who need certainty in a time of unprecedented change. People with disability are increasingly concerned about this misinformation, and I have been contacted to correct the political spin in this petition. The truth of this matter is that the federal government has already confirmed that transport to and from school for people with disability will be covered and can be included under NDIS packages when the rollout is complete.


There will be no changes to the way school transport services are run in the near future. The NDIS is designed to make sure that parents will be able to make decisions in the best interests of their child and their individual needs. Following consultation with the Queensland government and in an effort to ensure stable transition of school transport into the NDIS during the transition period, the existing school transport services administered by the Queensland government will continue to be available. All Australian governments, including the Queensland government, have already agreed that the NDIS is the most appropriate system to fund transport supports. This will include training and support to use the participants' mobility devices where it is viable in public transport; modification to private vehicles and driver assessment and training; costs associated with innovative transport options for people who cannot travel independently or use public transport; costs associated with the use of taxis or private transport for participants who cannot travel independently or use public transport; and transport to and from school or educational facilities where this would not substitute for parental responsibility and no other transport options are appropriate.

This is a broad set of criteria which will cover those who need it most in our state. Given that Queensland has already agreed to these policy principles, Queenslanders could be forgiven for thinking that the members for Morayfield and Ashgrove are either unaware of these policies or simply did not bother to check. I share the federal assistant minister's disappointment that this petition is causing concern and distress among parents and carers of children who are regular users of these bus services which are currently funded by the state government as a result of a baseless misinformation campaign. During the transition period, existing school transport services administered by the Queensland government such as school bus services will continue to be available to all current users. This has already been agreed to as part of the in-kind services provided by the Queensland government. A key objective of the NDIS is to provide people with disability choice and control over the supports and services they access in day-to-day life, and giving them the ability to tailor their transport method to suit their needs will be a key consideration.

In preparation for the full scheme in 2019, I understand the National Disability Insurance Agency is now working to understand how students and their families or carers can be provided with increased levels of choice and control over the school transport services they access. Various options are now being considered and key stakeholders are being consulted, including state governments, which the members for Morayfield and Ashgrove should be aware of. It absolutely beggars belief that, despite this publicly available information which members and the Minister for Disability Services should know, they

are still determined to spread blatant fabrications to people with disability, and the reason is simple: to distract from their own abysmal record in disability services. We on this side of the House understand the importance of disability service funding and the National Disability Insurance Scheme to people with disability. I urge those opposite to stop playing politics, stop their fearmongering and start delivering for people with disabilities in this state.

(Time expired)


 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (11.42 am): I rise to speak to the petition that has been lodged. I do think that petitions play a very important part in providing Queenslanders with a connection to their parliament to have their say on matters that are important to them. As members would know, the very heart of the National Disability Insurance Scheme is about providing people with disability choice and control over the supports and services that they wish to access. By ensuring that people with a disability and their carers receive full access to the support they need, the NDIS is working to the vision of a community that values people with disabilities. For many families, transitioning to the NDIS can be both an exciting and daunting prospect. For those who have not been recipients of a personalised package of care this can be even more so because it is a quantum shift in the way that they may have accessed services in the past, and these sorts of services would include school transportation.

I agree with the member for Mudgeeraba that it is disappointing there is distress and concern in the community regarding the delivery of school bus services for students with disability beyond 2019—information that was available had the Minister for Education sought clarification from her very own federal member who happens to be the federal assistant minister for disability services, but sadly that did not happen. One would think that on the back of families asking genuine questions about the future of school transportation at the very least the minister would have picked up the phone and found out that information directly. She could have even popped in to the assistant minister's office—it is not that far away—but, no, she did not. It would be very concerning if the real intention of the Minister for Education was less about children and more about politics, because people with disability, their families and their carers are not interested in politics. People with disability, their families and their carers do deserve to have their questions around transitional arrangements under the NDIS addressed but without the underbelly of political pointscoring. I can inform the House that in her response to the petition the federal assistant minister for disability services indicated that she had met with the Bus Industry Council to discuss the issues and was very clear that—

... as part of exploring innovative market solutions to services like school transport, that are frequently procured in groups, the Agency has commissioned a pilot through the Centre for Market Design to investigate how participants can interact directly with providers to choose the best way to get their child to and from school each day. The Agency is also open to test alternative models for market commissioning as they work through their consultations.

I would expect that that includes the current model. It would be helpful if the Palaszczuk government worked with the NDIA and the federal government in a productive way so that issues like this that are raised are dealt with in a timely and—

(Time expired)

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (11.45 am): I used all of my discipline not to intervene on the mistruths being peddled by those opposite, particularly the member for Mudgeeraba.

Ms Bates interjected.

Ms JONES: I listened to you in silence.

Ms Bates: No, you did not listen to me in silence!

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

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry, I was distracted.

Mr POWER: I could not hear the education minister for the yelling from the other side of the chamber.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. Resume your seat. Minister, will you resume your contribution and start again please.

Ms JONES: Thank you very much. Let us go through the time line. Let us get the facts on the table, because we had a lot of mistruths just delivered by the member for Mudgeeraba, as is her form. The former LNP government signed over more than \$40 million a year to the NDIS to run transport assistance for students with a disability. That is a decision that it made when it was in government. That is what happened. At that time—

Ms Bates interjected.

Ms JONES: I am getting there. At that time it put in no plans for what that would mean for students with a disability and their families. When you talk to families what we have seen, with more than 20,000 people signing this petition, is that they felt that they did not have clarity about what the service would look like into the future. As I have previously advised this House, on their behalf as the minister I made representations to the federal government and to the NDIA to say 'Can you please keep in place the current services that are being delivered in Queensland under the current arrangements,' including the wonderful bus services that the member for Morayfield mentioned in his contribution.

Ms Bates: Nothing's going to change, and you know it!

Ms JONES: That is right: nothing is going to change in 2019 because I lobbied the federal government to secure the position that we keep the current arrangements in place until 2019.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I apologise for interrupting your speech. Members of the opposition, the minister has an entitlement to speak and to be heard and you are being disruptive. There is a whole list of names of those who have already been warned. I am happy to put you on there if you want to be.

Ms JONES: As I said, I listened to the community. I listened to their concerns and as a responsible minister I made representations to the NDIA and the federal government to keep the current arrangements in place until 2019, and I thank and acknowledge them for listening to us and now delivering this. As we just heard from the member for Mudgeeraba—and I quote her words—she is saying that the NDIA and the federal government are now working to get an understanding about what will happen post 2019. That is no clearer way of saying that they have no idea what is going to happen post 2019, and that is what the petition is about. Families are deeply concerned that they do not know what is going to happen post 2019. That is why, as I have previously advised this House, I wrote to the federal minister for disability services saying, 'Can you please sit down with us and work through what will happen post 2019? Can you please listen to the families who want to keep the current arrangements in place post 2019?' That is what this petition says. I thank the member for Mudgeeraba for at least telling one truth, which is that right now the federal government has no idea what it is saying to those families beyond 2019. I thank her for saying that it is now, thanks to our petition—

Ms BATES: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister is deliberately misleading the House. That is not what I said. I take offence and ask that she withdraw those comments unreservedly.

Mr SPEAKER: The standing procedure is that if a member takes offence to something that they believe is offensive you withdraw whatever the member finds offensive.

Ms JONES: I withdraw. She did say in her contribution that they are now working to get an understanding—

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

Mr SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Ms BATES: It was qualified. The minister might as well have said 'but' or 'and'. It was not an unqualified withdrawal.

Mr SPEAKER: Resume your seat. For the purposes of clarity, Minister, will you please withdraw whatever the member finds offensive.

Ms JONES: I withdraw. I would like to say though that there is one side of politics that has stood up for the people of Queensland in getting credibility and longevity in services and that is our side. It is about time those opposite stopped throwing grenades across this chamber. It is shameful behaviour.

Ms Bates interjected.

Ms JONES: I find those comments 'screeching banshee' offensive and I ask her to withdraw them, particularly when she spent three minutes screaming at me at the expense of the children of Queensland.

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

Mr SPEAKER: The minister has found comments the member for Mudgeeraba has made offensive and asks that they be withdrawn. Will you kindly withdraw.

Ms BATES: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Now, what is your point of order?

Ms BATES: I have no point of order.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Resumed from 13 October (see p. 3870), on motion of Mr Butcher—

That the House take note of report No. 22 of the Agriculture and Environment Committee, *Consideration of the Auditor-General's report 20: 2014-15—Managing water quality in Great Barrier Reef catchments*.



Mr LAST (Burdekin—LNP) (11.51 am): I rise to speak to the Agriculture and Environment Committee report No. 22 *Consideration of the Auditor-General's report 20: 2014-15—Managing water quality in Great Barrier Reef catchments*. This is an issue which is particularly relevant to my electorate of Burdekin. As members would appreciate, the Burdekin is home to the largest sugarcane growing area in Australia and one of the largest irrigation schemes in Queensland. The spotlight has been very firmly shone on the Burdekin regarding water quality issues, and it is for that reason I want to raise some pertinent points around this important issue and the Auditor-General's report.

On 12 June 2015 the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan Independent Science Panel, Department of the Environment, Australian government, issued a statement about the report, emphasising the need for state-of-the-art models to predict improvements in water quality reaching the Great Barrier Reef. It is that very fact that I want to highlight here today, because without accurate data or consistent information how can one compile a report other than on assumption and opinion? Yet that is exactly what has been happening with regard to water quality in the reef. There is an urgent need for additional monitoring to refine and calibrate model processes to allow the uncertainty in model estimates to be better known, and all decisions should be underpinned by sound scientific evidence and not the hysteria, innuendo and wild assumptions that currently exist.

In my electorate of Burdekin, water is everything. It sustains the sugarcane and horticultural industries and over the years the use of water for irrigation in this area has been refined to ensure maximum efficiency. Farmers are not environmental vandals; they actually have a strong attachment to the reef and the waterways that feed into the ocean. Scientific research and assessment of the reef is a rapidly evolving process and studies completed as recently as eight years ago are now outdated and do not accurately reflect the current status of the reef. It is for this reason that I am sceptical of many of the assertions and conclusions outlined in the Auditor-General's report. We are now seeing industry led voluntary best management practices across the Burdekin. Farmers have as much interest in limiting the use of fertiliser and water run-off as the most ardent greenie because excess fertiliser and water use costs money. Increasing numbers of farmers are now participating in the best management practice program and the awareness of water quality in farming practices that might impact on water quality in the Great Barrier Reef is certainly much improved. We are now seeing the benefits of a Reef Alliance and increasing cooperation between government, industry bodies and landholders adjacent to the reef which is resulting in an improvement in water quality and a reduction in sediment run-off.

There is no question that the modelling is complicated and sophisticated, and for this reason there is a need to ensure reputable organisations, such as the Australian Institute of Marine Science, are engaged to carry out this research. For too long we have relied on substandard information and data that cannot be validated which has led to ineffective and inefficient delivery of Queensland's reef plan programs. In conjunction with this research, programs need to be in place that accurately record land management change and ecological processes over the long term to ensure confidence in reported data which should be independently verified.

Improving water quality in the Great Barrier Reef and reducing farm run-off will not be solved by shovelling bucketloads of money into feel-good programs with no accountability. We need to see that funding is aimed at producing solutions to this issue that meet the needs of all sections of the community, including farmers, graziers, developers, the resources sector, community members and tourism. It is easy to blame farmers and mining operations for sediment run-off, but this pales into insignificance when one considers the damage caused to the reef by natural events such as cyclones and floods. There is unequivocal evidence from the Australian Institute of Marine Science showing massive destruction of coral reefs from cyclones, and this should be acknowledged in those areas which have been subjected to a cyclonic event in recent years.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that advances in farming technology and a growing commitment from all sections of the community to the protection of the reef is making a difference. Instead of listening to the scaremongering of those groups and individuals with a political agenda, we should be acknowledging the work that is going into improving water quality in the Great Barrier Reef and the difference it is making.



Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (11.55 am): I rise to make a contribution in relation to the committee report of the consideration of the Auditor-General's report *Managing water quality in Great Barrier Reef catchments*. I was very fortunate to have been born and raised in North Queensland in the town of Tully. It is a sugar- and banana-farming community. My family, although not a farming family, was dependent for its livelihood on the sugar industry, my father having worked in sugar mills for nearly half a century as a sugar chemist and mum having worked in the sugar industry as well, both in sugar mills and with the former Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.

Over the last decade, as the member for Hinchinbrook, I have taken a keen interest in issues relating to the environmental sustainability and productivity of the sugar and banana industries in my electorate of Hinchinbrook. The thing that has concerned me for most of that period of time is the attitude and approach taken, particularly by environmental groups and unfortunately the Beattie and Bligh and now the Palaszczuk Labor governments, to natural resource management issues in Great Barrier Reef catchments, including those catchments that I represent. The committee report specifically notes that a criticism of the Auditor-General in terms of program governance and design was that there was no single point of accountability for the effective and efficient delivery of Queensland's reef plan programs.

I note the comments made a few moments ago by the member for Burdekin about the issues associated with monitoring and the inadequacy of monitoring that is relied upon to make a series of public policy decisions regarding the management of these environmental issues in Great Barrier Reef catchments. The monitoring and reporting change concerns expressed by the Auditor-General on page 5 of the committee report are particularly pertinent because these problems associated with actually measuring the outcomes of practice change and water quality data go all the way back to 2003. 2003 was the first time that agreement was entered into by both the Queensland government—at that time the Beattie government—and the Howard federal government. That was the first time we had a reef plan. It was supposed to be a decade-long reef plan that went from 2003 to 2013.

That original reef plan was designed to set baseline data against which gains and improvements in practice change and water quality outcomes could be measured, but politics intervened in the form of the Bligh Labor government in 2009 when it introduced the reef regulations. It moved legislation through this parliament which reclassified grazing and sugar industries in three catchments between Mackay and Mossman. It recategorised it as an environmentally relevant activity in the same category as things like sewage treatment plants and heavy metal refineries. What an outrage that public policy change was. It was a slap in the face to farmers and graziers in Central Queensland and North Queensland who have a commitment to the land and a commitment to the environment.

Since that time, we have seen this sort of short-termism and politically driven public policy from those opposite and their fellow travellers in the environmental movement. Unfortunately, that has driven the problems in determining baseline data observations and public policy decisions in terms of water quality outcomes that the committee has highlighted in its review of the Auditor-General's report. We need that baseline data. We need to measure water quality outcomes against real improvements in practice change. We can do that if we get rid of the heavy-handed regulatory driven approach undertaken by the Bligh government and now the Palaszczuk government. We can have genuine collaborative arrangements and partnerships in innovation with landholders and farmers in Central and North Queensland, who are certainly willing to have those improved outcomes for all the reasons, in terms of productivity and cost efficiencies, mentioned by my colleague the member for Burdekin. I appeal to the Minister for Environment, in accepting the Auditor-General's report and noting the contents of this report from the Agriculture and Environment Committee, to embrace that collaborative and partnership driven approach, because farmers in my electorate of Hinchinbrook are sick and tired of being demonised by those opposite and people in the environmental movement as degrading and impacting negatively on the reef. It is not true. They do want to do the right thing for the future of the reef.



Mr MILLAR (Gregory—LNP) (12.01 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the Agriculture and Environment Committee report No. 22. To the member for Hinchinbrook and former natural resources minister, I say, 'Hear, hear!' This is an issue that we continue to advocate. Certainly farmers and graziers in the Fitzroy region are leaders when it comes to best management practice in agriculture. For well over 20 years, participants in the cotton industry have been good custodians and good practitioners. In fact, it was 20 years ago this year that the cotton industry introduced the best management practice model. That best management practice model is outstanding. It is regarded as a nation leader and, indeed, a world leader when it comes to practices being implemented on farms.

I call on those opposite and green groups to visit the cotton growers in the central highlands and see firsthand the enormous ability that those farmers have to protect the land and the environment. My family, along with many families on the central highlands, have been adopting the BMP for the cotton industry for well over 20 years and have seen some great initiatives undertaken and paid for by the industry—I repeat: paid for by the industry—to make sure that they implement the right programs to have sustainable agricultural farming practices in the region.

Mr Pearce: They don't get the recognition they deserve.

Mr MILLAR: I take the interjection from the member for Mirani. He is right: they do not get the recognition that they deserve.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr MILLAR: I take that interjection from the member for Logan. I encourage him to jump in the car or onto a plane and visit. I will show him firsthand the beef industry in Central Queensland.

An honourable member: What about Longreach?


Mr MILLAR: We can go to Longreach too, although that goes into the Eyre Basin and not into the reef. I wish to talk about the beef industry in Central Queensland. I have adopted the cattle BMP. I pay tribute to the former environment minister, Andrew Powell, for the work that he did, along with the former minister for natural resources, Andrew Cripps, and the former minister for agriculture, John McVeigh. They implemented programs such as the cattle BMP. I acknowledge the work that they did with the cattle industry. This is a way to bring together both the agricultural industry and the community, to make sure that we have sustainable practices. They are doing a great job.

I wish to pick up on the comments of the member for Hinchinbrook. He is right: it is time to stop demonising farmers and graziers when it comes to the environment. It is time to stop looking for an opportunity to have a crack at graziers and farmers who are doing the right thing and are working very hard to make sure that they have sustainable practices.

The sugar industry has done some fantastic work around Mackay, which I know very well from my former profession as an ABC rural reporter. Groups such as Mackay Sugar and the BSES, as it was known, have some fantastic programs in place to make sure that they are farming in an environmentally sustainable way. They do a good job. All they ask is to be recognised and not demonised. I call on green groups such as the WWF to stop using farmers as punching bags for political purposes. Stop doing that. They may score a couple of political scores, but otherwise it does nothing for the relationship between farmers and green groups.

Mr Costigan: Counterproductive.

Mr MILLAR: It is counterproductive. I take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday, who knows of the good work occurring in the Proserpine region, such as at the Proserpine mill, which is fantastic. I call on all members, especially those opposite, to embrace what the farmers and graziers are doing. Let us encourage them and work with them. Let us not go into political pointscoring.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.05 pm): I rise to speak to the Agriculture and Environment Committee report No. 22, *Consideration of the Auditor-General's report 20: 2014-15—Managing water quality in Great Barrier Reef catchments*. Being the member for Whitsunday, my interest in this area of public policy is pretty obvious. I echo the sentiments of my colleagues on this side of the House, the member for Burdekin, the member for Hinchinbrook and the member Gregory. They are all very passionate about their respective electorates. We also understand the big picture, which is growing our economy while, at the same time, making sure that our environment is cared for. That has been a source of great debate in Mackay, the Whitsundays and, indeed, other places in regional Central and Far North Queensland. I am talking about farmers and graziers continually being the whipping boys of the crazy green movement. From time to time we see it in the Whitsundays. In fact, Sunday week ago we saw it at a community cabinet meeting where the first three questions were asked by two prominent green activists. One is a high-profile member of the Mackay Conservation Group, which is hell-bent on stopping the \$16 billion Carmichael project in the Galilee Basin. The other question was asked by the former Greens candidate for Whitsunday.

Mr POWER: I rise to a point of order. Does this rant against the environmental movement, interesting as it is, have any relevance to the audit report that we are debating?


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Logan, there is no point of order.

Mr COSTIGAN: There is no doubt that there are a lot of great farmers and graziers in my electorate of Whitsunday. The member for Gregory just mentioned the cattle industry and I think of the Deicke family, the Cox family, the Muller family and certainly the Faust family. They are passionate about the environment and certainly passionate about growing the agricultural industry. They have a lot of skin in the game with the cattle industry.

With due respect to my colleagues from North Queensland, the Mackay-Whitsunday region and the central district has more land under cane than any other district in the sugar belts across Queensland. We have to acknowledge the Smartcane BMP initiative of the former LNP government, which was spoken about a few minutes ago. I too pay tribute to then ministers Powell and McVeigh. That campaign was launched in my electorate of Whitsunday, at Michael Deguara's farm. Michael is a grower from Farleigh and, as a relatively young man, was the first to embrace it, if I recall correctly. Many others have since embraced it. More than 240,000 hectares or over 50 per cent of the cane-growing areas in reef catchments are now covered by the Smartcane BMP program. That is a tremendous outcome for the sugar industry and the environment. On that note, I pay tribute to our captains of the sugar industry in my part of the world: Kevin Borg and his team from Canegrowers Mackay; Mike Porter, the CEO of Canegrowers Proserpine; and the man we call 'The Happy Dragon', Paul Schembri, the chairman of Canegrowers Queensland. We call him 'The Happy Dragon' because he is a big St George supporter. He was pretty happy that day.

There is no doubt that we have other great farmers in the electorate of Whitsunday, such as the Simpson family, the Considine family and the Jefferson family. In many respects, they have been trailblazers along the banks of the O'Connell River, which runs right through the rural heart of my electorate and not far from little hamlets such as Bloomsbury, Elaroo and Kamo. Invariably, their work goes under the radar, but I can assure them and the wider community that it is appreciated as it contributes to greater environmental outcomes while, at the same time, making sure that we grow the agricultural sector in Queensland, particularly in North Queensland where there are so many opportunities, especially with the Commonwealth's vision to develop the north on the back of big job-creating water infrastructure projects, such as the Urannah Dam in my own electorate. It was terrific to be there during National Water Week not long ago. That is a project of great magnitude that can open up something like 30,000-plus hectares of irrigated farmland downstream, in the Collinsville area.

I want to congratulate all those stakeholders involved in the BMP programs to better protect the Great Barrier Reef. Tourism is critical to the Whitsundays. I will state the bleeding obvious: it is a cornerstone for Airlie Beach. Without tourism the lights go off. We can have the best of both worlds. I am tired of our cane cockies and our cow cockies being treated with contempt. It is beyond a joke now. We recently had the red army in Whitsunday. I say to everyone here today that the Premier came in and said, 'Isn't the rain great for the farmers.' Guess what? Crushing is underway and they need rain like a hole in the head. She has no idea.

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (12.10 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on this committee report. Like others in this House, I was born and bred in North Queensland. I grew up in Mackay. I saw what happened to the fringing coral reef at Brampton Island—the one between Brampton Island and Carlisle Island. In my lifetime I have seen how that was devastated. For reasons which we know about, it has been wrecked. As a tourism destination it has been severely impacted by the loss of the fringing coral reef between these islands just off the Mackay coast near the Pioneer River. I can attest to the fact that we do have a problem on these fringing reefs and the Great Barrier Reef.

The member for Burdekin said that the voluntary regime is working well. From reading this report I cannot see how he could actually come to that conclusion. The section on land management practices at page 5 of the report states—

The 2013 Reef Plan places a high emphasis on voluntary actions and market-based drivers ...

Industry participation in voluntary programs has been slow, particularly for the Smartcane Best Management Practice program. The rates of participation are not at levels needed to effectively contribute to the achievement of the Reef Plan water quality targets.

At page 4 the report states—


The audit report disputed the veracity of claims in the Great Barrier Reef Report Card, released in June 2014, that the goal to 'halt and reverse the decline in water quality entering the reef' has been achieved.

I think there is enough in this report to show that we really do have a problem. There are a couple of problems. We need to protect the reef. We know that. It certainly points out that the policy position under the previous government was inadequate. I commend the Auditor-General on this report. I have a problem with the inferences of members opposite that we are looking at findings that may be skewed. I believe that there is a problem. This report points out why we do need policy action in this area.

The member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Burdekin talked about political agendas. What I would say to those members is that there has to be political action. We need political action. We need political action to protect the crucial tourism industry that relies on the Great Barrier Reef.

I will make a couple of points about the impact that Great Barrier Reef tourism has on our economy. Some \$12.6 billion in expenditure is generated by Great Barrier Reef related tourism. Some 70,000 Australians are employed in this industry that relies on a healthy Great Barrier Reef. Over the next 100 years there will be \$51.4 billion in visitation dollars generated by tourism on the Great Barrier Reef.

It is certainly imperative that we take action at a policy level and a political level to protect this icon that drives such a large portion of our economy. I point out that this part of the economy is absolutely crucial for all other sectors of the economy. If we do not have a healthy tourism industry, the cane and cattle industries will suffer as well. I think this report speaks of what we need to do at a policy level. I certainly commend the report to the House.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (12.14 pm): As a former member of the Agriculture and Environment Committee I did do some of the work and attended some of the hearings that led to this report. I had to speak in this debate because I noticed that many on the other side set the false dichotomy that one side supports the farmers and the other side is against them. That is simply not true. As the grandson of a cattle farmer and someone who deeply values our agricultural industry, I think that this false dichotomy is damaging to our agricultural sector.

I know that the regions to our north value the reef and the farmers especially value the economic ecosystems around them. They recognise that they can have an impact on that. However, those on the other side did not want to talk about this audit report. They instead wanted to demonise others and suggest to farmers that people are not thinking about their best interests.

The member for Murrumba stated that industry participation in voluntary programs has been slow. This is of genuine concern for all those farmers who have real respect for the environment and value the environment. The report states—

The balance between productivity, profitability and environmental stewardship is tilted heavily towards the former two ...

That means that there is too much of a tilt towards productivity and profitability rather than the environment which the other side have suggested farmers value so much. We know that many farmers are doing interesting and innovative things under the best management practice program. They are to be commended for that. We celebrate them for that. That is what this report also does. We know that not enough of them are undertaking those interesting and innovative things.

Further, we know that the incentives are misaligned. We can perhaps get more profitability from some farms, but at the cost of the environment and our reef. We have to balance those things. Collectively we have to do that. It does not help if we try to attack the science, attack the process and create a false split between farmers and those who value the environment because we know that good farmers do both. We want to support them to get the best outcomes. This audit report highlights some of those problems.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): In accordance with standing order 71, the notice of motion relating to report No. 23 of the Transport and Utilities Committee has lapsed.

DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I inform members that we have the principal and student leaders from Glenala State High School in the gallery.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr FURNER (Ferry Grove—ALP) (12.18 pm): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 35 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee tabled on 30 August.

As chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee I rise to speak to report No. 35 relating to the oversight of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman. The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee has statutory oversight responsibilities of not only the Queensland Ombudsman but also the offices of the Information Commissioner, the Electoral Commissioner and the Criminal Organisation Public Interest Monitor. This report is provided as part of the committee's statutory oversight responsibility for the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman.

In respect of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman, it is fair to say that it does provide a fair, independent and timely investigative service for people who believe that they have been adversely affected by the decisions of a public agency and it also helps public agencies to improve their decision-making and administrative practices. During the public hearing, the committee members heard about the important role that the Queensland Ombudsman performs in respect of hearing from certain bodies.

The committee met with the Queensland Ombudsman, Mr Phil Clarke, on 25 May this year. Appearing with Mr Phil Clarke were Mr Andrew Brown, Deputy Ombudsman; Ms Diane Gunton, Director, Corporate Services Unit; and Ms Leanne Robertson, Principal Adviser, Public Interest Disclosures. During the public hearing the Ombudsman advised the committee of some interesting findings and explained to the committee that certain matters had concluded and that the workload had increased over 2014-15. He also noted—

The number of contacts made with the office, complaints received and investigations completed all continued to increase steadily. This has been achieved while maintaining the office's focus on timely management and resolution of all matters.

As you can appreciate, Mr Deputy Speaker Crawford—and I am sure you would be in the same position as I am—on many occasions people come into your electoral office to seek some sort of opportunity to raise matters under certain instruments about certain bodies where the capacity within your office prevents you from providing an answer in a number of cases. They are generally referred to the Queensland Ombudsman to assist them in accommodating the issues they wish to raise.

In respect of complaints received, the Ombudsman identified to the committee that the office dealt with 12,982 contacts, an increase of nearly 1,000 contacts compared with the previous year's total of 11,995. The office also finalised 6,962 complaints, an increase of nearly 700 complaints compared with the total of 6,308 complaints in the previous year. Of those complaints, it was broken down to the following extent: 69 per cent were about state government departments, including departments and statutory authorities—that figure was 4,849; 25 per cent were about local councils—that figure was 1,744; and five per cent were about public universities. There was a good range of areas that the Ombudsman had the opportunity to explore that were identified by those complaints and issues raised.

The time lapse, however, is improving. According to the annual report, the office continues to closely monitor the time taken to finalise complaints to ensure that improvements from business practices implemented over the past three years are maintained. More specifically, the report notes that in 2014-15, it took an average of 12.2 days to finalise a complaint compared with 11.6 days in 2013-14. This average includes complaints finalised after preliminary assessments or investigations. The report provides an explanation for that. The average time taken to finalise an investigation in 2014-15, being 12.2 days, is similar to the average of 12 days for the 2012-13 period. This represents a significant improvement from the average of 24.3 days taken to finalise a complaint in 2011-12. On that note, due to my time running out, I commend the report to the House.



Mr BROWN (Capalaba—ALP) (12.23 pm): I rise today to give a short contribution in regard to the report on the oversight of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman. It was a fantastic opportunity being a new member on this committee to be able to quiz the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman. Like other members, I get a fair few complaints about go via and SPER. My line of questioning to the office was in regard to the dramatic increases that we saw in SPER complaints to the office from 2013-14 to 2014-15. As I recall, the increase in SPER complaints jumped in one year by 138 per cent. That is quite a dramatic increase in just one year.

We all know the reasoning behind that dramatic increase. We need only look back to the decision in 2014 by the former government, led by Campbell Newman and the member for Clayfield, who decided to increase the number of penalty infringement notices that TMR could issue at one time for

tolling related offences. This changed the volume of PINs from 150,000 per annum to 600,000 per annum—a huge increase. That flowed into the number of complaints having to be handled by the Ombudsman's office.

I am pleased to report the good work that the Minister for Main Roads has been doing in this area since then, sitting down with TMR, SPER and Transurban and coming up with some new initiatives, which include waiving the first toll invoice fee if a customer opens a prepaid account with go via; a hardship policy to assist those customers who are experiencing financial difficulties; a new 'First Time Forgiveness' program to help account customers who have inadvertently made a mistake get their account back on track by waiving toll invoice fees; providing additional alerts to customers who have run out of credit on their go via accounts and may be incurring unavoidable fees; and an ongoing education program to help customers manage their toll payments and account preferences.

We know the debilitating effect that some of these bills can have. It can quickly go from a small fine to a couple of hundred dollars in a short amount of time. This leads some people with businesses facing the loss of their licence and their livelihoods. I commend the minister for doing the complete opposite of the previous government. They were fattening up SPER for sale. We all know that. This government is working with the three departments, making sure that they can do their best for consumers out there, rather than running up fines. I look forward to quizzing the Queensland Ombudsman on the figures. Hopefully they come down drastically instead of increasing drastically like we saw under the previous government.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): In accordance with standing order 71, the notice of motion relating to report No. 36 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee has lapsed.

INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr PEARCE (Mirani—ALP) (12.27 pm): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 33 of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, titled *Consideration of the Auditor-General's report 17 for 2015-16: Results of audit—local government entities 2014-15*.

From time to time it is good to remind those who take an interest in what is happening in parliament about how this system works. I would like to go through a few processes that have led us to where we are today in reporting to the parliament on the work that has been done by the committee.

The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee is a portfolio committee established by the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly on 27 March 2015. It consists of government and non-government members. The committee's areas of portfolio responsibility are: Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Trade and Investment; State Development and Natural Resources and Mines; and Housing and Public Works.

I refer to the role of the Auditor-General and the Queensland Audit Office. The Auditor-General is an independent statutory officer appointed by the Governor in Council under the Auditor-General Act 2009. The Auditor-General is supported by the Queensland Audit Office. The Auditor-General undertakes both financial audits and performance audits of public sector entities. Financial audits provide an opinion on the financial statements of public sector entities. Performance audits encompass broader objectives including evaluating whether an entity, program or initiative has achieved its objectives in an economical and efficient manner. The Auditor-General must report to the Legislative Assembly on each audit conducted of a public sector entity. That is what we are doing here today. The Auditor-General has reported to the committee, and our report is what we are speaking to today.

The Auditor-General takes into consideration a number of things: financial audits of local governments, significant financial reporting issues, asset management planning and business activities of local governments. It is a general look at the local government entity. Given that it is using funds that belong to the people of Queensland or their local area, the Auditor-General takes a good look at the entity to make sure that everything is working in an open and accountable way.

The Queensland Auditor-General audits the financial statements of local governments and related entities each year. For the 2014-15 financial statements, the Auditor-General reported that he issued 140 unmodified audit opinions and 10 qualified audit opinions—four for councils and six for local government entities. The number of qualified audit opinions was consistent with the prior year. Four councils and one related entity had not finalised their 30 June 2015 financial statements.

The Auditor-General's report highlighted issues relating to asset management planning and weaknesses in disclosure of council business activities. There is always going to be these sorts of problems in local government. There is always a number of reasons why things are not done in the appropriate way. That is why it is good to have an audit office that can look at a local government entity and pick up on those issues which need to be identified and acted upon. It is a good way of picking up a local government area that is not using their finances in the proper way, to make sure there is no rotting of the system and that people are getting a fair go.

I want to talk about asset management. Each local government is required to prepare and adopt a long-term asset management plan. A long-term asset management plan enables councils to understand what the long-term gain is and the optimal either replacement or renewal—

(Time expired)

Debate, on motion of Mr Pearce, adjourned.

STOCK ROUTE NETWORK MANAGEMENT BILL

Message from Governor



Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.33 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): The message from His Excellency recommends the Stock Route Network Management Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

Stock Route Network Management Bill 2016

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

A Bill for an Act about the management of the stock route network and associated land, to repeal the Stock Route Management Act 2002, and to amend this Act, the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Land Act 1994, the Local Government Act 2009, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Transport Infrastructure (State-controlled Roads) Regulation 2006, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 and the Acts mentioned in schedule 2, for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 2 NOV 2016

Tabled paper: Message, dated 2 November 2016, from His Excellency the Governor recommending the Stock Route Network Management Bill 2016 [\[1989\]](#).

Introduction

Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.34 pm): I present a bill for an act about the management of the stock route network and associated land, to repeal the Stock Route Management Act 2002, and to amend this act, the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Land Act 1994, the Local Government Act 2009, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Transport Infrastructure (State-controlled Roads) Regulation 2006, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 and the acts mentioned in schedule 2, for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Stock Route Network Management Bill 2016 [\[1990\]](#).

Tabled paper: Stock Route Network Management Bill 2016, explanatory notes [\[1991\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Stock Route Network Management Bill 2016, or the stock route bill. This bill represents more than a decade's worth of conversation and deliberation with local government and other stakeholders to improve the way Queensland's stock route network is managed. It had its initial incarnation back in 2002. It has taken a long time for this bill to get to the House.

Queensland's stock route network covers about 72,000 kilometres of interconnected roads, routes and reserves and covers 44 local government areas. The pastoral industry has used the network and, to a lesser extent, other roads and reserves for more than 150 years to move and graze livestock. The network is vitally important, particularly during times of drought. Queensland's stock route network has areas of natural value that support biodiversity and areas of cultural heritage significance connected to Aboriginal culture and early colonial history. That is why the Palaszczuk government is modernising and simplifying the legislative framework used to govern the management of the stock route network. This network is important to Queensland. We are very serious about retaining it, but we have to improve the way it is managed to ensure it has a sustainable future.

Management of the network is currently administered under several pieces of legislation, making it extremely difficult for users of the network to do business. It also makes it difficult for local governments, as the day-to-day managers of the network, to administer. This stock route bill will address this issue by providing a single management framework to administer stock travel and grazing on the stock route network and on other related roads and reserves. It will also clarify the distinct roles of the state and local governments. The state will continue to have strategic oversight of the network to ensure the integrity and connectivity of the network for its main purpose of travelling stock. This strategic oversight will be through a state management plan.

Additionally, in the unlikely situation where a local government's actions are improper, the minister will have the power to step in and take any action necessary to give effect to the purpose of the act. The role of local government to sustainably manage the network will be strengthened under the bill. Local governments will retain their role as day-to-day managers of the network and be given greater capability to make informed decisions based on their local knowledge. Local governments will now have the responsibility for approving all stock related activities on the network.

The state will no longer issue grazing permits under the Land Act or the Transport Infrastructure Act for the network. However, where a state controlled road forms part of the stock route network, the state's consent will be required before a local government can issue a stock travel, grazing or pasture-harvesting approval under the bill. This is to ensure the operational integrity of the state's transport network and to minimise the impact of stock related activities.

At the same time the bill will also ensure that a connected network is maintained for travelling stock; ensure potential users of the network for stock related activities have an opportunity to use the network by providing an order of priority for approvals; ensure the impact of stock related activities on other uses of the network, such as motor vehicle traffic, is minimised and road safety maintained; provide the ability to recognise areas on the stock route network that contain natural and cultural heritage values; ensure the network is sustainably maintained and managed; provide a framework for local government to be able to authorise stock travel, grazing and pasture harvesting on roads and reserves that are not part of the stock route network; and improve the fee and cost framework to reflect benefits to network users.

Stock travel and grazing activities are currently administered under several pieces of legislation including the Stock Route Management Act 2002, the Land Act 1994, and several transport acts including the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994. The stock route bill will repeal the Stock Route Management Act and amend provisions of the Land Act and transport acts to consolidate the management of travelling stock and grazing activities on the stock route network into a single act, and provide a framework for managing these activities on other roads and reserves. Consolidating and removing duplicated or prescriptive legislative provisions will reduce regulatory burden and provide flexibility to local government to equitably and effectively manage the day-to-day operation of the stock route network.

The bill establishes that the main purpose of the network is for the use of travelling stock on foot. Using the network for grazing stock is a secondary purpose. This means that grazing should only be authorised if the network can continue to support travelling stock and there is sufficient pasture. A key aspect of maintaining the network for travelling stock is to ensure the travel routes remain connected. For this reason, the bill provides that the state will continue to be responsible for identifying Queensland's stock routes and reserves through a publicly available register. A local government affected by any potential change to what forms part of the stock route network must be consulted before the change is made.

To improve local governments' ability to manage the network, they will now be able to temporarily restrict or prevent stock access to part of the network. This could be for public safety reasons or because of a temporary unavailability of water or pasture on that part of the network. However, to maintain a connected network, local governments will not be able to permanently close a stock route. This

responsibility remains with the state and would only be exercised after a review of usage and consultation with affected parties. To be clear on this point, the state has no intention of reducing the overall size of Queensland's stock route network. Temporary closure of a stock route by a local government under the bill also does not close the road to use as an ordinary road.

The bill proposes to introduce a two-tier classification system for stock routes. The classification of the stock route will reflect its level of use, and simplify management requirements, particularly in relation to stock facilities. Under a two-tier system, local governments will be able to quickly identify where resources and management are required to maintain the integrity and connectivity of the stock route network. Currently there are four stock route classifications: primary, secondary, minor and unused. The new system will have only two classifications: primary and secondary. Under the bill, the primary stock route network will be made up of the current primary and secondary network. This part of the network reflects the essential driving routes—that is, the areas that are used most often and are essential to maintaining a connected network. The secondary network will consist of the existing minor and unused network.

Building on this reclassification of stock routes are changes to how stock facilities, including water facilities on the network will need to be maintained. Under the bill, stock facilities located on the primary network will be the main focus for local governments to maintain in good working order. Local governments will be given the option to dispose of stock facilities located on the secondary network, with the state's approval. Facilities will remain an asset of the state and the state intends to maintain the existing capital works program for water facilities on the primary network.

To give effect to the main purpose of the bill—for travelling stock—the bill establishes a hierarchy for using the network. This is to address issues of equity and to improve administrative and operational effectiveness. Approvals to use the network will be issued by local governments in an order of priority, which I will now outline. First priority will be given to travelling stock of which there are two classes—slow and standard. Second priority is for unfit stock and emergency grazing. Unfit stock relates to animals that, because of illness, condition or other circumstances, are not able to travel at the required speed under an existing travel approval. Unfit stock approvals can be issued for up to two weeks only. Emergency grazing will be allowed if the land where the stock are situated has been affected by an adverse natural event such as flooding and cannot sustain the stock. Emergency grazing will be allowed on the primary network for up to two weeks and on the secondary network for up to four weeks.

Third priority is for short-term and long-term grazing. Short-term grazing will be allowed where the stock are situated on drought declared land or in instances where local governments invite applications to graze to help manage excess pasture. Short-term grazing will be allowed on the primary network for up to six weeks and on the secondary network for up to 12 weeks. Long-term grazing will be available to land owners or occupiers that are located next to the network. With approval, those located next to the primary network can access it for long-term grazing for up to one year, while those located next to the secondary network can access it for up to five years. Fourth priority is for pasture harvesting. Pasture harvesting will only be authorised where there is more pasture than is needed for travelling stock and the local government invites persons to apply for an approval.

Another purpose of the bill is to manage the stock route network in a way that minimises the impact on other uses of the land that comprises the network. The network is used for other purposes, such as road travel, recreation and tourism. Primarily, stock routes are roads which form part of the state's transport network. For this reason, road safety is required to be considered before granting an approval under the bill for stock to use the network. To recognise the natural heritage and cultural heritage values of the network, special interest areas will be able to be identified. Where a special interest area has been identified—either by the state or local government—conditions can be imposed to minimise the impact of travelling or grazing stock, or pasture harvesting. However, travelling stock will not be prevented from accessing these areas, except where there is a need to temporarily prevent access to maintain the natural or cultural heritage feature, for public safety reasons, or because water or pasture is temporarily unavailable.

It is important to note that the bill does not impact on protections already in place for these areas under other legislation, such as the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 or the Queensland Heritage Act 1992. This means that if there are values or interests protected under these acts located on the network, they must be managed consistent with these other acts.

The bill is also focused on ensuring Queensland has a stock route network available now and for use in the long term. This means ensuring it is sustainably managed. Currently, the state prepares a state management strategy, and then each local government that manages part of the network is

required to have a local management plan, approved by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. Under the bill, there will be a single state management plan making it clear for local governments what management outcomes are required for the network. This will significantly reduce the workload for local governments as they will no longer have to prepare and seek state approval of a local management plan. The state management plan will also suggest ways for local government to achieve the management outcomes. Local governments, however, will have the flexibility to identify alternative ways to achieve the management outcomes to suit their local situation.

Another key aspect that will improve the sustainable management of the network is providing local governments with the ability to allow pasture harvesting. This has been designed as a tool for local governments to manage pasture on the network, particularly where there is excess pasture to the needs of travelling stock.

The bill also provides a framework for local governments to authorise stock travel, grazing and pasture harvesting on roads and reserves that are not part of the stock route network. This can include: roads that are under local government control; reserves where the local government is the trustee of the reserve; and a state controlled road with the state's approval. The state will no longer issue permits for grazing under the Land Act on these roads or for approved state controlled roads under the Transport Infrastructure Act. This role will be taken over by local governments to reduce the number of government entities landholders have to deal with for grazing approvals.

The bill proposes a more equitable fee framework to support local governments in their management role and see approved users of the network paying a fee that better reflects the benefits they gain from the network. Under the fee framework, the state will continue to regulate the fees for travelling—slow and standard—stock on the network in recognition of stock travel on the network being a state interest. However, local government will retain all the revenue generated from these fees.

The Palaszczuk government recognises the impact of the drought situation on rural Queensland. For this reason, no increase in the fees for travelling stock, above annual indexing, is currently proposed. For other fees, local governments will have more latitude to set fees themselves. Grazing approval fees for emergency, short-term and long-term grazing on the network will be set by the local government at or above a minimum fee set by the state. Pasture harvesting fees on the network and fees for stock travel, grazing and pasture harvesting on roads and reserves that are not part of the network will be set by local governments. Local governments will also be able to charge cost-recovery fees for processing applications—whether for applications on or off the network. Local governments will retain 100 per cent of the revenue generated from all approvals they issue under the bill for the network or other roads and reserves. They will also retain all revenue from water facility agreements.

As the state will no longer be issuing grazing approvals under the Land Act and the Transport Infrastructure Act for approved state controlled roads, local governments will now be able to charge a fee for these approvals and retain 100 per cent of the revenue. Additional information on the proposed fee framework will be provided to the parliamentary committee as part of their consideration of the bill.

To support local government with implementation of the changes, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines will work in partnership with the affected local governments as well as the Local Government Association of Queensland and other government departments, in particular the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines will also engage with existing holders of grazing permits issued under the Land Act to explain the changes. Our plan is to have the bill fully operational within two years of commencement and the transitional provisions in the bill support this. In addition to repealing the Stock Route Management Act 2002, the bill also consequentially amends a number of other acts to give effect to the changes, namely: the Land Act, the Local Government Act, the Transport Infrastructure Act, and the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.49 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date


Hon. AJ LYNHAM (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (12.49 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee report to the House on the Stock Route Network Management Bill by 2 February 2017.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

**HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
BILL****Order Discharged**

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (12.49 pm): by leave, without notice: I move—

That government business order of the day No. 9, Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, be discharged from the *Notice Paper*.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Withdrawal

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (12.50 pm): by leave, without notice: I move—

That the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be withdrawn.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Reintroduction

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (12.50 pm): by leave, without notice: I move—

That notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders:

1. the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, introduced on 13 September 2016 and discharged and withdrawn today, be reintroduced following the presentation of a message from the Governor; and
2. in accordance with section 26B(3)(d) of the Constitution of Queensland 2001, the reintroduced Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, having already been referred to and reported on by the Transportation and Utilities Committee, be set down on the *Notice Paper* for its second reading immediately after its reintroduction and first reading without further referral to a portfolio committee.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Message from Governor

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (12.51 pm): I present a message from His Excellency the Governor.

MESSAGE

HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PAUL de JERSEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—

A Bill for an Act to amend the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 and the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 for particular purposes.

GOVERNOR

Date: 11 October 2016

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): The message from His Excellency recommends the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

Date: 11 October 2016

Tabled paper: Message, dated 11 October 2016, from his Excellency the Governor recommending the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 [1992].

Introduction

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (12.51 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 and the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 [1993].

Tabled paper: Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, explanatory notes [1994].

Further, I table a copy of the *Hansard* extract of the explanatory speech I delivered when introducing the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 on 13 September 2016.

Tabled paper: Extract from the *Record of Proceedings*, dated 13 September 2016, of a speech by the Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games, Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, introducing the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 [1995].

I adopt this explanatory speech for the introduction of the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 that I am introducing today.

First Reading

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (12.52 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with the motion agreed to by the House earlier today, the bill is set down on the *Notice Paper* for its second reading.

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INCLUSION OF 17-YEAR-OLD PERSONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 15 September (see p. 3582).

Second Reading

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (12.53 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016, introduced into parliament on 15 September 2016, brings 17-year-olds into the youth justice system. However, the bill does more than simply include 17-year-olds in the youth justice system. It is a catalyst for change in the way we respond to young people who offend and for open and honest discussion about this important matter. Importantly, this bill will commence on proclamation 12 months after its passing to ensure a measured approach to the transition of 17-year-olds from the adult prison system to the youth justice system.

This bill is not a debate about whether young people who commit crimes should face the criminal justice system. Of course, young people who commit offences must be held accountable by the police, the courts and more broadly by society. Any decision of the courts in relation to an offence by a young

person must weigh up the punishment for the offence, the deterrence against reoffending and to those who may consider committing similar offences, rehabilitation and of course community safety. This will occur whether the young person is tried as an adult or as a youth.

What this bill is about is how we treat those young people who find themselves in the criminal justice system. In applying a justice reinvestment model, what we achieve in the long term is a reduction in offending, recidivism and an increase in community safety. How we respond to young people speaks to our values as a community, and our obligations to care for and protect young people and to take the necessary steps to ensure our community's safety. The depth of concern expressed by community members about the inappropriateness of imprisoning 17-year-old young people in adult prisons confirms the importance of these values in our society.

The bill was referred to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee, with the committee tabling their report on 27 October 2016. I would like to thank the committee for their work in considering this bill. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of those stakeholders who made submissions on the bill to the committee. The committee received 15 submissions. It is telling that the views presented by every submitter to the committee indicated overwhelming support for the objectives and policy intent of the bill. The support was so encouraging, I would like to share some of that sentiment with parliament now.

Associate Professor Terry Hutchinson, a member of the Crime and Justice Research Centre in Queensland University of Technology's Faculty of Law, welcomes the introduction of this bill as does the UQ Pro Bono Centre at the TC Beirne School of Law, University of Queensland, where 14 individual lecturers personally endorsed the submission. The Queensland Family and Child Commission 'welcomes the objective to include 17-year-olds in the youth justice system and has consistently recommended this occur in previous submissions to parliamentary committees and Queensland government'.

The Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland wrote that it has 'long advocated for the removal of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system to the youth justice system and supports the objectives of the bill'. The Anglican Church of Southern Queensland's Social Responsibilities Committee 'offers its support to the bill, and welcomes the commitment of this government to ensuring the safety of 17-year-olds in detention by removing them from adult prisons'. The Salvation Army also supports the objectives of the bill. The Queensland Law Society wrote that they have 'consistently advocated for the inclusion of 17-year-olds in the youth justice system and welcomes this important legislative reform'. Community Legal Centres Queensland 'congratulates the Queensland government on progressing a 30-year-old issue to actual legislative amendment'. Professor Kerry Carrington, Head of School of Justice, Faculty of Law, QUT wrote—

... I congratulate the Government and the Minister Yvette D'Ath for proposing this historical amendment which will bring Qld into line with all other Australian Jurisdictions. It is long overdue.

There is strong, unequivocal community support for the policy intent of this bill. The non-government members of the committee did not support the bill's passage. However, a number of statements made by these members relied on inaccuracies. I am hopeful that the opposition understands the necessity for such a bill and that the views expressed by stakeholders have been listened to by the LNP in formulating their response to this debate. This is an issue too important to play politics with. This is an essential reform that will bring Queensland into line with every other Australian state and territory and will ensure we meet our obligations under international law.


The bill provides for the making of a time limited, transitional regulation to allow, upon proclamation, for the safe and orderly transfer of 17-year-olds who are in the adult criminal justice system, into the youth justice system. The transitional regulation will contain technical and operational detail, such as how a 17-year-old is to be relocated and when, and under what circumstances that individual's planned transfer might be delayed. It may be that their release from adult custody is imminent, so relocating them from Capricornia to Brisbane would not be in anyone's interests. They may be nearing completion of a course or program that is not available through youth justice. They may be sick on the day of transfer, or an emergency or natural disaster may occur that prevents the transfer. This is what we expect the regulation to contain and the bill's explanatory memorandum clearly provides such examples. This is part of the reason why 12 months is required to work with key stakeholders to ensure each young person can be transitioned safely and with minimal disruption.

Debate, on motion of Mrs D'Ath, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Lockyer Electorate, Roadworks; Laidley State School

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (2.30 pm): I rise to highlight a few issues in my electorate which concern me, and the first one I would like to talk about is the intersection of RAAF Base Amberley and the Cunningham Highway. Every morning and every evening there are traffic problems with something like 17,000 vehicle movements a day at this intersection. It is a dangerous corner and it really does need some modification. I have been speaking to the minister about what we can do in the interim and I have been speaking to federal members of parliament as well. It really does need funding and it is one of those intersections that should be a priority for South-East Queensland. I think somewhere in the vicinity of 6,000 to 7,000 people are going to be working at the base very shortly, so the federal government does need to throw some real money into this intersection to make it safe. What is rather concerning is that two or three fuel tankers a day travel into the Amberley base and cross two lanes of traffic at an unrestricted intersection, so this could be a really dangerous intersection and I am concerned about it.


Mr Power interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: I hear the interjections from the member for Logan. I am sure the member for Logan is aware that none of the roads in my electorate are state roads. He has made a mess of the state roads in his area. It is interesting how the South East Queensland Regional Plan is going to affect communities in my area. I have a lot of different rural activities in my area. I am still somewhat perplexed by the fact that the department and the government seem to be locked into 250 acres. One hundred hectares is the minimum lot size for rural land. As I have said on numerous occasions, you can make a living off five acres of land if you have nurseries, strawberries, flowers or these sorts of things. It is more relative to water.

The other issue that I would like to raise is Laidley State School, which unfortunately continues to give me some grief. The school should have probably 600 to 700 students but it is now down to 380. The management of the school has been left wanting. I have raised this issue continually with the regional office and the minister. The management of this school really does need to be improved and I look forward to that. At the moment for some reason I think the teachers or the principal or the hierarchy there have taken the taps out of the toilet block because the kids were spilling water, and it is just creating some ridiculous—

(Time expired)

Thuringowa Electorate, Roadworks

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.33 pm): I am proud to inform the House that Thuringowa has received much needed roadwork upgrades, some of which have been completed in the Townsville region. In my electorate of Thuringowa I know that my constituents are very happy with the \$7.81 million investment by our government into the Hervey Range Road upgrade that is now complete between Lynam Road and Alice River. This upgrade, including centre lane markings and widening, will make our roads safer. I know this, having personally attended many road accidents on this particular stretch of road in my 25 years as a paramedic in my former role. Wide centre line treatments have been shown to reduce head-on collisions, so this will make a big difference to the safety of all road users. I also heard these concerns directly from my constituents, both as a candidate and as the new member for Thuringowa in 2015.


To address their concerns I went about being a good hardworking local member, so I got a petition going in the Alice River area and gained direct support to seek funding for the road upgrade. I have also worked with the Townsville Bike User Group who use this area for training, and together with locals we tabled a petition in October last year. I made further representations to the Minister for Main Roads and Road Safety. I must acknowledge the minister, who also made this project come forward as part of the accelerated capital works program our Premier initiated to help tackle the unemployment issues our region inherited from the former Newman LNP government and the mining downturn. I am proud to deliver this project and make safer roads for Thuringowa.

I would like to thank the main roads minister for his announcement yesterday regarding the tendering process for the \$30 million stage 1 duplication of Riverway Drive. Again I am working hard for locals, 24,000 of whom use this section of road. I will deliver this for Thuringowa without selling

assets, as the former member told to locals—in fact, he put a billboard up saying 'delivered'—but there was a caveat that we had to sell our port. I will not be selling assets. I have real funding. I am working hard for my electorate and we will deliver Riverway Drive. It is a fantastic asset for our area.

The locals in Thuringowa are not fools. They know when they are being told an untruth, so they spoke up loudly at the 2015 state election and they allowed me to get real funding through the State Infrastructure Fund, and I thank the Deputy Premier. This upgrade will finally give some relief to the thousands of people who use the area in Kelso, Condon and Rasmussen. A detailed design is nearly complete, and I encourage all local suppliers to bid on works with QTender. I want locals on this job. The first stage of that tender process gives companies the opportunity to show their previous experience in areas such as maximising local procurement and delivering similar projects. I look forward to seeing this road started and completed in this term of government.

Maroochydore Electorate

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (2.36 pm): Seven hundred thousand Queenslanders who live north of Brisbane between the Sunshine Coast and the Moreton Bay region need Labor main roads minister Mark Bailey to stop stalling plans for the Bruce Highway upgrade which we so desperately need for jobs and safety. Very few days go by when there is not a serious accident on the Bruce Highway causing serious delays. The federal government has committed funds for planning to upgrade and duplicate more of the lanes north of Brisbane, but Minister Bailey is sitting on his hands and will not deliver that plan until 2018. This is unacceptable. We should not have to wait nearly three years simply for the plan to be done, and the ball is in the minister's court. The funding is there. They need to ensure that this work is done and they need to finalise plans for six lanes on this vital section of highway.

The Sunshine Coast is one of the fastest growing regions in Queensland, yet this Palaszczuk Labor government is asleep at the wheel and still not listening to the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay region. If you put both of these regions together, that is about 700,000 people who are stuck with this goat track and this minister is not going to deliver the plan for the upgrade until 2018. That is not good enough. I hear the excuses and yapping going on from Labor members who do not want to see real infrastructure. They are better off not paying their own bills than ensuring taxpayers' money is spent in a timely way. Despite widespread support from the community for desperately needed infrastructure, Labor continues to bury its head in the sand and delay or forget about our much needed rail and road upgrades. Federal roads and infrastructure minister Darren Chester visited the Sunshine Coast recently to see firsthand what the Sunshine Coast LNP team have been fighting for. The North Coast Rail—

Mr Power interjected.


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Member for Logan, I think there has been enough interjecting from you today. I call the member for Maroochydore and I ask the member for Logan to cease interjecting.

Ms SIMPSON: In the lead-up to the last state election the LNP government pledged half a billion dollars to duplicate the line from Beerburum to Landsborough. This would have provided an additional 150 weekly services for Sunshine Coast commuters and unlock the bottleneck for freight services, getting more cars and B-doubles off the Bruce Highway. Labor said that they could do infrastructure without raising taxes, cutting services or leasing assets. Well, they have whacked up the taxes, they have told complete whoppers about what they were going to do, but still there is nothing with regard to a plan for the rail line and nothing with regard to a plan for the Bruce Highway.

With regard to the Bruce Highway, I thank our federal colleagues Ted O'Brien, the member for Fairfax, and Andrew Wallace, the member for Fisher, for nearly a billion dollars for the project between the Caloundra Road—

(Time expired)

Whitsundays, Community Cabinet

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.39 pm): I thank the Mayor of Whitsunday Regional Council, Andrew Willcox, for the hospitality he and his councillors showed the member for Mirani and me when we visited his region to attend the Whitsunday community cabinet meeting. It was great to see Mackay Mayor Greg Williamson and Andrew Willcox share with the Deputy Premier the GW3 plans for the Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac regions. Mayor Baker was unable to attend the meeting due to commitments in her region, but on her behalf the other mayors outlined the plans they have for progressing the economic future of our great combined regions. Mayor Willcox certainly showed off the best of his region.

Many announcements made on the weekend and Monday were well received by locals. Minister Byrne gave an update on the planning for both the \$7.5 million Mackay and \$2.4 million Proserpine new fire stations. They will both be located out of the busy city centres, with modern, up-to-date facilities that will deliver a high standard of service in each community.

Already over 60 unemployed people in the Mackay-Whitsunday region have been engaged in work due to the Palaszczuk government's Back to Work program. I will share one story with members. D'artagnan is a business owner I spoke to about the program. He had in his business two volunteer workers who came in off the street, both of whom had been unemployed for over 12 months. He was telling me about how he would like to keep these two workers on in his business. D'artagnan applied for a payment for Jarrod and was able to get \$15,000. The process was very simple and quick. Because it was so simple and quick, he applied in relation to the second young man. With this money D'artagnan is going to buy new equipment and upgrade his workplace facilities. He has also been able to buy a machine to replace the screens on tablets and laptops. He is the only person in North Queensland who can do this. There are great outcomes from this program.


Also over the weekend, on the Sunday we were able to go down to Midge Point to visit the people there who have been battling erosion. They were so pleased to see the minister. They were also pleased to see Mayor Greg Williamson. Some \$20,000 has been given to that community to undertake a feasibility study. They were so pleased that they finally got the truth. They said that they had felt so let down by their member. They finally have an outcome.

Mr Cripps: They did not say that at all.

Mrs GILBERT: They certainly did.

(Time expired)

Mount Isa Electorate, Telecommunications

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (2.43 pm): I have watched with some curiosity the fuss that has been made in the media about the rail issues in Brisbane. On inquiry I learned that people were waiting 10 to 15 minutes for a train. Just prior to that time I had spent a couple of days with Helen Gluer and the minister. I was very interested that people were so worried about a 10- to 15-minute wait for a train when at the same time the people of Burketown and Gregory have been without phones for nine days. I know that this is a federal issue, but that issue should be everyone's concern. It is pretty upsetting and agitating for people in those communities to see on the front page of our newspapers that people are waiting 10 or 15 minutes for a train when they have been without phones for nine days. Annie Clarke, the former mayor of Burketown, has been sitting at the remote cattle station Brinawa Station by herself without a phone. I am being contacted via Facebook by people who are trying to get some action up there.


In order to provide some perspective, a couple of years ago the Inlander just failed to turn up for a CWA conference. People were told that they should make their own way on buses or in cars. No-one seems to worry about that. No-one seems to worry when people are stranded on Mornington Island for four weeks because the airport is not operating. That does not make the front page of the paper. No-one seems to be worried about that; they are worried about 10- or 15-minute delays.

In terms of issues with telecommunications in Karumba, we regularly get calls from Yvonne Tunney at Ash's fish and chip shop. In peak season, when she has 20 or 30 tourists lining up at the counter, EFTPOS may be down for the whole day so she has to conduct manual transactions. If we are serious about trying to promote and develop businesses in the north, we need to give as much consideration to the issues I have raised as we give to some travel inconvenience here. If I am in Brisbane I have the CityCat, buses and an extensive taxi service. I think a delay of 10 or 15 minutes on the rail network pales into insignificance when people are being left without phones for nine days. Telstra has something to answer for. Again, I know that this is a federal issue but everyone here should be aware of the difficulties faced by people.

I refer to the introduction of the national curriculum. The issues with telecommunications have affected schools also. Things come through on the phone. The satellite technology has not been what was expected. Either kids cannot download information from the internet because it is faulty or they have no phone to talk to their teachers. These are big problems.

(Time expired)

Wynnum Manly, Health Services

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.46 pm): Recently the Bayside had occasion for a joyful and important celebration. On 14 October the Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, health minister Cameron Dick, Auntie Merle, Nunukul Yuggera dancers, community leaders and community members gathered together for the ground breaking and sod turning at the Wynnum-Manly Community Health Centre Gundu Pa. Gundu Pa is a state-of-the-art contemporary public health centre and is the response the Wynnum Manly community worked for and deserves.


When I stood for election I made a commitment to Baysiders that decent local public health services would be retained in the Bayside, that there would be no job losses and that front-line health services would be retained in the Bayside. The Palaszczuk government has delivered on this commitment—another election commitment.

The Premier has always been a great advocate for the Wynnum-Manly community—right from the start. As leader of the opposition the now Premier, along with the member for Bundamba, Jo-Ann Miller, came along to our rallies to hear just how important retaining local health services was to the Wynnum-Manly community. The Premier had the grace to receive at the gates of Parliament House a shopping trolley full of petitions with over 15,000 signatures from the Wynnum-Manly community. It was no surprise that the Premier joined again with the Wynnum-Manly community to participate in this moving and joyful ceremony.

The Minister for Health, Cameron Dick, has ensured that our health centre will not only retain all existing health services but also deliver new and expanded services to better meet the needs of our growing community. Importantly, there will be no job losses. This important local project will deliver jobs in our community during the construction phase and into the future.

Our community was thrilled that the Premier could come back to where it all began and that the Palaszczuk government is delivering on another election commitment. Baysiders, like all Queenslanders, deserve good quality health services. Unlike those opposite, that is exactly what the Palaszczuk government is delivering. Those opposite sacked people. They closed the Moreton Bay nursing care unit and 85 residents lost their homes, and they cut services where they are needed the most. That is the clear difference between those opposite and the Palaszczuk government. The Palaszczuk government is delivering front-line services and delivering jobs now and into the future.


Pacific Surf Life Saving Club; Gold Coast Airport

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (2.49 pm): I congratulate one of our surf clubs on the Gold Coast. The Pacific Surf Life Saving Club, of which I have been a member for the past 25 years, recently won the Point Danger Branch club of the year. That put it into the running for club of the year for the state. It won that as well. This is a little club on the Gold Coast, in Palm Beach, that does not have any poker machines, does not have a restaurant and does not have any formal commercial activity. It runs a wedding every now and then and raises money from that, but most of the funding comes from members of the club. Once the club won the Club of the Year in Queensland, that put it in the running to be the Club of the Year in Australia and two weeks ago that event was held in Sydney and Pacific surf club won the Club of the Year in Australia. What a fantastic achievement for a little club like Pacific to win Club of the Year in Australia!

An emerging issue on the Gold Coast is the instrument landing system to be installed at the Gold Coast Airport. This issue will affect most electorates on the Gold Coast, especially the coastal electorates. This is something that I have supported for a number of years on safety grounds. Most members in the parliament would know that my background is as an aircraft engineer, so I know quite a bit about this issue. From a safety aspect, an ILS is the best form of equipment to get aeroplanes safely on the ground in bad weather. The unfortunate thing is that an ILS works in a straight line from the airport, and that will put aeroplanes over a lot more houses than present. When this is installed, that is going to have an effect on people.

It is high time that the federal government put in place some rules to say that aeroplanes should only fly that route in bad weather. Only in bad weather do I want to see aeroplanes using that route over houses, affecting people who live there. This afternoon I will be writing to federal members on the Gold Coast asking them to bring this forward as urgently as they can to try to get to a situation where the federal government and Airservices agree that they will instruct air traffic control to keep those aeroplanes on what is called the required navigation path, which is off the coast, and away from those houses to keep the noise down in order to keep the amenity of the people who live underneath the flight path as best they can. I will be urging them to get on with that as soon as possible.


Mental Health Services

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (2.52 pm): Following the nightmare years of the Newman-Nicholls government which saw mental health services cut in Queensland, I have been calling for more support for those people who need mental health support. Many Queenslanders were rightly horrified by the Newman-Nicholls LNP government's reckless decision to close the Barrett Adolescent Centre. It was a poor decision that had tragic consequences. Unlike the former LNP government, I am very proud to be part of a government that listens and gets on with the job of getting people the help they need. That is why I am very proud of the recent announcement by the Palaszczuk Labor government to adopt the recommendation of the commission of inquiry into the Barrett Adolescent Centre to build a new bed based extended treatment and rehabilitation facility for young people. I am very pleased that the Minister for Health is in the chamber this afternoon because he has been instrumental in ensuring that we deliver those additional mental health supports to young people in Queensland.

I am very pleased to see that this new support facility will be built on the Prince Charles Hospital campus on the north side of Brisbane which is only 30 minutes from Caboolture. This new support facility will be funded by the Palaszczuk Labor government and construction is due to begin next year. I note that over the coming months the government will work closely with experts, consumers and families to come up with a specific design for the facility. I welcome this approach because our government is a government of consultation and listening unlike the former LNP government, which was told by so many people—by patients, by experts, by the families of patients—about the importance of extended treatment and rehabilitation facilities for young people. The LNP did not listen and left a massive gap in the support services available to young Queenslanders with mental health needs.

This new bed based extended treatment and rehabilitation centre on the Prince Charles Hospital campus grounds will specifically provide support for young people living with severe and complex mental health issues. This government, the Palaszczuk Labor government, knows that a suite of treatment and rehabilitation supports are needed to provide a holistic approach to address the mental health needs of young people. A continuum of care is needed to enable our young people to get the support they need. While I am very proud that a new bed based extended treatment and rehabilitation centre will be built on the north side of Brisbane, I am also very proud that this Palaszczuk Labor government is also investing \$350 million in our five-year mental health plan. This investment includes more support for alcohol and drug support services and new community based youth mental health teams on the ground across Queensland. I commend the Palaszczuk Labor government for working hard to provide extra services and resources to support at-risk local adolescents in the most appropriate way.

Warrego Electorate, Banking Services


 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.55 pm): I rise to express disappointment on behalf of my constituents in the ANZ bank, Heritage Bank, Suncorp Bank and Bank of Queensland. The lack of business confidence in Queensland caused by the do-nothing Palaszczuk state Labor government is echoing in the financial sector. This is clearly evident in rural and regional communities, some of which are losing their only financial institution in the town. These institutions should extend the courtesy to meet with the affected communities and provide their customer usage rates on which they are making their decisions. Elderly members in the Warrego community are being discriminated against as many do not have access to a computer or feel comfortable accessing online platforms. The ANZ bank announced its branch closure in Jandowae despite the last two years of some of the best grain harvests on record and new solar farms recently approved in the region. A piggery expansion will enable the Jimbour abattoir to employ an estimated 45 additional staff. Many are expected to be located in Jandowae. ANZ was the only full bank in the community of Jandowae—a community which is surging ahead. ANZ might say it is 'Your world, your way', but in Jandowae they say it is not their world or their way.

Heritage Bank's motto is about people first. In Dirranbandi, Tara, Miles, Chinchilla, Meandarra and Roma, Heritage mini branches are being closed. It is the people of my electorate that are being put last. Pat Stephens runs a great local small business in Dirranbandi and advised me that he will not be able to bank third-party cheques into his account through Australia Post and nor will the agency carry enough cash to satisfy his business interests. He will now have to drive a 200-kilometre round trip to do his banking. Suncorp Bank has also announced its intention to close the branch in Miles. Miles will lose three banking institutions with the announcement of the closure of the Bank of Queensland with

the loss of three positions. In Miles they are finding it very hard to love the Bank of Queensland—or love any bank for that matter! The Western Downs Regional Council and I are working with major companies to encourage staff to live in the community of Miles.

These bank closures are at a time when the agricultural industries across the region are turning the corner from drought following good winter rains and strengthening commodity prices. To use Pat Stephens's words, we have to sometimes still use that old-fashioned item called cash and we need a financial institution to do that. I call on these banking institutions to reconsider their decisions and to continue to support rural communities just as those rural communities have previously supported the banks in their communities.

Calamvale Leopards Junior AFL Club

 **Mr PEGG** (Stretton—ALP) (2.57 pm): As members would know, commitment to sport and particularly junior sport is an important part of any community. There are significant health benefits of sport and physical activity, particularly for young people. The Calamvale Leopards Junior AFL Club is a very important club in my local area that does a lot of great work in our community promoting sport and physical activity for both young men and women. The Calamvale Leopards Junior AFL Club does wonderful work supporting players, their families, volunteers, coaches and supporters. I have been very privileged to attend games in the past and it has been wonderful to see the community atmosphere cheering on the active juniors in my local area. Recently I went to the Calamvale Leopards Youth Presentation Day. It was fantastic to see the young people in my electorate excelling in sport and getting recognised for their achievements. I particularly commend Garry Dunne and Lisa Mitchell and all the volunteers, parents, coaches and supporters for all the work that they do. The celebration recognised the fantastic achievements of the players, coaches and umpires.

This year some members of the Calamvale Leopards Junior AFL Club have been recognised by Brisbane Juniors. Tyson Elies was nominated into the final six nominees for Junior Club Volunteer of the Year and Joshua Smart was nominated for Junior Club Umpire of the Year. Alex Dunne was awarded the Brisbane Junior First Year Umpires Coaches Award. This was a massive achievement as it is the first time this has been awarded to anyone in the Calamvale Leopards. Another major award was for Female Coach of the Year awarded to Helena McNaught, the under-13s girls coach. Helena is a first-time coach, so this is also a particularly noteworthy achievement. The Calamvale Leopards Junior AFL Club has also seen success in massive growth in the number of teams entered this year. The teams added include two under-6 teams, under-11 girls, under-13 girls and under-17 boys. That is a net growth of seven teams meaning it fielded 19 teams in total this year.

As well as the great work they do on the field, it is their commitments off the field that they should be commended for. There were a significant number of events that the Calamvale Leopards hosted this year, including the Harcourts family fun day; the inaugural interclub challenge with Narangba footy club; hosting four weekends of grading fixtures at the start of the season; a pie drive; the Good for Footy national raffle; their gala dinner celebrating not only 150 years of AFL in Queensland but 16 years of the Leopards; and last but not least, they also hosted a weekend of finals footy.


Time and time again the Calamvale Leopards Junior AFL Club has done so much to support young men and women in my community to be active in sport and I thank them for all their hard work. 2016 was definitely a wonderful year for the Leopards and I am sure that 2017 will be another fantastic one for the mighty Leopards as well.

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INCLUSION OF 17-YEAR-OLD PERSONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 4149, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (3.00 pm), continuing: As I was saying before the break, it is important that our regulation will outline the types of transition examples that will need to be dealt with in 12 months time with the passing of the bill. It is neither appropriate nor responsible to seek to provide for the issues that

will arise through the transition in the bill itself. Such provisions are best prescribed in regulation through the development and identification of these issues through consultation with extensive stakeholders and relevant agencies over the coming months in the lead-up to the proclamation of the bill.

The complexity of young people's needs in the youth justice system means that a multiagency response is required. Youth justice has been preparing for many years for the inclusion of 17-year-olds. However, this bill, and the governance arrangements being established for the accompanying reform, will empower other government departments to prioritise the needs of this small but very complex cohort. The government has a clear plan for making this happen. The plan involves moving to an evidence based developmentally appropriate system which acknowledges the risks and needs of the different aged cohorts within youth justice. The plan is premised on careful assessment of each child and young person's development, cognitive ability, health, welfare and education needs. The plan is clear. What is yet to be bedded down is the operational detail of the plan which logically is best settled as close as possible to implementation to ensure its currency. This multifaceted response must also involve non-government organisations which is why the consultative arrangements to oversee the inclusion of 17-year-olds into the youth justice system are central to the transition process.

The intention to undertake a consultative process means that the plan to transition 17-year-olds into the youth justice system will be open and transparent and the transitional regulation will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders and agencies. The plan involves a comprehensive multiagency approach and youth justice will negotiate the implementation details and costs with other government departments over the coming months. Costs cannot be fully identified now as the whole-of-government process and implementation of new models of early intervention will influence important cost variables into the future. Some may seek to argue that this bill should not be passed until all of these practices are implemented and any savings can be quantified. However, this approach has been used as an excuse for not taking action for too long. The time has come to act and at some point we must stop putting this issue in the too-hard basket. This bill is the first step to address a long outstanding anomaly that has left Queensland out of step with the rest of the nation.

The LNP's call for a single dollar figure are indicative of its approach to governing: no consultation, no planning and ignoring the advice of its departments. It wasted millions of dollars on a youth justice system that, contrary to expert advice, completely failed to deliver the outcomes it promised. The issue of 17-year-olds straddling the youth justice system and the adult corrections system was one that the LNP had the opportunity to address. In fact, it did. However, instead of taking the opportunity to finally address this historic anomaly by moving all 17-year-olds into the youth justice system, it sought to push more 17-year-olds out into the adult system by amending legislation to have 17-year-olds automatically transferred to the adult prison system upon turning 17 if they had six months left to serve. This was a lost opportunity.

In contrast, the Palaszczuk government is a progressive government with a strong reform agenda. We listen to the people: to experts, to stakeholders and to our departments. We are a government that plans. Our approach ensures changes are carefully developed and implemented across government departments. This approach assures the community and the parliament that the reforms make the most of existing investments in government services and that they achieve the best outcomes in the most efficient way possible. Without change to existing policy, practice and service delivery across government for young people in youth justice, the need to build a new detention facility at an approximate cost of \$400 million is inevitable in the near term based on population growth alone. Similarly, a straightforward transfer of 17-year-olds into the system would require this expansion immediately. That is why we do not intend to progress in this way. Our government is taking a multifaceted approach to this reform because we believe in justice reinvestment. This is why we are developing and delivering transitional arrangements through a whole-of-government focus and in consultation with stakeholders. This approach will address costs over the long term by investing in programs that will have a real and positive effect on the rates of youth offending and recidivism. Addressing the underlying causes of offending and reoffending will not only create capacity within our existing resources, it will make our communities safer.

Youth justice is already implementing a range of multiagency interventions that will be expanded and enhanced in the context of the integration of 17-year-olds in the youth justice system. Early results from these initiatives point to less offending by these particular young people and re-engagement with education and training. Each of these initiatives has the potential to reduce the number of young people held in remand and those returning to the detention population. These initiatives include Transition to Success; trauma informed practice, which is a strengths based framework that recognises the impact trauma can have on the developing brain; the reinstatement of court ordered youth justice conferencing, which is a restorative justice response to youth offending; conditional bail programs that are delivered

to young people at high risk of being remanded in custody; intensive case management with chronic violent offenders and their families in a program that assists young people and their families with multiple and complex needs by providing individualised intensive support and rehabilitation programs.

Members should be aware that youth justice already has 17- and 18-year-olds in detention as a result of sentence orders imposed for offences committed whilst those young people were under 17. Youth justice already manages the risk of having older teenagers in the same facility as younger children. Current practices exist to ensure the safety of all young people in detention. Separation as a way of safely managing young people is not a new practice. Young people are separated based on age, gender, legal status and nature of offending, as well as risk to self and others. Youth justice also operates a low operational-staff-to-detainee ratio of four to one, resulting in close supervision.

All of these strategies are aimed at minimising the risk of young people being adversely affected by older cohorts. The transition of 17-year-olds into the youth justice system will, of course, change the profile of the cohort, but will not introduce new risks to detention centres. As part of the government's broader reforms, youth justice will be presenting options relating to 10- to 13-year-olds in the youth justice system for the consideration of the key agencies group and the cabinet subcommittee. The first meetings of the key agencies group and cabinet subcommittee are planned for November and December respectively should the bill pass. These fora will ensure the relevant government departments are empowered to reconfigure service delivery policies and practices as necessary to ensure the safe transfer of 17-year-olds from the adult system into the youth justice system.

Providing vocational education opportunities in youth detention is a high priority for this government because the evidence shows that participation in education and training is fundamental to reducing recidivism. One strategy that will assist with this is the expansion of youth justice's successful Transition to Success vocational program. This program provides an alternative education and training pathway that also assists young people to develop the social and life skills they need to sustain employment.

In 2017, this will form part of the transition process from Queensland's detention centres to support young people's reintegration into their community. The Transition to Success program is supporting young offenders to engage in further training, study and employment. The program is generating positive early results in reduced recidivism and will benefit 17-year-olds when they are transitioned into the youth justice system. Bringing 17-year-old offenders into the youth justice system is the right thing to do.

This bill presents an historic opportunity for each of us in this parliament. As put so well by the Anglican Church Southern Queensland Social Responsibilities Committee in its submission to the committee—

It is critical therefore that support for this Bill is not derailed by a preoccupation with possible short term budget implications. Youth Justice is a complex issue, requiring multi-pronged responses from diverse parts of the system, and a holistic view of where our fiscal investments should be made. We use the word 'investment' advisedly, because choosing how Government dollars are spent on behalf of Queenslanders reflects both the need for good stewardship of resources, informed by sound evidence of what works; and the priorities and values we hold as a community—whether we choose to invest in communities and the lives of young people, or in more prison beds.

I am proud to be part of a government that is delivering such an historic and overdue reform to the youth justice system in Queensland. I commend the bill to this House.

An incident having occurred in the public gallery—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask people in the gallery not to clap or make any noises, please.



Mr WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (3.10 pm): I rise to address the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016, which seeks to fundamentally change the structure of our youth justice system in Queensland. In terms of background to the current system, the explanatory notes state—

The youth justice system in Queensland currently applies to young people aged between 10 and 16 years of age, with young people alleged to have committed offences as 17-year-olds treated as adults in the criminal justice system. Inclusion of 17-year-olds in the adult criminal justice system is inconsistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the law in all other Australian states and territories. It is also inconsistent with a substantial body of Queensland and Commonwealth law, which defines adulthood at 18 years.

When the Juvenile Justice Bill 1992 (which was re-named the Youth Justice Act 1992 ... in 2010) was introduced into Parliament in 1992, the Government was committed to increasing the upper age limit to the age of majority. Due to significant resource implications associated with the inclusion of 17-year-olds in the youth justice system, it was not possible to give effect to that intention immediately.

That is what the government said about this matter when it introduced the legislation.

At the outset, I wish to read out the following statement, which I believe is a well-articulated position on what is, as the Attorney-General acknowledged, a very complex issue. I quote—

For every argument in favour of the move, there is an argument that can be put forward to support the status quo.

For example, it is the case that 17-year-olds would not necessarily be always better off if they were transferred to the juvenile justice system.

This is because when determining a penalty against an adult offender, the court can take into account prior offences for which the adult has a conviction recorded as a child, whereas in the juvenile system any finding of guilt can be taken into account regardless of whether a conviction is recorded.

This may be offset by reduced penalties generally applying in the juvenile system, but it could also mean an increased likelihood of being sentenced to a period of detention.

As well, some judges may be reluctant to sentence a 17-year-old to detention in the adult system, but be more inclined to do so in the youth system.

In adult prisons, 17-year-olds have access to specialised programs that are tailored to meet a range of needs.

On this point the quote continues—

These include educational, vocational, substance abuse treatment, anger management, life skills like budgeting and applying for jobs, as well as programs to address specific offending behaviour.

Seventeen year olds are also able to access transition support and reintegration processes, to give them the best chance of remaining crime free once released.

Members might ask who said that. It was Labor's then minister for communities, Warren Pitt, who was in the gallery only a few days ago. He said that in 2007 when this issue was raised as part of a youth justice review. That was a practical position that Labor took at that time, despite and notwithstanding what their formal policy position might have stated. It resonates with the position taken by seven Labor attorneys-general since 1992, when this law was first introduced and when, as has been said, a mechanism was contained in the act for a regulation that could change 17 to 18. From 1989 to 1995, Dean Wells did not do anything about it. From 1995 to 1996 and then from 1998 to 2001, Matt Foley felt content to leave this where it was, given the complexities involved. From 2001 to 2005, Rob Welford was quite satisfied to leave this as it was. From 2005 to 2006, Linda Lavarch was quite content—

Mr Langbroek: Old guard.

Mr WALKER: I do not know about the factional battles. I will leave that to the experts. From 2005 to 2006, while she was attorney-general Linda Lavarch did nothing about it. She was content to leave the present situation alone. From 2006 to 2009, Kerry Shine did not trigger this provision.

Mr Power interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Member for Logan, I will warn you under standing order 253A. To make sure that everybody is aware, the warnings start again after lunch.

Mr WALKER: From 2009 to 2011, Attorney-General Cameron Dick, of all people, understood the intricate problems with this and did not make the change. Paul Lucas was attorney-general from 2011 to 2012 and acted similarly. However, today this Attorney-General stands up and says that the LNP government had the chance to do something about this, but did nothing. I say that seven Labor attorneys-general had the chance to do something about it, but did nothing. The reason that they did not do something about it was because there are, indeed, very complex issues at hand and they are ones that the Attorney-General has not addressed. I will come to that in a moment. In 2007 when Mr Pitt made the comments that I quoted, Labor understood how complicated and complex this issue is and made no change to the arrangements. They knew that any transition policy had to be crystal clear and that the financial implications of change had to be recognised and dealt with. Ten years later, those policy and budgetary challenges have not changed and certainly are not dealt with in this bill.

The explanatory notes state that the bill before the House has two key objectives, which are to—

- Increase the upper age of who is a child for the purposes of the Youth Justice Act 1992, from 16 years to 17 years; and
- Establish a regulation-making power to provide transitional arrangements for the transfer of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system to the youth justice system.

This is happening at a time when the Victorian Labor government has mooted going exactly the other way, taking 17-year-olds out of the youth justice system and putting them into the adult system. The key to this matter came today from the Attorney-General in the very first paragraph of her speech. She described this bill as a catalyst for discussion. A bill that goes through this House and becomes the law of this land is not a catalyst for discussion. A bill that passes this House becomes the law of the

land and is not the beginning of a conversation; it is the end of a conversation. Today the problem is that we have not had that conversation. Despite what the Attorney-General says about consultation, there was no broad consultation on this bill. I grant that it went through the normal committee process, but there was no broad consultation on it and no discussion within the public arena. The Attorney-General stands here and says that this bill is a catalyst for discussion about 17-year-olds in the youth justice system. A bill being passed through this parliament should not be a catalyst for discussion. The discussion has to happen first and the bill has to come second. That is precisely what has not happened here.

We have grave concerns over the rushed nature of this bill and the lack of detail around Labor's proposed transition plan. The Attorney-General tries to fob it off as a matter of detail, saying such things as, 'We'll get there closer to the time' and 'We'll work out who goes where'. However, it is much broader than that. All this bill does is sets a principle and then says, 'We'll propose to have a plan about a plan'.

The issues in our youth detention centres are incredibly complex and they deserve careful consideration to ensure that the response meets community standards. For the sake of these young people in detention and in the interests of keeping our community safe from offenders, both young and old, we simply cannot afford to get this wrong.

I have listened to the Attorney-General's introductory speech, I have read the explanatory notes, I have read the bill and I have read the departmental briefing to the committee and through all of that Labor still has not explained how they will manage the delicate process of transitioning 17-year-olds alongside much younger children. The last thing we want is 17-year-olds teaching younger juvenile detainees, some as young as 10, how to be savvy criminals. Let us be clear, these 17-year-old offenders presently include armed robbers, those who have committed violent assaults and, in the past, even more serious offenders. There is grave danger in locating them with younger offenders.

So unclear is the Palaszczuk Labor government's plan that it still has not figured out what the final cost will be. We are not talking chickenfeed. The explanatory notes state that cost of implementation will be dealt with in this way. They state—

The cost of implementing the Bill would be substantial without accompanying reforms, such as diverting young people from the criminal justice system to effective alternative programs that reduce offending and reduce the numbers of young people in custody on remand. Without such reforms, a dedicated new youth detention centre would be required at an estimated cost of \$400 million.

Precise and complete identification of the costs associated with transferring 17-year-olds into the youth justice system and implementing the range of strategies identified as required, will be one of the responsibilities of a Key Agencies/Whole of Government panel that will be established to lead implementation of the Bill.

Day to day operational costs associated with inclusion of 17-year-olds to the Youth Justice system is estimated to cost Government in the order of \$44 million per annum. However, this figure does not include an estimate of the cost of any remand reduction strategies arising from the work of the Key Agencies/Whole of Government panel.

I repeat that what the government has said in the explanatory notes is that precise and complete identification of the costs associated with transferring these people is not available. That was clear from the departmental briefing as well. As I said, we are not talking about small amounts of money. We are talking about \$400 million, if nothing else changes, to provide a new youth detention centre.

The only argument the government has is that this money might be saved if, what are called, remand reduction strategies are put in place. What reforms are they? What are these remand reduction strategies? We know that Labor has already watered down the 2014 youth justice laws that were put in place at that time and did that without a proper review.

What else do they have up their sleeve? They should come clean and explain what policies they are referring to. We know that they want to divert as many people from detention as possible because they are notoriously soft on crime and they cannot manage the prisons. As at 1 September there were 49 17-year-olds in the custody of Corrective Services, separated from the remainder of the adult prison population. I reiterate that figure in relation to the costs that have been talked about. The cost that the government is expecting to incur is \$400 million to house 49 people—members can do the maths themselves as to the intensity of the cost that is proposed—plus a recurring expense of \$44 million per annum for 49 people. As at 1 September there were 49 17-year-olds in the custody of Queensland Corrective Services. They were separated from the remainder of the adult prison population.

The government says that there may be a need to build a new youth detention centre at a cost of \$400 million, but it has not worked that out yet. That is one of the small details that the committee working on this will attend to. In addition, the cost for these 49 detainees is estimated to be \$44 million a year but maybe more.

We must remember that the government is already facing a spending catastrophe in prisons and detention centres. The Ombudsman reported earlier this year that the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre is holding some 108 inmates more than it was built for, with women sharing cells and sleeping on the floor, their heads positioned near toilets. The Premier has said she is considering a new wing being built to resolve that issue.

Overnight we have heard reports about the Capricornia Correctional Centre having an overcrowding problem of about the same scale—about 100 or so inmates more than it can take. The police minister has said that the government will look at a business case to expand this prison by some 244 cells.

Let us pause there. That is a new wing of the women's prison that this government has to budget for. It is an extra 244 cells for the Capricornia Correctional Centre. It is now asking us to sign a blank cheque, both policy wise, as to how this transition is going to happen, and money wise, as to how it is going to happen. These are expensive projects and they are pressing issues. In addition to the women's prison and in addition to the Capricornia Correctional Centre we have casually thrown in the prospect of another \$400 million that this government has to find.

Where is that money coming from? Does the government have the money? On the quiet, I do not think they do, and yet they are wanting us to commit, by passing this bill today—because once we have passed it that is it—to the potential of that expenditure. That is absolutely unacceptable. Both the policy position and the costs of this proposal are yet to be determined. That is not good enough for such an important and sensitive issue.

Despite repeated requests for an urgent briefing on the youth justice review, the Attorney-General still has not provided the opposition with any detail or information more than two months after it was announced. It seems that this Attorney-General is trying to deal with a portfolio position far too big for her. Whether it is judicial appointments which are behind, forgetting to appoint a review panel to conduct the local government election review, pushing back key decisions around lockout laws or being slow to appoint members to the Jobs Queensland board, the Attorney-General seems to epitomise the government—asleep at the wheel.

The Attorney-General needs to explain why this has been so rushed and poorly thought through. Despite this policy apparently being Labor Party policy for 24 years, 19 years of Labor governments and seven attorneys-general in that time have failed to address it. When they do come to look at it suddenly time is of the essence and the process is a complete rush job.

I suspect that the Attorney's heart is not in this. She is acutely aware of the policy and the budgetary challenges. She knows that this needs more thought. She has been gazumped by the health minister, of all people, who, out of the blue, publicly announced this, despite having been an attorney-general who could have done something about it, and without further ado the die is cast.

Why would we support anything that is clearly half baked? Labor has a chequered history when it comes to youth justice issues and dealing with youth crime. They repealed the LNP's 2014 youth justice amendments without review. That was odd for a government that has had a review into just about everything else on earth. Those reforms were beginning to show some success. I will concede that they were early signs, but they were beginning to show some success.

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Mr WALKER: The 2014-15 Childrens Court annual report, Attorney, which was released in November 2015—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I mention to the Attorney and to the member that this is not about having a conversation across the chamber.

Mr WALKER: Thank you for your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. The 2014-15 Childrens Court annual report released in November 2015 indicated as follows—

The trend line in relation to the ten year comparison of the number of juvenile defendants disposed of in all Queensland Courts shows a slight increase, although in 2014/15, there was an 8.7% decrease from the previous year.

The trend line in relation to the ten year comparison of the number of charges against juvenile defendants continues to rise, although in 2014/15 there was a 4.9% decrease from the previous year.

The annual report also noted that—

In 2014/15, ten percent of juvenile offenders were responsible for 45 per cent of all proven offences.

It might have been just the alignment of the planets that meant that those decreases reported in 2014-15 occurred, but it is clear that they occurred against a rising trend and they occurred just after the LNP's reforms were put in place.

We have an issue in Queensland—and we have had it for a number of years—that is, that there is a repeat cohort of youth offenders who continually thumb their nose at the law and the authorities, particularly in regional Queensland. We know that Townsville, for example, is feeling this more than ever. The member for Everton and I have been to Townsville a number of times and that is the continual feedback to us. There are Facebook pages. There is plenty of online access to information which shows what a difficult issue this is for the people of Townsville—somewhat less so for the people of Cairns but for the people of Cairns as well. They know that this government is not supporting them in relation to the fight against youth crime.

This bill, like the youth justice bills from Labor we have seen before, fails to deal properly with the issue. The annual report which I spoke of earlier also made a number of other points that this government has continually failed to address, and that is in regard to the high rate of Indigenous incarceration rates in Queensland. The Childrens Court President, Michael Shanahan, notes—

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander juveniles continue to be over represented. In 2014/15 young Indigenous people accounted for 43% of all young people with a charge disposed of in a Queensland court. In 2014/15, 54% of the average daily number of juveniles in detention were Indigenous.

Again, the member for Everton and I had firsthand experience of that when we visited the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. It is very clear that there is a significant issue there with the gross over-representation of Indigenous detainees and the issues that that presents. Again, the government has failed to deal with this issue. We pointed it out in the debate in June when the first two youth justice bills were debated. As I said earlier, the comments in relation to this were made in the annual report going back to November 2015.

These two issues—the cohort of repeat youth offenders and the over-representation of Indigenous youth offenders—are important issues in the context of our entire youth justice system and the government have continually failed to respond. In the meantime, they have launched reviews into our parole system, the youth detention centres and how they are managed and now this issue—transitioning 17-year-olds out of the adult criminal justice system.

As I said before, regional Queensland continues to feel the issue of youth crime the hardest and there is no better example of this than in Townsville. At the committee hearings in January, Townsville Crime Alerts and Discussions group convenor, Tracey Bannerman, providing the following testimony to the committee—

On 1 December 2015 the Palaszczuk government released a statement announcing youth justice reforms. This government deemed these reforms did not work. How can the current government say something does not work if it has not been utilised properly? The government have been in power for 12 months now and during that time they have repeatedly said they would get tough on crime. In those 12 months they have not introduced any new policies or reforms in regard to combating juvenile crime. Instead, they have been busy trying to quash the previous government's reforms which were put in place by the LNP government because the public had had enough. The public were sick of hearing about crimes happening and having little to no feedback if the offenders were caught. We have yet to see the courts use these reforms to their full and proper potential so that they are actually given a chance to work.

Townsville fought hard for these reforms to be put in place because the residents felt that something needed to be done about the level of crime that their city was experiencing. People were frustrated by the lack of action against juveniles repeatedly committing crimes and hearing about them getting off with a slap on the wrist. Juveniles were using the court system like a revolving door.

I interpose that I expect the situation is getting worse and not better since Ms Bannerman made those statements, despite some fluffy attempts to disguise the problem with some interim and temporary arrangements the government has purported to make. At those same hearings, a sitting councillor at the time from the Townsville City Council, Gary Eddiehausen, provided the following evidence—

... Townsville is one of a number of regional cities in Queensland where juvenile crime is a significant issue and of real concern to many law-abiding residents. Such levels of crime have occurred in our city at a high level, and this has been the case for some years now. Our city's residents are sick to death of juvenile offenders, especially recidivist offenders, seemingly in a cycle of detention, immediate release and then a continuation of their activities and possibly back into custody again. They have little or no respect, as I said before. If these type of offenders, especially serious offenders, choose to continue with their life of crime, that is their personal choice.


Regional Queensland is struggling economically and, as a result, crime is on the increase. It is important that any strategy that is put in place recognises the issues that regional Queensland is facing and how best to deal with those issues. I repeat that with juvenile crime on the increase it puts further pressure on the government's rubbery \$400 million figure and their suggestion that strategies may be in place to ensure that that centre does not need to be built and that the \$400 million does not need to be spent.

When we were in government, our youth justice policy was guided by four key points: firstly, young people being held accountable for their actions and facing consequences for their offending; secondly, safer communities in Queensland; thirdly, opportunities for young people and their families to turn their lives around; and, fourthly, closing the revolving door of detention centres. What the government should have done before rushing this legislation into the House is to have a proper look at the structure of our system in Queensland, to formulate a proper policy and to cost it. I understand there has not been a broad review of the total system for decades. The problem is too important to be dealt with by rushing through the process and getting it wrong.

I want to put three clear questions to the Attorney-General because I have not heard them answered in her introductory speech, in the explanatory notes, in the departmental briefing or today. Firstly, does the government have a clear policy as to how 17-year-olds will be accommodated in youth detention? Will there be separate centres for 17-year-olds? How will very young detainees be protected from the influence of these older and wiser offenders? Secondly, is this proposal going to cost nothing or is it going to cost \$400 million in capital expenditure and \$44 million in recurrent expenditure or somewhere in between or somewhere more, or is the Attorney unable to say? I think I got part of the answer in the Attorney's speech today when she said, 'Costs cannot be identified now.' Thirdly, if the intention is to change laws to ensure that fewer offenders are placed in detention to save that expenditure that I just referred to, what changes are proposed and how can the Attorney guarantee that such changes will not put the community at risk by allowing offenders who should be in detention to remain at large?

The Attorney has not answered those questions, and I do not believe she can. This proposal is worse in fact than half baked—the government has not even identified the ingredients yet. The LNP will not be supporting these changes. We encourage the crossbenchers to look at the lack of detail in this bill and not just rubber stamp it because the government has rushed it through in the midst of a media crisis created by issues within the juvenile justice system.

The Attorney refers to the transition process as being one that just tidies up the details. It is far more than that. It goes to the very policy as to how we will deal with these matters. It goes to the very cost of how we are going to deal with them. If those matters cannot be identified, we are back in the position that Labor governments since 1992 have been in, that those seven attorneys-general have been in, and that they have not been able to find a solution for. It is not good enough to say that this is a catalyst for discussion and then to launch off and lock ourselves into a position when we do not know the answers to those questions. Like everything this government does, this is a reactive and poorly thought through process. We in the LNP cannot in all good conscience support legislation that has no articulated plan to implement its stated policy objectives and no detail as to how it will be funded.

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (3.38 pm): I rise to support the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016 as the chair of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee, whose responsibility it was to examine the bill in detail. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the many groups and organisations for their submissions and for those organisations that allowed the committee to come and visit; namely, the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre and the Stuart correctional centre, both located in beautiful downtown Townsville. I would also like to thank the members on both sides of the House who are members of the committee and, of course, the secretariat staff for their involvement in the examination of the bill.

Queensland's current approach to housing 17-year-olds in adult prisons differs from all other Australian states and is inconsistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Australia signed the convention on 22 August 1990 and ratified it on 17 December of the same year. There is broad recognition that 17-year-olds benefit from being included in the youth justice system rather than being treated as adults in a criminal justice system, specifically in relation to young people's neurological and cognitive development and the need for a justice system that responds to young people in a developmentally appropriate way. The department backed this up when it advised the committee during the public hearing that the youth justice system was a better fit for 17-year-old offenders especially in terms of outcomes in reducing recidivism. The department stated—

Our view is that, in terms of reducing the likelihood of reoffending, those young people are much better served by the intensive support and wraparound services they are able to access in a youth detention centre than they have access to in the adult system.

The committee received 16 submissions on this bill, and it is interesting to note that all 16 submitters supported the bill. In fact, there was no-one who came forward who opposed the bill. Most acknowledged that the reforms were long overdue. For example, the Queensland Council for Civil

Liberties applauds the government for finally taking steps to address the issue of bringing 17-year-olds into the youth justice system and under the authority of the Youth Justice Act, submitting that the failure of successful governments to deal with this issue over the last 24 years is unjustified.

The Youth Advocacy Centre, YAC, was extremely pleased to hear that the government's commitment to treat 17-year-olds as children under the Youth Justice Act was being actioned. They submitted—

This has been under discussion for nearly 30 years and we congratulate Premier Palaszczuk and Attorney-General D'Ath on being the ones to move from discussion to action.

Amnesty International is strongly supportive of the bill, submitting that it 'will bring Queensland into line with other jurisdictions in Australia as well as Australia's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child'. In expressing its support, Community Legal Centres Queensland submitted—

There should be a consistent definition of a "child" across State and Federal legislation. It is incomprehensible that a 17 year old is not old enough to vote, get married, obtain a passport in their own right or be sued but is old enough to face the adult criminal justice system.

The UQ Pro Bono Centre submitted—

The inconsistency between states is particularly arbitrary and problematic, as it is difficult to justify children being granted fewer fundamental rights depending on where they reside.

The YAC submission advised of the need for uniformity across all jurisdictions and was concerned about the anomalies created by the current inconsistencies. It stated—

Queensland is the only jurisdiction in Australia that continues to treat 17 year olds as adults ... It is not acceptable that how a child is treated in the criminal justice process depends on where they live in Australia ...

...

It cannot make sense that a 17 year old can be charged, tried and possibly detained as an adult in Coolangatta in Queensland while their mate literally across the road but who is technically in Tweed Heads in New South Wales is dealt with as a juvenile. The 17 year olds from Victoria and New South Wales coming to Queensland for "schoolies" celebrations—

which we will see on the Gold Coast glitter strip soon—

will not be aware that if they should get into trouble, they will be treated as adults.

What astounds me the most is that, while we have 16 submitters agreeing with the bill, the only group opposed to the bill were the three members of the committee from the opposition. Even the other members of the opposition seem to agree with the bill, as the *Courier-Mail* in an article on 28 October by Jason Tin titled 'LNP trio in way of jail law change' states—

LNP MPs sitting on a parliamentary committee tasked with examining Labor's proposed laws to get 17-year-olds out of adult prisons have declared they won't support them.

The Palaszczuk Government's decision to shift 17-year-olds was applauded by major advocacy groups and stakeholders, including the Queensland Law Society.

But LNP committee members Verity Barton, Mark Boothman and Steve Dickson have voiced their opposition to the legislation.

Opposition Justice spokesman Ian Walker yesterday appeared to distance the party's leadership team from the trio's lengthy submission.

This is not the first time the trio have got the team message wrong. Who can forget earlier this year when the LNP members of the committee did not support the ETISB Committee's estimates report and thereby effectively adopted the stance of not supporting the expenditure of the budget. Not only was this the first time in anyone's memory that opposition members did not support the expenditure and thereby put at risk the very functioning of the education department; when the vote was taken in the House the opposition did not support the stance by the LNP trio on the committee and in fact supported the estimates report. This will be the second strike against the LNP trio of the committee. We all know what happens at strike 3. Either they are getting the wrong advice or methinks there is skulduggery afoot.

We will hear from those opposite that there is no plan for the transition of 17-year-olds into youth detention centres in this bill. The transition of these young people will be complex, challenging, well planned, thorough and successful. When introducing the bill, the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice said—

The focus going forward for all government agencies will be on concrete and measurable strategies to reduce reoffending and remands in custody. A whole-of-government panel will be convened to oversee the development and implementation of programs and practices necessary to achieve these aims and safely integrate 17-year-olds within the youth justice service system. A stakeholder advisory group will also support and advise the government panel on this work. A cabinet subcommittee has been formed to oversee the progression of this work.

This was also supported by the department when addressing the committee's inquiry when it advised—

The work of the multiagency group gets underway and we start establishing, identifying and preparing for the various strategies that will be implemented. It will not just be one; it will be a number. We might find that we are ready for different cohorts at different times. There might be geographic differences. There are a whole range of options that are on the table. The way that this has been progressed provides for the flexibility for us to move with whatever works at the time.

This is the important part—

We will not be picking up 50 17-year-olds in a bus on day one and taking them to detention centres; a whole range of different options will be considered.

The YAC noted the complexity of the transition but believes the approach proposed in the bill 'seems a reasonable and practical way to proceed'. In particular, YAC welcomed the government's commitment to working with stakeholders on the detail that will be involved during the bill's transition phase. In addition to supporting the bill, Amnesty International recommended—

... the Parliament ensure the cabinet subcommittee, whole-of-government panel and Stakeholder Advisory Group charged with overseeing the transitional arrangements for the transfer of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system are advised and guided by relevant bodies including the First National Action Board, the Queensland Child and Family Commission and the Office of the Public Guardian.

Queensland Family and Child Commission, QFCC, believes that the 12-month implementation time frame will allow the appropriate consideration of establishing or strengthening safety measures for young detainees prior to the introduction of 17-year-olds into youth detention.

Those opposite will focus solely on the cost of this transition process. The department advised that approximately 80 per cent of young people in the youth justice system are on remand, requiring a median stay of around 14 days in detention centres. Notably, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are 23 times more likely to be held in detention than non-Indigenous people. It was interesting to hear the member for Mansfield say that we need to be doing something about that but within the next breath was sprouting that we should lock them up and throw away the key.

The department acknowledged that remand reduction strategies and reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in detention were key strategies to meeting the challenge of including 17-year-olds in the youth justice system. The department advised—

Central to this bill and one of the reasons it is such a transformational initiative really is that it does envisage a change to the way in which youth justice operates, and that is why it needs to be a multiagency approach. The aim is to not have to build, not have to immediately go to a \$400 million build because you are doing things like the remand reduction strategies.

This approach was supported by submitters. The Youth Advocacy Centre submitted—

There will clearly be costs involved in changing the situation (although presumably this was the same for Tasmania in 1998, the NT in 2000 and Victoria in 2004): however, these costs need to be balanced against the financial costs of ongoing involvement with the criminal justice system and the personal costs to victims of crime. Where a young person is sentenced to incarceration, the youth detention centre provide opportunities to attend the therapeutic program and participate in education which are not available in prison and therefore there is more likelihood that young people can be diverted. That is not to say that this is operating to its greatest potential at the moment, but monies invested appropriately here could save the significant cost of keeping an adult in prison for years into the future. Further, there is evidence to suggest that those going to prison are more likely to offend than those kept in the youth justice system with the costs that accompany that.

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland Social Responsibilities Committee believed the cost of implementing the bill was an investment that will benefit the community as a whole. They said—

It is critical therefore that support for this Bill is not derailed by a preoccupation with possible short term budget implications ... national and international evidence demonstrates that investing in rehabilitative and therapeutic responses that will help children in trouble—including 17 year olds—to become contributing members of our community, is both cost effective and future thinking.

The Community Legal Centres Queensland contended that the costs of the change 'are not prohibitive', submitting—


Considering the cost of imprisonment of one young person is approximately \$237,980 per year then diverting this to better funding diversionary methods would be more cost effective. By adopting preventative, therapeutic and rehabilitative approaches, it is possible to achieve far better outcomes than punitive measures.

It is clear. For almost 30 years, the government of the day has found this issue of moving 17-year-olds from adult prisons to youth detention centres too hard, too difficult. The Palaszczuk government has said there has been enough talk and it is now time for action. This bill will achieve what should have been done all those decades ago. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stewart, adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Rail, Timetable

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (3.52 pm), by leave: During question time today, I advised the House that my office had been advised of likely cancellations to tomorrow's Queensland Rail services. Following question time, I met with the acting CEO and other Queensland Rail personnel to be briefed on the nature of these service changes. As I have said since Tuesday, it is apparent that the former CEO's assurance that the interim timetable was sustainable was not correct. This is deeply disappointing. As a consequence of the interim timetable not delivering, the Premier ordered a permanent timetable be developed for the remainder of the year. That new seven-day timetable for the rest of 2016 will be released tomorrow and commence on Monday.

Tomorrow, however, there will be a required diminution of services across the rail network as we shift to the new sustainable 2016 timetable. Tomorrow we will be delivering 1,197 services on the CityTrain network. This means there will be 113 fewer services than the interim timetable, spread across the timetable. These services have been limited to off-peak times where possible. For customers with wait times of more than 30 minutes, alternative transport will be offered by station staff. TransLink and Queensland Rail will be communicating these changes immediately.


Tomorrow's cancellations rip the bandaid off the running sore that is an interim timetable that is not reliable enough for commuters. Commuters do not just want regular services; they want consistent services and a timetable they can rely upon. I again thank the hardworking train crew and station staff across the entire Queensland Rail network. That is my focus going forward. I thank the House.

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INCLUSION OF 17-YEAR-OLD PERSONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 4164, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.54 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill. At the outset, with the indulgence of the House, I would like to put on the record my congratulations to the Chicago Cubs, who after 108 years have broken the hoodoo and have broken the curse of the billy goat. As someone who used to live in Chicago—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Linard): Member for Broadwater, I am struggling to understand the relevance of your current comments.

Miss BARTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, as I said, with the indulgence of the House—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Broadwater, could we please get back to the bill.

Miss BARTON: It is nice to know that we cannot celebrate significant events around the world.

As I said, I rise to make a contribution to the debate. At the outset, I acknowledge my fellow members of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee. I would like to also acknowledge those who took the time to make submissions, the secretariat, representatives of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General as well as those from Corrective Services who in particular assisted the committee when we made a trip to Townsville to visit the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, as well as the Townsville Correctional Centre in Stuart.

As has been outlined by the shadow Attorney-General and member for Mansfield, the opposition will not be able to support this bill today and there are a number of reasons for that. The first one is that there has been no transition plan formulated at all by this government. Quite frankly, it is very disappointing that the parliament is today debating a motherhood statement. Today we are not talking about how this transition is going to happen. We are not talking about how 10- to 13-year-olds will be managed in youth detention facilities alongside 17-year-olds who may have committed some very serious indictable offences. We are not talking about what changes are going to be made in the youth justice space to see that we do not need to build a new youth detention facility at the cost of \$400 million. Instead, we are dealing with the motherhood statement that contained no plan. As the non-government members' statement of reservation said, 'At best there is a plan for a plan.'

One of the most concerning things for the non-government members—and I know the shadow Attorney-General and member for Mansfield touched on this—is that any detail of the transition plan is going to be provided to this parliament through regulation. That is incredibly disappointing. If this is the really significant transformational change that the government claim it is, why are they not trusting this entire parliament with the details of how they are going to transition 17-year-olds from adult correction facilities into youth detention facilities? There are 89 elected members who are here to be advocates for our community, but this abuse of the sovereignty of the parliament is a slap in the face of the Westminster traditions that we all seek to hold dear.

In a week and a fortnight where this government has demonstrated an inability to understand Westminster traditions and the principles of ministerial responsibility, it is no surprise that this government continues to abuse Westminster traditions. Every single component of the transitional plan is going to be provided by regulation. That is simply not good enough. There are 89 members of this House elected to make sure that any changes to legislation in Queensland are appropriate and that there are no unintended consequences. However, the abuse of the Westminster tradition and the abrogation of the sovereignty of parliament by doing everything through the regulation-making power is absolutely disgraceful. That is one of the reasons, as is outlined in the non-government members' statement of reservation, that the opposition is not in a position to be able to support the legislation before us today.

As I said, we are simply debating and discussing a motherhood statement. As the shadow Attorney-General has pointed out, there have been many opportunities for the Labor Party, if they cared about this issue, to do something. Most galling of all is the reason that we are even considering this motherhood statement is that the member for Woodridge came out and made a statement in September in relation to this issue. If the member for Woodridge had really cared about it, then perhaps he could have done something when he was the member for Greenslopes and the attorney-general of this state. What we have seen is a Labor Party divided and as a result we have a motherhood statement that this parliament is being asked to consider. As I say, the sovereignty of this parliament is being abused by entrusting all of the detail of how this process will work to a regulation. What this parliament is being asked to do is to trust a cabinet subcommittee, which is 47 per cent of cabinet, according to the department and the whole-of-government multiagency entity. We are being asked to put our trust and faith in them. It strikes me that if we are setting up a cabinet subcommittee where the membership is at the moment about 47 per cent, it might have been easier for the cabinet to consider how the transition phase would work in the first place and then bring to this place an actual bill that the parliament can genuinely consider. Given this government's love of inquiries, I am really surprised that we actually have not had an inquiry yet into why there is only a plan for a plan as opposed to actually having a plan.

One of the other significant concerns that the non-government members have above and beyond the abrogation and the abuse of the sovereignty of parliament is that there is a significant lack of detail around the cost. The explanatory notes mention a figure of \$44 million per annum and they also talk about a potential cost of \$400 million. When we had a public briefing with the department, members of the committee took the opportunity to find out a little bit more detail about the costings because \$44 million is a lot of money and \$400 million above and beyond that is a lot of money, as has been outlined by the shadow Attorney-General. What we were told by the department is that if there are no changes to the youth justice framework in this state and we move the 17-year-olds who are currently in the adult system into the youth detention facility and into the youth justice system, that will result in a cost of \$400 million for a new facility. The government says that they will not need to build a new youth detention facility because they have a plan. The only problem is we have no idea what that plan is. The opposition simply cannot put its trust and faith in this asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government's ability to actually manage the plan properly. A number of people have approached me in my community, other members of the committee and other members of the opposition with respect to concerns they have around this change.

The chair of the committee spoke about the fact that 16 people made a submission on the bill and supported it. In a state of four million people, 16 people writing submissions is not necessarily the only thing that we need to consider. As I say, a number of people have raised with me their concerns about how we are going to manage that. When we had the opportunity as a committee to visit the Cleveland youth detention facility, we were told about a particular individual who had committed some very serious and heinous crimes. That person was of age and was being moved to the Stuart correctional centre the next day. There are going to be 10- to 13-year-olds who are part of a very vulnerable cohort in youth detention facilities who are potentially going to be exposed to perpetrators of very, very serious indictable crimes, and at no point in time has any detail been provided to the committee or to this parliament about how that is going to be appropriately managed.

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Miss BARTON: I will take the interjection from the member for Currumbin. It is about risk management because as a parliament we need to have confidence in the ability of any facility to appropriately manage 17-year-olds alongside 10- to 13-year-olds. However, at the moment no plan has been announced; no detail of the transition has been announced, so how is the parliament supposed to have confidence in the government's ability to do something that it has not even at this stage worked out? It makes no sense that the opposition would be asked to support what is simply a motherhood statement and is a plan for a plan.

When the member for Woodridge first came out in September and said that he thought that it was time for 17-year-olds to no longer be in adult correctional facilities, the minister for corrections himself said that there were some practical issues that need to be considered. The shadow Attorney-General says that there are practical issues which need to be considered. The problem is the solution to those practical issues and the consideration of them has not as yet been provided to the committee nor have they been provided to the parliament. If the minister for corrections himself acknowledges that there are practical considerations that need to be dealt with and that there are practical issues which need to be considered, surely the minister for corrections himself acknowledges that it is unreasonable for this parliament to consider this bill without these considerations even being outlined as well as the solution.

What we have seen is this government has shown on a whole range of issues, particularly in the youth justice framework, that they are weak on crime. The shadow Attorney-General outlined a couple of months ago—I think it was during budget week when we were considering some changes to the youth justice legislation and also even earlier in this parliament when we were considering changes—some of the great reformatory things that we did in government and that we were starting to see some positive changes from that. It is of grave concern that we are now told by the department that they do not look at recidivism rates for those in youth detention or 17-year-olds in adult correctional facilities. How are we supposed to know what people are being placed in youth detention facilities and how appropriate it is for those 17-year-olds to be alongside 10-year-olds if we do not have an idea of how often they have been in detention or, indeed, their rate of recidivism?

When the committee visited the Cleveland youth detention facility—and can I place on the record again my thanks and acknowledgement for staff at the Cleveland youth detention facility for their hospitality and for taking their time to show members of the committee around—we had an opportunity to have a look at what kind of education is being offered. I know that the member for Albert in particular is very, very concerned about what kind of vocational educational opportunities there are for 15- and 16-year-olds and particularly 17-year-olds in youth detention facilities. Surely if we are going to have someone in a youth detention facility, we want to give them as many tools as possible to empower them to make positive change in their life. A great way that we can potentially do that is by providing them with an education so that when they leave a youth detention facility they can go out and get a job. I am sure that the member for Albert will touch on this in greater detail in his contribution. Certainly non-government members of the committee were very concerned that there were not sufficient resources to be able to provide a quality vocational education for those older juveniles in youth detention facilities, and that is quite concerning.

As I have said, we are simply dealing with a motherhood statement in the House today. It is reactionary. The government is divided. They have had ministers come out ahead of cabinet considering what it would do and say that change needs to be made. The real irony, of course, is that the first person to do that had the opportunity to do it when he was attorney-general and he squibbed it. The member for Townsville suggested that perhaps people were weak for not having done it before. Quite frankly, I am not sure that the member for Woodridge would appreciate being told that he did not have the courage to do something when he was the attorney-general. The reality is that it is rank hypocrisy for members of the Labor Party, who have had the opportunity in the past to make this change, when they are no longer the attorney-general to break cabinet ranks and come out and say, 'Well, we need to do something about it. It's time.' The person who should have been—


Mr DICK: I rise to a point of order. I find the words personally offensive. I ask the member to withdraw. As she well knows, the attorney-general in the Bligh government was not responsible for youth justice. It was her government, the Newman government, that conflated youth justice and I ask her to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Linard): Order! Member for Broadwater, the minister has asked that you withdraw. Do you withdraw?

Miss BARTON: I am happy to withdraw. As I was saying, it is disappointing that there are people who were members of the Bligh government who had an opportunity to make this change if they really, really cared, but perhaps there was a little bit of factional rumbling. Perhaps someone wanted to put forward their credentials to someone who might be about to seek a change of leadership. Perhaps they were putting forward their credentials to be considered as the treasurer of this state, or perhaps they were looking to be deputy premier to someone else. What we have seen is that people who had an opportunity before squibbed it, and they now come into this House and seek this change.

Of course the problem is that we now have a motherhood statement, and there is no real detail and there is no real plan. It is unfortunate that this government is absolutely abrogating the sovereignty of this parliament by asking us to put our trust and faith in a transition plan that does not even exist yet. It is absolutely disgraceful but, as I say, given this government's history of ignoring Westminster traditions it is hardly surprising that we again see Westminster traditions trashed by the Labor Party in this state because it seems that there is one rule for Labor and one rule for everyone else. Whether that is ministerial responsibility, whether that is the sovereignty of parliament, whether that is breaking a solemn commitment and promise to the people of Queensland, we again see that it is one rule for the Labor Party and one rule for everyone else.

As I say, this government has put in a motherhood statement and at best has a plan for a plan. It is disgraceful that this government would seek to come into this House and ask all 89 members to put their trust and faith in half of the cabinet—and then a multi-agency working group—to detail what this plan is going to be. We have seen very, very clearly that this Attorney-General and this government does not want to put a plan in front of the parliament, and that is an absolute disgrace. It is a slap in the face to Westminster tradition and a slap in the face to the people of Queensland who have elected 89 members to this House to make judgement calls about these things, and the 89 members do not get an opportunity to make that judgement call because there is no plan in place. As I say, at best there is a plan for a plan. The opposition cannot and will not support this bill, as has been outlined by the shadow Attorney-General, and I know that my colleagues on the non-government side of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee will also outline their concerns, as will a number of members of the opposition.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (4.13 pm): I rise to support the youth justice and other legislation amendment bill 2016. I would like to thank everyone on the committee: the chair, the deputy chair and opposition members, all of the people who made submissions and the secretariat. I would also like to thank the Attorney-General, who is doing a marvellous job. This is a passion of mine, and it is really good to see that the Attorney-General has stood up for the youth of this state. I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Labor government that is standing here for you.

As we know, 17-year-olds are completely different. We were all 17 once. I grew up in a pretty tough area out west, and I was a pretty handy young man in my young days. I was a wild young man, but I was very fortunate because I had very good parents and I came from a very loving and good family. When we drill down on a lot of what is happening with the youth, believe you me, what we heard from those opposite was a blast from the past. I thought I was back running for Keppel in 1995 and 1998, because the then member for Keppel was the National Party member, the Hon. Vince Lester. I am sure the other side of the House knew Vince Lester well. They have not changed, because in 1998 the then member for Keppel wanted to flog kids with a cat-o'-nine-tails. He said, 'The only way we can whip these kids into shape is with a cat-o'-nine-tails.'

You should always be careful what you wish for when you are talking about the youth, because I was in my campaign office in North Rockhampton and a gentleman came in one day. He called me a few unsavoury names—which I will not mention to the House—because I did not stand up with the member for Keppel and bash these children and whip them with a cat-o'-nine-tails. I told him my position, which is that kids are kids and education is the way to go and helping families—which the Labor government always does—to make sure that these children do not run off the rails. About six weeks later when I came back to my office the gentleman who had come into the campaign office approximately six weeks before wanting to whip kids asked if he could talk to me about his grandson. This is what you have to be careful of. I asked what was wrong with his grandson, and he said that his grandson had been led astray by a bunch of other young fellows. They robbed an old lady down in Lakes Creek. I said, 'Bring him out the back of the office.' He asked, 'What for?' I said, 'I'll just get the cat-o'-nine-tails out and we'll flog him to death out on the wheel.' He changed his opinion about whipping children from that day on. He thought the Labor policy was a good idea, which was family intervention and making sure that kids are educated and making sure that we are doing the right things.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: I will take that interjection from the member for Southern Downs because I have seen what happens after three years of their government. One of the things that touched me when I went to Townsville the other day—and I would like to thank the staff at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre—was how stark it was. When we walked through I asked the staff what happens at the youth detention centre, because it really touched me when you hear some of the horrific stories from some of the young blokes who are in the detention centre. Of course they are separated, so you are not going to get some of the harsh older people incarcerated with the young ones. The staff went through it and explained that to us, but one of the things that really touched me on that tour was how sterile everything is. When you go in there it is not warm, so if we are trying to put youths back on the right track it is not the right atmosphere. As far as I am concerned, it is not inviting that we are heading that way.

We heard the previous speaker talk about training, so I asked one of the staff members there about training and they said, 'No. That was cut. We lost all of our training under the Newman era.' I said, 'Pardon?' It took me back, because my idea as a father, a citizen of this great state and a member of parliament is that when a young bloke or a young lady goes off the rails, we train them to give them a better life and get them ready for the world outside again. It stunned me. I will not mention the officer's name because there could be retribution, but I asked, 'What do you mean?' They said, 'There's no training.' The training was cut in the youth detention centres, so we are locking these youths up in an environment where there is no training.

Members opposite talked about being worried about training. There was no training in the Newman-Nicholls era—absolutely none. The whole training facility was closed down. It has taken a Labor government to start it back up again. That has been restarted by the education department. The education minister has actually kicked that in. Those opposite sit there and say that they are concerned. I feel like we are back in 1989: those opposite just want to lock people up and throw away the key and release these youths back onto the street.

I think this bill is correct. If you go through a correctional centre—I have been through plenty in my day—

Mr Stevens: They let you out?

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection from one of my old cell mates! I think we shared a cell. I have been through them in a work capacity.

Mr Stevens: You got retrained.

Mr SAUNDERS: I learned from the member opposite to read Best Bets; that is how I got retrained. I have been through a lot of correctional centres in my capacity with the Together union and in my work life. They are not friendly places. Those opposite would have people believe that correctional centres are holiday camps where people lie around on lounges and have drinks brought to them. They are not holiday camps.

One of the things that always strikes me when I walk into a correctional centre with the officers is the sound of the door banging behind me—and I am a grown man. That is not a very good feeling. By putting 17-year-olds in with grown men, especially in the male correctional centres, all we are doing is setting them up to fail.

Mr King: Criminal for life.

Mr SAUNDERS: That is exactly right: we are setting them up to be criminals for life. They do an apprenticeship in there. Our best chance of putting these kids on the right track is to utilise the youth justice system and make sure they are trained.

Through the communities minister we got a bit of money into my electorate. In this regard I was speaking to the regional manager for Act for Kids, David Swain. We have seen a difference since this government came to power in terms of the families that have been saved by early intervention. This is a credit to not only the communities minister but also the Attorney-General. Some 138 families in the Wide Bay region that were at risk of youth offending have been saved. That has occurred because the money from this Labor government has been reinvested into making sure—not only for the youth but also for the families—these kids have a future in life. It saddens me to see that those opposite are not willing to give these youths a second chance. A lot of people in society have had a second chance. I heard some horrific stories as a member of the committee. What some of these youths have seen is a bit distressing. What they have seen we may never see in our lifetimes, yet we expect those kids to bounce back with no intervention or help from the government.

Some members opposite talked about their constituents. Last year in Hervey Bay I ran into a young girl who got a second chance from a program under the previous government. She was telling me about her lifestyle. This is what we have to think about when we are talking about youths and young

offenders. Every time she came home she did not have anything to eat. Every time her mother got a new partner she was sent out on to the street—at 14 or 15 years of age. This young lady has turned her life around thanks to the programs that were put place in the Bligh era. I always think of this young lady and what chance she would have had. She was living on the street, and the more she broke the law the more she felt accepted by the group of youths she was hanging around with. She never got that from home. Opposition members do not understand that—

Ms Boyd: Too privileged.

Mr SAUNDERS: A lot of them are privileged. They have not seen what we have seen. They do not understand that these youths are not born like that. We as a government and as citizens of this state and this country have a moral obligation to make sure these youths—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: The interjection of the Southern Downs helps us to understand why they think that way. We saw his actions when he was a minister of the Crown. I do not have to go into that, but—

Mr Springborg: What, cutting the dental waiting lists in Maryborough?

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection. You cut it down because of federal intervention. You got the Gillard money. I can tell you that now because I have the facts and figures to prove it. That was all Gillard money and you took credit for it.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Linard): Member for Maryborough, I ask that you direct your comments through the chair.

Mr SAUNDERS: Sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker. Their comments upset me. This is a very touchy subject. When I see the attitudes of those opposite, it is no wonder the state was in such disarray for three years. It is no wonder people could not wait to turn them out.


Mr Mander: Twelve more months.

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection—

Mr Mander: Six months.

Mr SAUNDERS: It does not matter how long it is because they will not get back into government. The people have had enough of them. We have seen the attitude of those opposite here today. We, as a committed government, are trying to talk about the youth of our state and the future of our country, yet those opposite want to go back to the days of bringing people in in chains and tying them up.

As I did earlier, I congratulate the Attorney-General because she has done a wonderful job. She is standing up—someone has to—for the youth of this state, because those opposite would not stand up at all. I commend the bill to the House.


 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (4.26 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. The bill broadly seeks to move 17-year-olds from the adult justice system into the juvenile justice system. I note that the stated objectives of the bill are: to increase the upper age of who is a child for the purposes of the Youth Justice Act 1992 from 16 years to 17 years; and to establish a regulation-making power to provide transitional arrangements for the transfer of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system to the youth justice system.

The LNP opposition has taken the view that we will not be supporting the bill. We do not believe that this measure is in the best interests of the youth and adults who are currently in respective systems and of those who will enter the system in the future. Further, the cost of implementing the bill would be substantial without accompanying reforms such as diverting young people from the criminal justice system to effective alternative programs that reduce offending and reduce the number of young people in custody on remand. Without such reform, a dedicated new youth detention centre would potentially be required, at an estimated cost of \$400 million. The estimated cost to government for the day-to-day operational costs associated with the inclusion of 17-year-olds in the youth justice system is up to \$44 million per annum. I note that the bill was scrutinised by the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee. The committee, after due consideration, could not reach agreement on the passage of the bill, with the LNP committee members providing a statement of reservation.

I want to address just for a few minutes the related issue of youth violence and our juvenile justice system and a local application. Local Thornlands teenager Matthew Stanley was tragically killed in 2006 at age 15 from a violent incident at a teenage birthday party in Alexandra Hills in Redland City. Matthew was hit and killed by a drunken 16-year-old in what was described as a one-punch death or a coward's

punch death. The attacker was convicted of manslaughter and committed to juvenile detention. Over the years Matthew's father has shared some concerns that he has held with the juvenile justice system and how it dealt with the perpetrator and also with his family and that ultimately it did not adequately deal with the circumstances and the perpetrator as he felt it should. Paul Stanley went on to establish the Matthew Stanley Foundation to try to prevent such incidences of youth violence and we have learnt much since then about youth crime, youth violence and running our youth juvenile detention centres.

Following Matthew's death we saw the emergence of campaigns to educate children and adults about youth violence. The One Punch Can Kill campaign and Walk Away Chill Out initiative have been important to Clevelanders and all Queenslanders. I have spoken a number of times in this House about the work of Paul Stanley. I am proud of him as a father and an advocate for dealing with conflict in a peaceful manner. On 23 September just this year the Matthew Stanley Foundation commemorated the 10th anniversary of Matthew's death. A large portrait of Matthew was unveiled at the Alexandra Hills Hotel on 23 September. I was honoured to attend the unveiling alongside Paul Stanley, members and supporters of the Matthew Stanley Foundation, the artist and local dignitaries. Artist Bastian Allfrey did an amazing job of capturing the likeness of Matthew. Also in attendance was Deputy Mayor Wendy Boglary and former member for Cleveland Phil Weightman, who is the chairman of the board of trustees for the Matthew Stanley Foundation, and I want to acknowledge Phil for his role with the foundation. Paul Stanley has worked tirelessly conveying his antiviolence message to students across the state, including our own local schools in Redland City. The Walk Away Chill Out campaign has been extremely successful in highlighting the devastating consequences of violent and antisocial behaviour. Paul's work has no doubt prevented a number of young people from committing violent crimes and entering our juvenile detention system. In conclusion, I do not support the changes put forward in this bill.

 **Mr WILLIAMS** (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.32 pm): I rise in support of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill. This bill represents an important step in youth justice in Queensland's criminal justice system. The bill was introduced on 15 September 2016 and was referred to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee for scrutiny. The report was tabled on 27 October 2016. I thank the other members of the committee, the secretariat, Hansard, the Attorney-General's ministerial staff and the 16 submitters who all supported this bill. The issue at the core of this bill is not new. The treatment of 17-year-olds in the adult criminal justice system has been of concern for more than two decades. The bill changes the Youth Justice Act 1992 with respect to the definition of a child, the change from under 17 to under 18 years. Once again, following three years of LNP naval gazing under the Newman-Nicholls government, it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that has displayed leadership and determination to tackle this historic injustice. The government is doing so in a measured, sensible and proactive manner to transition to the new model.

The current youth justice system applies to young people aged between 10 and 16 years of age, with 17-year-olds treated under the adult justice system, leaving them to be incarcerated with adults. This is inconsistent with all other Australian states, not to mention the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as Queensland's definition of what constitutes an adult. Our 17-year-olds will continue to be imprisoned for at least 12 months after this bill commences and the bill provides for a transitional regulation-making power to ensure that its policy intent is realised. The commencement of the bill being delayed for 12 months from the date it is passed will allow the government and non-government agencies sufficient time to develop the operational detail for transitioning and implementation strategies reducing the number of youth in detention on remand.

All we see from those opposite is political games with the lives of these young people, remembering that this issue has been part of public debate for decades. It is just a game—showtime for the LNP. One might think that on an important issue like this bipartisanship might come to the fore or at least open genuine policy discussion would exist. The opposition members of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee have said that they did not support this bill, hiding behind their supposed concern for our transition plan. They have totally missed the point that this bill establishes a comprehensive transition plan to start the ball rolling. The process is a moving target. However, the plan is premised on a careful assessment of each child with regard to development, cognitive ability, health, welfare and education needs and is evidence based, encouraging multiple agencies, both government and non-government, to be involved.

The operational detail should logically not be finalised until close to the actual date of transition as variances will exist in terms of numbers, modelling, capabilities, capacities and several other factors. This facilitates innovative solutions using existing investment to achieve the desired outcomes in the most economical method of transition. The ongoing reform agenda is very clear in its objectives. It is

about reducing offending and reoffending and reducing the number of young people on remand. It is also about increasing the number of children and young people being successfully supported in the community and it is about increasing community safety. The evidence shows that children and young people's participation in education and training is fundamental to reduce recommitting offences. Vocational education opportunities for children and young people in youth detention and in the community are a fundamental priority of reform for this government. The Transition to Success program is an example of how this government is providing opportunities for young people to re-engage with education, training and skills and to intervene early for those at risk of entering the criminal justice system and doing away with the risk of them re-entering the justice system. Evidence suggests that it reduces offending by up to 85 per cent.

These amendments do not mean that we are going soft on crime in young people who have committed offences. They will be held accountable for their offending. The reforms in this bill are part of the government's broad reform agenda in youth justice and represent significant progressive reform in Queensland, and only the Palaszczuk government has committed to doing this long overdue reform. Let me turn to the statistics after sentencing. Some 55 per cent of non-violent crimes are moved from remand across, with 14 per cent being female and eight per cent being under 13. It is disappointing to see that 68 per cent in youth detention are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The committee visited the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in Townsville. I saw a very well organised centre. The demeanour of the youth was good. We were informed with certainty that inmate segregation was paramount and that 10- to 13-year-olds did not associate with 14- to 16-year-olds. I was content with the information provided to me which was in accord with my observations. It would, however, be remiss of me not to mention another observation, and here I digress from the bill.

Visiting the motor workshop, on entry I observed a metal detector wand. I saw benches, I saw cupboards, I saw a blue car, I saw a car hoist and I saw an outboard motor on a stand. I have to say that I was disappointed when I saw that the outboard motor was covered in dust. It was distressing to me because of the knowledge that 68 per cent of the youth in the detention centre were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and I question why the rehabilitation centre for these young people would not be teaching them to tune and repair outboard motors given that boats are the main form of transport in the Torres Strait Islands and teaching small engine mechanics to those from mainland communities, increasing the stature of these young people when they return to their communities so that they do not reoffend. I found the answer. The answer came by way of the realisation of the cuts that were made under the Newman-Nicholls rabble. The jobs of the teachers, the public servants, the people who would be there to teach these young people, were cut. No wonder those opposite are opposing this bill. We have a job to restore those positions.

In closing, I feel sorry for the trio—one in particular. I think it is pretty low that the deputy chair of the committee, the member for Broadwater, would lead the charge denying passage of this good bill. Like in estimates, becoming the underperformer she will be asked to fall upon her sword by those opposite to enable the preselection of David Crisafulli in her seat.


Mr Madden: Is that the plan?

Mr WILLIAMS: That is the plan.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr WILLIAMS: I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Millar): Order! Before we go to the next speaker. Member for Pumicestone, I was on my feet. Please be aware that when the Speaker is on his feet you sit down.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (4.42 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill. Like those speakers before me, I thank my fellow committee members, the chair and the deputy chair, the staff and everybody who participated. I thank individuals from the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre and the Townsville Correctional Centre for making our visit to a prison as acceptable as possible. I will not go into the fact that while there were no problems signing in and going through the security devices, some of the members had a lot of trouble trying to get out.

From the outset this was going to be a contentious issue for the committee to deal with. The subject matter has deep ramifications on the day-to-day lives of those serving in our youth detention facilities, especially those who are young in years. This places a massive responsibility on all the committee members to not just take it on faith that the department will be able to instigate procedures

to protect those younger youth serving in our youth detention facilities from the potential violence inflicted by those who are much older. I am talking about individuals who are the size of a fully grown adult; larger, one could say, than a lot of the individuals in this chamber here today. These individuals could possibly be responsible for the most horrendous crimes imaginable. We are not talking about the odd offence. To be placed in a prison or a youth detention centre a person must have committed multiple offences or offences that are classed as serious in the eyes of the community. There is always the chance of rehabilitation, the fear of entering these detention facilities as a deterrent and those wishing never to return. Sometimes deterrent is not enough and there are those in our society who wish to flout our laws and the liberties of others. There are those who are simply cruel at heart and have no conscience or respect for others and have their own twisted reality.

Many members in this chamber, if not all of them, have been contacted by those who have been victims of crime and possibly by families who have loved ones serving in detention centres. The majority of those families who have family members serving in detention centres wish their blood relatives who have committed crimes against our community a speedy transformation and reform. In recent times we have seen in media outlets where department regulations and planning have failed to protect the wellbeing of those most in need of guidance and protection. This is not a matter of blind trust in a world where some comic-book hero comes down to save the day; this is a hard, fast reality of our modern society. The protection of the individual is paramount.

When it comes to the wellbeing of members of society, Queenslanders and the people in our individual electorates have instilled in us that it is our role to perform to the best of our ability, even if that is creating laws so airtight and thorough that those who have deviated from the path that is acceptable to our society have a safe environment in which to reform. I am sorry, but I would fail in my obligation and the promise I gave the good people of the northern Gold Coast and southern Logan City if I did not perform my role in that way. It is the morally right thing to do to demand what regulations this Palaszczuk government has planned, if any, when it comes to developing a transition plan and how it will deal with adult sized prisoners around 10-year-old youths. Under the current system a 17-year-old prisoner is separated from the adult prison population. They are not allowed to interact. They are housed in a sea of concrete and steel. Those walls are a layer of protection from what is beyond and, potentially, protection from those in the general prison population.

Those opposite talk about United Nations conventions and discuss the broad benefits of including 17-year-old youths in youth detention centres, but these individuals are not gentle giants, they are there for a reason and let us not forget that. Placing these individuals with youths who are one-third their size creates serious concerns. Therefore, let us not talk about the broad benefits of a reoffending 17-year-old mixing with other juveniles as young as 10, 11 or 12. Let us not forget some of them have committed horrendous crimes. Fifty-two per cent of those currently in youth detention facilities have had prior admissions to detention. I should add that as the department did not collect the reoffending rates of those who have served in youth detention centres, it is unclear how high these numbers could really be.

In relation to the statement that the lack of vocational education training opportunities seriously hampers the ability of these youths to reform and give them the skills they need for future careers, as was stated by an officer in the detention centre, due to the varying sentences, some very short in duration, it is hard for a youth to complete even a single certificate module.

I note that at the facility we visited no current vocational education or training is occurring. I can certainly understand the concerns that the guards highlighted. However, if youth are there for only a very short time, there is not enough time for them to complete even a single certificate module, which defeats the purpose. We attended a workshop. There was a car and, as the member for Pumicestone highlighted, an outboard motor sitting idly by. Maybe in future legislation we should look at youth completing not just time but also some modules, so that they get some type of educational benefit to use when they leave.

My biggest concern with this bill is its lack of detail, especially around the transition plan and what it will cost the Queensland taxpayer. The explanatory notes refer to \$44 million per annum. However, the department acknowledges that it is difficult to put a cost on the transition, both initially and going forward. It should be noted that that cost does not include the cost of additional staff. Again, my concern is the lack of detail in the bill. In good conscience, I cannot support something where there is possible risk for younger offenders—that is, the ones who have a chance to reform and become meaningful members of society. I cannot support a piece of legislation that is paralysed with no plan. Therefore, I cannot support the bill.



Ms HOWARD (Ipswich—ALP) (4.51 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. In Australia, adulthood is defined to commence at the age of 18. Why then does the current youth justice system in Queensland apply only to young people between the ages of 10 and 16? Why are 17-year-olds in this state treated as adults in the criminal justice system? I believe that this approach is inconsistent within our own state and within the rest of Australia. The Palaszczuk government is committed to correcting this issue and to showing leadership with this amendment.

We believe that 17-year-olds must be given proper recognition under the law, which can only be done by ensuring that they are brought into the youth justice system. Seventeen-year-olds are still youths. They are not adults and, as such, they should not be treated as adults in the justice system. The benefits of including 17-year-olds in the youth justice system are nationally and internationally recognised. It is known that children's and young people's neurological and cognitive development is immature and incomplete. That means that they must be included in a criminal justice system that responds to that group in a developmentally appropriate manner. Including 17-year-olds in the youth justice system allows an increased ability to divert them from the court system; gives them access to more age-appropriate education, training and specialised programs; reduces the exposure to adult offenders; allows for more intensive staff support and supervision in custody; and provides the sentencing principles of the Youth Justice Act to be applicable to them, which means that support and rehabilitation in the community is prioritised wherever practicable and appropriate.

This bill ensures that we are doing the right thing by the people of Queensland. It means that we will be in line with the rest of the nation and with international law and standards. Bringing 17-year-olds into the youth justice system will allow them and the victims of offences committed by them to benefit from the reinstatement of the restorative justice program. This reinstatement was made under the Palaszczuk government through the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 2016 and it took effect on 1 July this year.


The transition arrangements to move 17-year-olds into the youth justice system are complex. There are 50 or more 17-year-olds who need to be transitioned from adult custody and 200 or more 17-year-olds on supervision orders who need to be transitioned into the youth justice system. To ensure that the transition process is completed successfully, a key agencies whole-of-government panel, led by Youth Justice within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, will be convened to oversee the development and implementation of programs to safely integrate 17-year-olds into the youth justice framework. The key agencies whole-of-government working group will be supported by a stakeholder advisory group and can draw on the expertise of the Childrens Court Committee, chaired by the President of the Childrens Court, Judge Shanahan.

With this bill, the Palaszczuk government will establish a comprehensive transition plan to address and correct the issue of having 17-year-olds being treated as adults in the justice system. The plan is light years ahead of anything that the previous LNP government could have thought up. The bill, and the transition plan in it, is an evidence-based multiagency response and will be undertaken in collaboration with non-government service providers and advocates. It will ensure that the needs of 17-year-olds and all other stakeholders are addressed as 17-year-olds are transitioned into the youth justice system.

The transitioning of 17-year-olds into the youth justice system is not only the right thing to do; it is part of a broad reform agenda underway in youth justice. The objective of this ongoing reform is very clear: it is about reducing offending and reoffending; it is about reducing the number of young people in remand; it is about increasing the number of children and young people being successfully supported in the community; and it is about increasing community safety. The reform agenda is based on real evidence that shows that children's and young people's participation in education and training is fundamental to reducing recidivism. The government is doing this by ensuring that vocational education opportunities are available for children and young people in youth detention and in the community. In so doing, we are ensuring that community programs for young people are being funded. The \$325,000 commitment from the Treasurer for funding to be used to support young people in the community of Ipswich is a great example of that.

The bill ensures that the government is making the most of existing resources and investment. It is doing that by mandating that each government agency has to work flexibly to better target their services at the small but complex youth justice cohort. The comprehensive multiagency approach outlined in the bill will deliver reduced costs to government in the long run. It will mean that we can work more effectively with children and young people when they first come into contact with the youth justice system. It will mean that there is a greater likelihood that they can be diverted from a lifetime of involvement in the criminal justice system.

The amendments proposed by this bill do not mean that we are going soft on crime. Children and young people who commit offences will be held accountable for their offending and courts will continue to appraise appropriate outcomes for offending. The difference here is that, unlike the previous LNP government, this government is committed to reducing the number of children and young people who find themselves in the youth justice system and providing the support they need. The reforms in this bill are part of a broad government reform agenda in youth justice. The bill represents a significant and progressive reform for how 17-year-olds are treated in the Queensland justice system. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (4.57 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. Here we are again, with this soft-on-crime Labor government going soft on youth crime and putting young people at risk. We all know that the LNP is the party of law and order, and nowhere is that more evident than on the issue of youth justice. Here we have a Labor government with no real plan or transitional arrangement, on an ideological basis seeking to put 17-year-old prisoners in detention alongside children as young as 10. This Labor government is putting at risk the safety of young people in youth detention with a change to the law that means that it cannot guarantee the safety of children in detention. Once again we have a Labor government with no plan and no idea, implementing a change with far-reaching implications, with no regard to whether it will work.

As the shadow minister for youth and child safety, I am deeply concerned about the consequences of this bill, particularly as the Carmody inquiry found that 72 per cent of children and young people in the youth justice system were known to Child Safety. I am deeply concerned for those young children in detention who now may be exposed to much older prisoners who are entering the youth justice system despite having previously been tried and convicted as adults. Of course, this is nothing new under this Labor government. We have already seen those opposite repeal, without any regard for its repercussions, the LNP's 2014 youth justice reforms. Our reforms included naming and shaming repeat youth offenders, making breach of bail an offence and making youth crimes for which no conviction was recorded admissible in court if that person is sentenced when they reach adulthood. Our reforms, which provided a deterrent for young offenders and instilled confidence in our youth justice system, were tossed aside under this soft-on-crime Labor government. In doing so, there was no discussion and no consultation by this government.

Despite their love of reviews, there was no review when it came to repealing our youth justice reforms. What we are continuing to see with this bill is a lack of detail surrounding Labor's plan for youth detention. As we on this side of the House know from effectively managing our youth justice system during our time in government, youth detention is a complex issue. Sufficient planning and consideration needs to be in place before major changes, such as those that this bill would implement, are made.

Under this government we still see no plan and no transitional process outlined to manage the delicate process of transitioning 17-years-olds in detention to being detained alongside much younger children. Of course, then we have the cost. As is always the case under this Labor government and Labor governments of the past, we see a grand policy announcement with no plan to pay for it. We have a bill that will significantly increase the pressure on our youth detention system in Queensland and no detail from this government on how they will fund it.

We have seen the government outline an annual cost of \$44 million to bring less than 50 17-year-olds into youth detention, coupled with a possible new \$400 million youth detention centre. Despite this nearly half a billion dollar potential cost of this bill, we still have no indication from this government on what the final cost will be. From the start these reforms have been rushed and pushed through this parliament with no regard for those who are affected, no plan to mitigate the consequences, no plan for a transition and no idea of the cost.

In regional areas in particular we are seeing the impact of this government's policies. It is our youth in our communities that are suffering as a result. We have seen concerns raised that this government has introduced no plans to counteract the spread of youth crime and continues to ignore the way this issue is affecting regional areas.


In Townsville, where I visited just a few weeks ago, we had the Townsville Crime Alerts and Discussions group stating before a committee of this parliament that there have been no new policies and no new reforms to combat juvenile crime. Instead, in the words of the group, all we have seen is a government 'trying to squash the previous government's reforms which were put in place by the LNP because the public had had enough'.

This is an issue this government has time and time again failed to get right, putting our young people and communities at risk. The former LNP government had a plan which we were implementing to deter youth offenders and make our communities safer. Unfortunately, we have yet to see the same under this Labor government and it is our youth who will suffer the most.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by the Premier

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.01 pm): Under standing order 267, I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. It has come to my attention at 4.15 this afternoon that the Premier has deliberately misled the parliament this morning. In response to a question about the member for Bundaberg's outstanding debts the Premier said of the minister, 'She had paid those outstanding rates notices.' The minister has released a statement at 3.50 pm this afternoon which said, 'The Queensland branch of the ALP settled the account with the council yesterday.' I believe the Premier has deliberately misled the House and I intend to write to the Speaker about this matter for referral to the Ethics Committee. I table a copy of the *Hansard* with the Premier's answer and a copy of a media statement from this afternoon.

Tabled paper: Statement, undated, by the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Leanne Donaldson, regarding payment of outstanding rates [1996].


Tabled paper: Extract from *Record of Proceedings*, dated 3 November 2016, of a question without notice from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Tim Nicholls MP, to the Premier and Minister for the Arts, Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, regarding the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Leanne Donaldson [1997].

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Millar): Leader of the Opposition, please write to the Speaker.

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INCLUSION OF 17-YEAR-OLD PERSONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (5.02 pm): I rise to speak on the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill. I will be speaking against the bill. This bill typifies this Labor government's soft-on-crime approach. This bill shows that this Labor government is all about moral posturing and has no concern for practical implications. This bill shows that this Labor government is concerned about symbolism and not about community expectations. Probably most worrying is that this bill shows that this Palaszczuk Labor government is more concerned about the perpetrators of crime than the victims of crime.

Mr Harper: How did the boot camps go?

Mr MANDER: I will take that interjection and come back to boot camps in a moment. This government's record on youth justice is disgraceful. It is no coincidence that the youth crime rates in this state, particularly in regional areas—and particularly in this local member's area of Townsville and Thuringowa—have increased dramatically since this government has reversed the youth justice reforms that the LNP government introduced. As the shadow Attorney-General said earlier, these laws and reforms were introduced because the community was sick to the back teeth of continually living in fear on the streets and in their homes, particularly in Townsville and Cairns.

Mr Walker: And they're back to that again.

Mr MANDER: I take the interjection from the shadow Attorney-General. They are back to that again. We have a serious youth crime issue in this state.

In the *Townsville Bulletin* of 17 May 2016 Superintendent Glenn Kachel from the Townsville police stated—

We have a hardcore group of recidivist offenders who we are constantly dealing with ... 43% of our top 100 property crime offenders are aged 11-16.

What have they done?

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Thuringowa, the member for Everton is not taking your interjections. I would like to hear him.

Mr MANDER: This is what they have done. We made breach of bail an offence. Any common-sense person would say that that is a smart thing to do. What did they do? They reversed that. We said that no longer should incarceration be included in the law as a last resort for repeat offenders. What did they do? They reversed that. We said that some of these repeat offenders, some of these hardened youth offenders who have stolen 80, 90, 100 cars should be named and shamed. We also said that we need to look at other ways of dealing with some of these youth offenders. We said we need early intervention and diversionary programs. That is why we introduced the boot camps—the boot camps that were never given a full opportunity to be proven effective, despite some very promising signs. What has happened now?

Government members interjected.

Mr MANDER: I take the interjections from the members opposite. What has happened now is that the government realises that boot camps are an option, but the only thing is that they do not like the name 'boot camps'. What name do they use? In typical Labor fashion they call them 'culturally appropriate adventure learning programs'.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr MANDER: In brackets. I will take that interjection from my colleague from Whitsunday. That is what has happened. They have again refused to accept that the reforms that we brought in were effective and instead are now trying to use politically correct terms to change that.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Everton—

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Attorney-General! Member for Everton, you are provoking them. I ask that government members cease interjecting. Let us hear the member speak, please.

Mr MANDER: What has happened now is that we have a revolving door youth justice system in this state, particularly in Townsville and Cairns. There is nothing more frustrating for a police officer than to arrest a juvenile offender for a break and enter one night and then the next night arrest the same offender for stealing a motor vehicle. The people of Townsville and Cairns in particular are sick to death of this.

What was the response from this government? Initially there was not a problem, but obviously they did some polling in Townsville and realised that they are on the nose up there, particularly when it comes to law and order. All of a sudden we have a snap cabinet meeting up there for a week—

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the member for Whitsunday. The red army decided to spend a week there. Then we had some of the most innovative crime-fighting strategies ever heard of. The first one was 15 police recruits doing a doorknocking campaign.

Mr Costigan: No, they stole it from the Salvos.

Mr MANDER: There was some confusion about who it was. They were knocking on doors reminding people that it is their fault that their cars were getting knocked off and it is their fault that their houses were being broken into.

Once they realised how ridiculous that policy was and saw the response from the community they then decided that they were going to have a fly-in fly-out strike force. Some 30 extra police would come in for 30 days. Let us make this look good. Let us increase the number of arrests we have had. After 30 days they will go away and hope that nobody remembers that we had an issue there. I can tell the House that the residents of Cairns and Townsville do know that there is still an issue there, and they are sick of it.

Then they needed to think of something else. They saw the emergency services helicopter in the garage and said, 'Let's get that out there and pretend it's a police helicopter'—without any equipment, without anything appropriate whatsoever. Now we have police hanging out of a helicopter with their binoculars, looking down to see if they can see any crime in Townsville! It is absolutely ridiculous. What we know on this side of the House is that our police do a fantastic job. Policing is not the issue. The issue is the law, the legal framework that these police have to work within. They are also completely frustrated by this.


I argued that the decision by this soft-on-crime Labor government to transfer 17-year-olds out of the adult prison system is a knee-jerk reaction without due consideration. What happened is that the Premier, on the very rare occasion that she went on talkback radio, was asked a difficult question and then suddenly there is a \$400 million investment being announced without any consideration whatsoever. This is a simplistic response to a very, very complex issue.

There are good reasons for the current laws. They have been supported for years by both sides of government. Why would we want to mix hardened 17-year-old criminals with children as young as 10? Why would we want to do that? It makes absolutely no sense at all. Let us think of the logic of this. We have 17-year-olds in the adult prison system at the moment and they are segregated and kept separate. What is the solution? We are now going to move 17-year-olds into the youth justice system and have them segregated and kept separate. It is exactly the same thing but in a different context, and it is going to cost us \$44 million a year probably—maybe more—and probably a capital investment of around \$400 million. It is absolutely ridiculous. It is no wonder that when those investment decisions are made those on the other side of the House clocked up nearly \$80 billion of debt. We will watch that figure go up as we see more and more decisions like this implemented.

There needs to be a major review of the structure of the Queensland justice system. We have not had one in over 30 years. We need to look at this complex issue and give it due consideration, not a simple knee-jerk reaction. The profiles of 17-year-old offenders vary greatly. You have different levels of emotional maturity, you have varying physical capabilities and you have various degrees of offences committed. A 17-year-old convicted and incarcerated for car theft should be treated differently from a 17-year-old who has committed violent crimes like murder and rape. I do not think the public will be happy with murderers at 17 years of age going back into the youth justice system.

Mr Costigan: They'd be aghast.

Mr MANDER: They would be aghast. What is going to happen now is that 17-year-olds will be given more protection from incarceration. We will wait and see what the people of Townsville and Cairns think about that when they hear that the changes to the youth justice system mean that there will be an increased ability to divert people from the court system. They have already lost confidence in the government. When they see this bill, introduced once again by this Attorney-General, that confidence will be even lower.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (5.13 pm): I start by expressing my complete confidence in this outstanding Attorney-General and the reforms that she has ushered in under her stewardship in this very important portfolio. I must say that she is a million times better than her predecessor and I am happy to stand by this Attorney-General every time.

I rise to make a contribution to the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. I commend the government members of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee for their contribution to the consideration of this bill and their contribution to the committee report. I have read the report and I am very impressed with the government members' contribution.

This is a matter which has been before the Queensland parliament and before the people of Queensland for a long time. It has been something that I have been very interested in and very passionate about. I am very pleased that we will be ending, with the support of this House, an injustice in respect of how we have treated 17-year-olds in Queensland within the context of the criminal justice system.

As we know, in Queensland currently the law defines adulthood as commencing at the age of 18, except in the criminal justice system. By treating 17-year-olds as adults in the criminal justice system we are not just inconsistent within our own state and with the rest of Australia but also actually in breach of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This bill before the House will correct that situation.

I have an outstanding youth justice service located within the Morayfield electorate.

Mrs D'Ath: Hear, hear!

Mr RYAN: The Attorney-General has been there and has met with the hardworking youth justice staff. The Caboolture Youth Justice Centre, which is on Walkers Road at Morayfield, has been there for a number of years and has been working very hard with our local young people to ensure that they receive the support that they need to be positive contributors in our community, to make sure that where

young people find themselves on the wrong side of the law they receive the support that they need not only to address those troubles that they may have experienced but also to then go on and become positive contributors.


One of the services that is supported through the Caboolture Youth Justice Centre is the YJET program. Again, the Attorney-General is very well aware of the YJET program. The YJET program has been running for a number of years from that youth justice service. One of our community organised partners, Intercept, has been very involved in ensuring that we provide opportunities for those young children who are at risk of spending the rest of their lives engaged in the criminal justice system. Surely no-one in this House supports the outcome that young people could spend the rest of their lives engaged in the criminal justice system. Whatever we can do to ensure that those young people at risk get the support that they need to lead productive lives and lives that are free from being engaged in the criminal justice system is, I think, a paramount thing that we need to consider.

The YJET program provides opportunities for those young people who might not be engaged in school and who might be at risk of engaging in the criminal justice system. They provide those young people not only with educational support but also with the additional emotional and community support that they need to lead productive lives. A few years ago at one of the YJET graduations I heard a story from one of the parents about what the YJET program had meant to them and their young person. The program meant that their young person not only did not end up in jail but went on to continue engaging in family life, eventually going back to school and then getting a job. I think that that is testimony to the hard work of those people who are involved in the YJET program.

Another instance is when I ran into one of the mums of a graduate from the YJET program. Let us just call this young person Dylan. This mother said to me that she was pleased to see me at her son's graduation a few years ago. I said, 'What school did your son go to?' She said that he went to the YJET program at the Caboolture Youth Justice Centre. I try to never miss a YJET graduation. I asked what Dylan was up to. This mother said, 'Dylan has gone on to get an apprenticeship as a mechanic and he is earning more money now as an apprentice mechanic'—and we all know that apprentices do not earn that much money—'than our family has ever seen.' This is what gets me: Dylan's mother then said to me, 'We're just so proud of him.' That is the benefit of intervening early when we talk about youth justice. This is the benefit of making sure that we correct the injustice of 17-year-olds being considered to be part of the adult criminal justice system. This bill, of course, will correct that injustice.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of all the people at the Caboolture Youth Justice Centre. They do outstanding work and they have been leaders in their field for many years. I know that they have often won awards for the work they have done engaging young people in the community. Just a few years ago, before the youth justice changes of the Newman government, they achieved some outstanding results when it came to measuring recidivism in the Caboolture area, with the number of young people reoffending being some of the lowest numbers. That is because they adopt an approach of working with young people to ensure that they are given not only the incentives but also the support to lead productive lives and to contribute to our economy in ways that are of benefit to our community.

I am very pleased to see that we have taken the very courageous step to correct this injustice and ensure that the law in Queensland is not only consistent with the laws of Australia but also consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has taken a long time for us to get to this point. I must credit not only the Attorney-General but also the Premier for their outstanding leadership on this issue and for ensuring that Queensland is no longer inflicting this injustice on young people in our community. I hope that all members of the House will support this very courageous correction to the law in Queensland.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.21 pm): I rise to add my contribution to the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. The bill's objectives are to increase the upper age of who is a child for the purposes of the Youth Justice Act 1992 from 16 years to 17 years and to establish a regulation-making power to provide transitional arrangements for the transfer of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system to the youth justice system.

Notably, the committee could not reach agreement on whether or not the bill should be passed. Similarly when the youth justice bill was debated earlier this year, the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee could not reach agreement on whether or not that bill should be passed. Non-government committee members commenting on the earlier bill acknowledged that the bill did not address the fundamental and ongoing issue in youth justice in Queensland, and neither does this one, as was so ably articulated by the honourable member for Mansfield.

As part of Labor's revenge politics to undo everything the LNP did because they had no policy of their own, Labor repealed the LNP's 2014 youth justice reforms. Boot camp orders were removed from sentencing for children, publication of identifying information was prohibited, and breach of bail was removed as an offence. These laws were introduced by the LNP government as appropriate measures to tackle the rising problem of repeat offenders in Queensland, and they were working.

The LNP will be opposing the bill before us because we are not satisfied that the government can guarantee the safety of very young detainees—as young as 10—if 17-year-olds are moving into the juvenile justice system and the cost of the transition is not able to be determined as the transition plan is yet to be put in place. The issue of 'no plan, we'll make it up as we go' was of genuine concern to non-government members of the committee worried about the impact such interactions might have on those aged 10 to 13. I share those concerns, despite attempts of assurance by the Attorney. The department advised—

This issue has literally been on the books since 1992 ... so it is something that is talked about constantly in youth justice.

Labor have been in government for the major part of the past 20 years in Queensland and have admitted it has been constantly talked about, so why have they not got a transition plan in place? They have had, as I said, over 20 years.

The LNP has consistently expressed concerns about the lack of detail around Labor's proposed youth detention laws. Currently 17-year-olds in adult prisons cannot mix with the adult prison population—they are permanently separated—but without details this bill would allow them to be moving amongst persons as young as 10. Concerns have been raised about a lack of vocational training for this cohort should they be moved into juvenile detention, similar to teenage foster-kids over the years being lumped into motel rooms, given an Xbox and told to amuse themselves. Without tools and skills to gain employment, these young people are more likely to continue their criminal ways and choose to mix with others like them.

Non-government members of the committee feel it is important to ensure there are educational opportunities for those in detention to help curb recidivism. Departmental evidence showed that 52 per cent of those currently in youth detention facilities had a prior admission to detention, yet the department said they did not collect data of recidivism rates for those currently in detention facilities so it is unclear how many prior admissions there may have been. There has always been a gap between what Labor say they will do and what they actually do. Failure to collect accurate data after all these years is inexcusable.

We are told that approximately 55 17-year-olds will be transferring from adult prisons into the youth justice system. Ten of these young people will be sentenced and the remainder on remand are awaiting a court hearing. There were 210 17-year-olds on community based orders at the time of the department's briefing who would be transferred over to youth justice community based management supervision.

The explanatory notes acknowledge that the costs of implementing the bill would be substantial, even without accompanying youth justice reforms that reduce offending and reoffending and the numbers of young people in custody on remand. Saying costs are substantial is something of an understatement—a gross understatement at that—when costs are estimated to be some \$440 million at \$44 million per year for around 55 youth as well as the cost of remand reduction strategies and infrastructure.

As the member for Currumbin for almost 13 years, I have witnessed some pretty scary periods during that time when our youth were exhibiting unruly, reckless behaviours and taking to our suburban streets in their hundreds causing havoc as they went. Thankfully, due to a combined community and police approach we were able to curb those behaviours and prevent an escalation of events. I am very proud that I initiated an approach that saw our police and community working together in a truly cohesive way and supporting a range of initiatives implemented by some police who understood the power of a collaborative approach.

I commend the dedicated efforts of now Assistant Commissioner Brett Pointing, now Superintendent Jim Keogh and then Inspector Des Lacy, who worked tirelessly with the community to fix our wayward youth. Some of the initiatives like the Palm Beach CCC and a parent-led truancy task force had a huge impact in putting an end to these large gatherings of youth causing mayhem. That was a decade ago now, and the challenges, temptations, proliferation of social and digital media, and criminal activities facing our youth have escalated, especially when it comes to drugs. Not only are they more accessible; they are more dangerous in their potency and leading to acts of extreme violence.


At around 10.30 pm on Sunday, 10 April a group of 12 to 15 youths approached a stationary bus and started beating the door demanding to be let on. Using the emergency release button, one youth forced his way onto the bus and approached the driver, who told the boy the bus was not operational and told him to leave. The boy refused. Moments later the two became involved in a scuffle where the driver was punched in the face by the boy before two more members of the group entered the bus and began punching and kicking the driver.

It is common knowledge that juvenile offenders are often seen as soft targets by criminal gangs on the Gold Coast who entice them to join feeder clubs whose initiations and activities lead them to membership of adult clubs. The people of Currumbin and the greater Gold Coast are fearful that any weakening of the LNP's tough VLAD laws will make these youngsters even softer targets. Just recently there has been a spate of rock- and other missile-throwing incidents targeting buses during the school holiday period. The culprits have not been caught, but thousands of dollars worth of damage to bus windows has been caused that has taken them out of service.

Fare evasion is costing residents over \$25 million a year. Those opposite might snigger that these are not serious offences. However, I argue that some of the youth who get away with smaller offences go on to commit bigger crimes. You do not hear about some of the crimes committed by the worst juvenile offenders because the perpetrator is classified as a youth. Granted they are only few in number, but their offences are frightening including rape, attempted murder and assault. Do we really think it is okay to place these felons in the company of 10-, 11-, and 12-year-olds in youth detention? Well, I do not.

I doubt there is disagreement amongst honourable members that issues in our youth detention centres are incredibly complex and deserving of careful consideration, but words are cheap in politics and headlines are not worth the paper they are printed on if policies do not work—or, worse, they have the potential to cause harm to another younger cohort. Fifty-two per cent of youth in detention are repeat offenders. Labor's soft-on-crime approach means kids do not get pulled up early. Former New York mayor Giuliani referred to early intervention as the 'broken windows' policy which saw police and law enforcers crack down on the small stuff and send a message that breaking the law will not be tolerated.

I would like to commend local resident Ian Grace for his unswerving dedication to youth through the Palm Beach Youth Music Venture. For the past seven years, Ian has encouraged youth with musical aspirations to form bands and, with the help of some amazing mentors, showcase their talents at an annual concert. I am very proud to be the patron. Unfortunately, though, I imagine most of the 17-year-olds who would be affected by these new laws are well past the small stuff and, as repeat offenders, have the capacity to influence younger youth. Government members argue about the negative influence of adult prisons. I contend that the risk of harm and/or corruption to an easily led younger age group is far more alarming, but I bet there is not any data on that, and therein lies the problem. The LNP will be opposing this bill.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (5.30 pm): This Labor Palaszczuk government cannot even manage train timetables, so how can we trust them to manage something far more complex such as the transition of hardened 17-year-old criminals into the youth justice system? Sometimes things on the surface look attractive, but it is when you start to look at the detail that you realise you need a good plan and you need to know what you are doing. There should not be any naivety about this process.

My real concern has been outlined by a number of my colleagues. They have raised the concern that there is no plan to effectively make this transition and get the outcomes we all want to see—that is, fewer people committing crimes and fewer people being subjected to crime themselves. Clearly, there are valid concerns about the lack of detail around Labor's plan because this legislation is not accompanied by a plan; it is a headline with a power to transition 17-year-old criminals into the youth detention system but there is no detail as to how that is going to be done. That is where the real concern is.

How can we trust this Labor government when they have a litany of failed administration which have caused serious concerns? We have seen it with the Health payroll system and the devastation that caused for the health professionals. We have seen it in a number of other areas of administration. It is time there was recognition of this failed administration and shonky government because they have had a significant impact on people's everyday lives.

Mr FURNER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I refer to standing order 236. The member for Maroochydore is totally off track on this bill and is completely irrelevant to the youth justice bill before the chamber. I ask you to bring her back to being relevant.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): I am listening very carefully to the contribution of the member for Maroochydore. I would just remind her of the long title of the bill.

Ms SIMPSON: I remind the member who took offence to the fact that the government have a failed administration in regard to serious and complex issues and that they ignored that failed administration that this is entirely relevant to the issue before the House. The criticism that we in opposition have of this Labor government is that they cannot manage a chook raffle, let alone complex and difficult issues such as this.

I believe there are people of good intent who do want to see 17-year-olds removed from adult prisons for very laudable reasons. The concern we have raised is that any such transition has to be accompanied by an appropriate plan and consideration so there are no unintended consequences, but we have not seen that plan. I can hear the squawking of the member who took offence to the fact that I have raised this litany of failed administration of Labor governments in this state, and this government in particular, but we have to raise it here. It is not enough to have good intentions; the government has to have good actions and has to understand its plans and how to administer them. Otherwise, people will be more damaged than they already are and the circumstances of their lives of crime.

As my colleague the member for Everton outlined, not all 17-year-olds have committed the same level of crime. Some offenders have committed grievous crimes such as murder, while others have committed different levels of crime which, while necessitate them being brought into the criminal justice system, are not of the same gravity and they cannot be treated in the same way. There must be a realistic way of addressing the issue of how these 17-year-olds are dealt with in the criminal justice system.

This soft-on-crime Labor government have simply scrapped the LNP government's 2014 youth justice reforms without putting something else more effective in their place. Once again, they say they are going to make things better, but they have not in fact administered and brought about the very action they claimed they wanted to. They are simply about headlines rather than substance. In the last 12 months, they have not introduced any new policies or reforms with regard to effectively combating juvenile crime. One of the issues my colleagues have raised—and I will raise it here as well—is the need to address early intervention and prevention. One of the most cost-effective ways to address that range of crimes that people see reflected through the youth detention system and the adult criminal justice system is early intervention. It is always a lot more expensive to deal with people who are hardened in their criminal ways and have had years of criminal activity, whether as juveniles or as adults. Early intervention was the focus of the LNP's plan with some of our youth justice initiatives. This Labor government have been critical of those, but once again they have failed to deliver something better.

The issue of recidivism and breaking the cycle of recidivism is extremely significant. As my colleague the member for Everton also mentioned, there has been an ad hoc way of approaching a lot of these issues where really it is time there was a root-and-branch full understanding of the cycle of crime so we can see a real breakthrough in the way we address recidivism. There is also an issue around transition for people who are in detention or adult jails. The issue of reform while in jail and after jail has not yet been appropriately addressed. It is very much an ad hoc approach that we see from the Labor government.

The Labor government have now come up with a proposal to transfer 17-year-old offenders from the adult criminal justice system into the youth justice system without any tangible plan on how to deal with the practicalities of this change and in particular how to keep younger children safe and separate from these older 17-year-old criminals. They have talked about it in theory but there is no detail about how they will do it. From evidence provided to the committee, the government have no plan on how to manage the delicate process of transitioning these 17-year-olds into youth detention facilities alongside much younger children. How can the government guarantee the safety of very young detainees—some as young as 10—if 17-year-olds who may have committed serious offences are moved into the juvenile justice system? I have heard people say that they will all be separate and that is the practice, but once again I do not have the confidence that this government have the ability to achieve that or that they understand how to achieve it.


There has to be a change—not only in the number of people who are working in this system but also with the significant new facilities that will need to be physically built to do that. Furthermore, this asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government do not even have a clear picture of how much this plan would cost. They do not know what their plan is and they do not really know what it will cost. There has been

an estimate that it could be about \$44 million per annum. That is a pretty significant additional amount of money, but there have been forecasts that it will be far greater than that because of that physical rebuild that has to take place.

I know it is uncomfortable for many people opposite when we ask these questions, but it is reasonable to ask the questions. It is not enough to have good intentions. It is not enough to tick that little box and say, 'We have satisfied our need to be seen to be doing the right thing,' and then not have a plan to achieve that because outcomes matter; it is not just what they say they are going to do. Outcomes matter. Guess what? They did forget to include the cost of the additional staffing requirement over that \$44 million per annum guesstimate and that is something that we have a very valid concern about.

An answer to a recent question on notice revealed that, as at 1 September 2016, there were 14 17-year-olds in youth detention and 49 17-year-olds in adult prisons. I think it is important to note that 17-year-olds in adult prisons are accommodated together with other 17-year-olds away from the rest of the adult prison population. This means that the government is planning to spend at least \$44 million—and we know it is most likely going to be a lot more than that with the capital build—to bring fewer than 50 17-year-olds from adult prisons into youth detention centres. I will say that again: this Labor government is planning to spend at least \$44 million to bring fewer than 50 17-year-olds from adult prisons into youth detention centres. Labor's plan also indicates the possible need for a new \$400 million youth detention centre. We need more than good intentions; we need good actions. We need an overhaul in the way that recidivism, prevention and early intervention occurs not only with youth but also those in older age brackets. I would have welcomed a plan that sincerely addressed that. This legislation does not. Unfortunately, it is a damaging con because it does not provide the answers in a concrete way that will achieve those outcomes.

(Time expired)

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (5.41 pm): I rise to express my wholehearted support for this bill that removes 17-year-olds from the adult prison system. As many people in this House are aware, I have represented people in Queensland including many children. In fact, I have had the opportunity to visit most of the correctional centres throughout Australia. I know the challenges that face our front-line services: the police, the correctional officers and the youth workers. I know the challenges that face the parents and guardians of children who find themselves tangled up in the court system, often through no fault of their own. I have represented a child who was living in an industrial bin because he was too scared to go home. I have represented children from broken homes, I have represented children from good homes and I have represented children for whom no answer can be found. I have long been an advocate for these changes. The legislative change is well overdue. My friends at the Youth Advocacy Centre and other community legal centres have been campaigning passionately on this issue for almost 25 years. It is an area we have been talking about for this long and we long ago fell behind other states and the international standard.

The Palaszczuk government has made a clear commitment to a youth justice system based on restorative justice. We have already legislated to remove penalties and laws based on retribution rather than restoration such as the boot camps and the removal of the sentencing principle of detention as the last resort. In my opinion, a tough on crime approach towards young offenders does not act as an effective deterrent against reoffending but, rather, instils a sense of hopelessness and disconnection. Treating children as criminals and removing them from their homes and schools simply conveys the message that they do not belong in their community. I believe that when writing criminal law it must always be considered whether or not the state's response will do further harm to the community at large.

Despite our best efforts as a government, some children in this state are still struggling through life on a daily basis. Not all children are raised in a stable home with loving parents and food on the table. Not all children are encouraged to go to school every day and to treat others as they would like to be treated. I agree that this disadvantage does not excuse offences against the laws of our society, especially where the crimes are of a violent or sexual nature. However, I think it would be remiss of us not to acknowledge that many of these children could seriously benefit from an education based approach to discipline. It is important to recognise that young offenders who are brought before our courts are overwhelmingly from low socioeconomic areas. The majority are charged with minor offences against property such as shoplifting and fare evasion, and 75 per cent of youth offenders are either homeless or at risk of homelessness and 63 per cent of them do not attend school. These children need to be given every opportunity to rebuild a respectful relationship with their community while their brains are still developing.

It is well known that the human brain does not mature until about the age of 25. American psychologist Laurence Steinberg likened the brain of an adolescent to a car with an overactive accelerator and an underactive brake. Teenagers are more susceptible to impulsive, irrational and risky behaviour due to their still developing frontal lobe, and this is increased when they are experiencing high emotion or peer pressure. When this information is taken into account, it is not difficult to see why crime rates peak among people aged between 15 and 19. Indeed, some of the data records a 400 per cent increase in crimes committed within this age bracket compared to the rate of people aged over 19.

Generally, between two-thirds and three-quarters of young offenders grow out of their offending behaviour by their early adulthood. This trend is referred to by criminologists as the age-crime curve and is a phenomenon that is well documented across the world. The reason we have developed a specialised youth justice system is to take into account this immaturity and to focus on the rehabilitation of troubled youth to one day become responsible members of our society.

Our youth justice system seeks to divert young people from the court system whenever possible and encourages rehabilitation in the community. This is a major focus on education and contact with family and victims in a controlled environment. The resources committed by the government to this system are substantial compared to the adult system, but this is a choice we have made as a community. As a society, we have chosen to support troubled children by offering them the option and resources to get their lives back on track.

The debate we are having here today is whether 17-year-old offenders should be treated as adults or as children in the criminal justice system. In all other areas of law and society, 18 is considered the age when a child becomes an adult. A child under the age of 18 cannot buy alcohol or cigarettes and they cannot get married or travel overseas without the involvement of an adult. When the age of 17 was chosen for the Youth Justice Act, it was not argued that these children deserve to be treated as adult criminals. It was acknowledged then that 17-year-olds should fall under the Youth Justice Act and it was anticipated that this transition would occur over the years following.

It continues to surprise me that our LNP opposition are so utterly backwards on this issue. We are at the stage now that those on the other side of the room are the last people in the country to stand up and say that children should be delivered straight into the harsh reality of adult prison instead of being rehabilitated back into the community. The members for Broadwater, Albert and Buderim say it is too expensive and too hard. Those members of parliament are on their own with that view. In 1990 the United Nations ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, currently accepted by 193 states across the world. The convention defines a child as a person under the age of 18 and lists the protections governments should adopt to ensure the rights of the child are upheld. Our state has been in breach of this convention now for a quarter of a century.

Those opposite criticise our government for acting too decisively on the issue, despite the fact that a detailed and generous transition program has been provided for. This system works in every other state and the benefits are evident in the rehabilitated youth who return to benefit society. The LNP's position on this issue is truly shameful. This unjustified legal anomaly has already been around 25 years too long.

Before I finish I would like to correct something that the member for Mansfield outlined about what is happening in Victoria. The member failed to dig further into what is actually happening in Victoria. In Victoria there has been a suggestion that the parole system be looked at in relation to what is occurring with 17-year-olds there; not that they will be returned to adult prison. I needed to correct that for the record. The Children, Youth and Families Act has governed the way they treat children in Victoria since 2005.

I commend the Premier and the Attorney-General for their courage in bringing this legislation to the House and I commend the legislation to the House.



Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP) (5.50 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old-Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. This bill was introduced into parliament on 15 September 2016 by the Attorney-General, the Hon. Yvette D'Ath MP. To provide some background, the objectives are twofold: firstly, to increase the upper age of who is a child for the purpose of the Youth Justice Act 1992 from 12 years to 17 years; and, secondly, to establish a regulation making power to provide transitional arrangements for the transfer of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice to the youth justice system.

Getting tough on crime is not—and has not—been one of the Labor government's stronger policy objectives. The Palaszczuk Labor government repealed the Liberal National Party's 2014 youth justice reforms without any appropriate and justifiable evidence based review. However, on most other matters

the Labor government has also been more than willing to endlessly conduct reviews with extended time frames. The major problem with the Palaszczuk Labor government, which I have mentioned here many times when addressing the Queensland parliament, is that Labor's preference is always for a knee-jerk reaction over and above a mature consideration of all the facts when it comes to the consideration of matters of social complexity.

In their haste to repeal many of the Liberal National Party's great policy and legislative reforms, those opposite failed to take into account that in 2014-15 under the previous LNP government there was an 8.7 per cent decrease in the number of juvenile defendants dealt with in all Queensland courts and a 4.9 per cent decrease in the number of charges against juvenile offenders. This is the very reason the Liberal National Party has consistently expressed concern about the lack of detail with respect to Labor's youth detention laws.

It is also important to recall that back in 2007 the former Beattie Labor government considered a proposal to remove children from adult prisons, but they abandoned the proposal because Queensland's juvenile detention centres were already too overcrowded. Again in 2009 the former Labor minister for communities, Ms Karen Struthers, made a written commitment to remove youth offenders from adult prisons. Ms Elizabeth Fraser, the former commissioner for children and young people, lobbied the government and the department and completed a policy position paper on this very issue. Minister Struthers wrote to Ms Fraser in 2009 and gave a commitment to make the change but refused to put a time frame on its then implementation. Minister Struthers later refused to go ahead with the plan because of the cost and associated management and implementation issues. These same issues still exist today.

Today there are approximately 49 17-year-olds in adult prisons and another 200 who are subject to community based orders. Under the reforms presently before the House, both groups will be moved to the juvenile detention system. The cost of transferring 17-year-olds out of adult prisons and into the youth justice would be approximately \$175,000 per young offender, and the current legislation before the Queensland parliament states that the cost would be \$44 million a year. There are also capital costs to consider which could potentially run into hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

This policy has been made without proper consultation and just how it would be implemented remains unclear. The risk management elements and the material emergent safety concerns for even younger offenders have not been properly articulated. There are many details yet to be considered, such as how we are going to separate hardened 17-year-old offenders from 12-year-olds? The cost figure also assumes that the number of 17-year-olds in the youth justice system will continue as it currently is and says nothing about implementing programs with the aim of reducing juvenile crime in the first instance and/or preventing reoffending by juveniles.

Queensland government figures today show that there has been an increase in the number of assault incidents involving 17-year-old prisoners to 63 last financial year, which is up from 46 in 2014-15. Whilst we reflect on these figures, another fact is that presently 17-year-olds are accommodated together with other 17-year-olds away from the rest of the adult prison population within the relevant correctional facility. As former Labor minister Mr Warren Pitt said, 'For every argument in favour of a move, there is an argument that could be put forward to support the status quo.'


It has been well documented that 17-year-olds would not necessarily always be better off if they were transferred to the juvenile justice system. Today in our jails 17-year-olds have access to specialised programs designed to meet a range of special needs. These include education, vocational training, substance abuse treatment and programs, anger management and life skills as well as addressing explicit offending behaviour. All of these programs can contribute towards a young prisoner remaining crime free once released.

As a responsible member of parliament I cannot and will not endorse this legislation in its current form when the safety of very young detainees cannot be guaranteed if 17-year-olds are moved into the juvenile justice system. A full and transparent costing of this proposed public policy transition must be elucidated and articulated before any legislative reform is enacted. Far more detail is needed and the consideration of all the above elements I have outlined should occur. I oppose the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016 not necessarily on philosophical grounds, but because of the failure of the Palaszczuk government to clearly outline a fail-safe risk management framework and an appropriate practical transition implementation plan for their proposal in Queensland.

I am a caring and compassionate person and I believe in offering rehabilitation to those who have committed a range of offences, but I also believe in individual accountability and personal responsibility. With individual liberties and personal rights also come mandatory responsibilities. With this government

failing in its management of transport services, failing in its management of Queensland's child safety system and failing in its management of Queensland's economy and associated infrastructure investment, how could anyone have confidence in the Palaszczuk Labor government implementing its proposal here today?

We have had years of failed administration, such as the failed Queensland Health payroll implementation, corporate fraud with the fake Tahitian prince episode, the Jayant Patel clinical governance debacle and the tentacles of union corruption and illegality surrounding the Labor Party in Queensland. We can have no confidence in this Labor government implementing this plan in Queensland, and it is for these reasons that I oppose this legislation.


 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.57 pm): It is a sad day when we are discussing legislation which is basically badly costed and a knee-jerk reaction to a television program. This is exactly the same thing that ruined the cattle industry when Joe Ludwig—Labor son of the famous Bill Ludwig—reacted to an ABC show on live cattle export deaths overseas. It is exactly the same thing that happened in relation to greyhounds on the ABC when Mike Baird saw his popularity plummet through the floor after a knee-jerk reaction. Quite clearly this legislation is the Premier's response to the Northern Territory footage, and that is why we are here today with a knee-jerk reaction to a problem that should have been costed and dealt with in a proper and timely manner rather than this ridiculous situation. We could be spending \$400 million on a new facility, which is ridiculous. I am told that we could be spending \$44 million a year for 49 prisoners, which is absolutely ridiculous as well. If they want to go and give their parents a million when they are 15, they will be a lot better off waiting to keep the kid out of jail until they get older.

There is no logic whatsoever in the legislation we are considering. We have heard the bleeding heart stories from members on the other side of the House in relation to those 49 17-year-olds in proper prisons. They are not talking about shrinking violets; they are talking about prisoners who are in the system because they have done some extremely bad things against society. They are the worst, if you like. We have a policy in our judicial system, as the Attorney-General well knows, of keeping children out of jail. The Attorney-General should respect the decisions of the judges, because the only time these so-called kids get sent to these jails is when their actions have proven too much for them to be kept in society.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.00 pm): As the opposition leader is currently in a meeting of the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee, along with the Premier, with his authority I move—

That this House expresses its dismay at the litany of failures of the Palaszczuk Labor government and the harmful effect of those failures on the Queensland economy and Queenslanders.

This government's inaction is simply harming Queensland. This is a government big on ideological chitchat and posturing, but the resulting paralysis—the failure to make hard decisions—means that Queenslanders are losing their jobs of today and are losing out on the jobs of tomorrow. This is a government that lurches from an error to a blunder and then to failure. It is a government with the anti slogan that Queensland is closed for business, sending opportunities flooding south into New South Wales and even into the Labor state of Victoria.

This appalling Labor government has a Treasurer in whom the business community clearly has no confidence. We have seen the CCIQ business survey denouncing the Queensland economy as weak and the Sensis Business Index making a highlight of the lowlight that just one in 10 businesses believes the Palaszczuk Labor government's policies are supporting them. Just one business in 10 believes that this incompetent Labor government's policies are supporting them.

Meanwhile, we have a transport minister who not only cannot get trains to run on time but also refuses to accept the responsibility for it when every principle of Westminster convention says that he should be resigning. This is a transport minister who is happy to let others fall on their swords, yet he does not have the courage to redeem one skerrick of honour by doing so himself. He has stooped, stumbled and crashed to this new low.


We also have a child safety minister who has presided over a dangerous decline in the level of protection afforded to our most vulnerable. We have a housing minister who does not even want to provide housing—a housing minister who has abandoned the community of Logan, all on the altar of a flawed and outdated ideology. We have an industrial relations minister who seeks to employ a CFMEU official as an in-kind favour for her union mates and who allows unions to run riot across Queensland, costing jobs and wrecking the economy. This is just another hammer blow to the building industry now desperate under this government for even a hint of encouragement.

Today we have learned that, while those in the country are hurting, we have an agriculture minister—she stands over a \$420 million department—who is going to have to face the farmers of Queensland and explain to them why they should pay their rates but she does not have to. It is not only the last six or 12 months of rates while farmers have been hurting as a result of the drought; this minister thinks it is okay to not pay three years worth of rates. It is unacceptable to the people of Queensland.

We also have a police minister who callously dismisses pregnant women sleeping on the floor of prisons. We have an environment minister held to ransom by the Greens and the Left to the extent that thousands of jobs and the economic vitality of our regional communities are threatened by perpetual delays to these vital job-growing regions of Central and Northern Queensland and the Darling Downs. We have a planning minister who cannot approve a development in her own electorate.

The sum of this multifactoral dysfunction among the senior ranks of this lazy, incompetent government is a Premier so hamstrung that she can neither act nor discharge the duties of her office. As a result, the trains are not running, the housing for needy Queenslanders is not being built, the construction industry is withering on the vine and our most vulnerable children are not being protected. We have seen some 35,000 full-time jobs being lost since the start of this year and 51,000 Queenslanders have simply given up looking for a job. This asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government is incapable of governing Queensland.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport) (6.05 pm): I directly quote the member for Callide when he said this morning that if you want to be a headkicker you need to practise in the mirror. I think the member for Nanango needs to do a bit more practice if she wants to be a headkicker.

This is the laziest motion I have seen in this House. Ordinarily members take advantage of these opportunities to put some rigour and detail and thought into their private member's motion. That is not what we have seen tonight. We have seen nothing but negativity. It is the same thing we see continually from those opposite. They are now in their fifth year of negativity. I have not heard the shadow Treasurer say one decent positive thing about the Queensland economy since he has been in the job. Maybe he will surprise us one day, but that certainly is not what we see.

I oppose the motion, which refers to a 'litany of failures'. I know of some failures from the other side of the House. They have a very long and poor record. I refer to 1 William Street, which we will be moving into. Some of us already have moved in. This project is one of the worst financial disasters in the state's history. We know that they sold seven CBD office buildings for \$237 million less than their book value. Now we will be saddled with vacant floors—three to nine over 15 years. If you add it up you will see that we will be paying in excess of \$1.5 billion over the next 15 years. This is a terrible deal for Queenslanders. It is the legacy of the Leader of the Opposition when he was the treasurer.


Those opposite all expected that they could just coast through the last election. How do we know that? They were so sure they would win that, even though they said they would ask people's permission to sell assets, they got \$250 million preapproved—on the credit card—by the Governor in Council to spend on the asset sales process. That is how cocksure they were that they would win the last election. Queenslanders saw through it. Instead of talking up the economy and trying to grow the economy during their three years in office, they spent the entire time talking the joint down. That erodes confidence. We on this side of the House have rebuilt confidence.

I have heard those opposite time and time again selectively pick from surveys. They fail to look at surveys like the NAB Monthly Business Survey, which has been consistent. Since the 2015-16 budget was handed down what have been seen? We have led that survey or been equal first. This survey is at least consistent—more consistent than anything we have seen from those opposite.

I have referred to the preapproval of \$250 million for asset sales that the opposition leader got when he was treasurer. Let us talk about the \$100 million they actually spent. This was at a time when they were telling Queenslanders they had to tighten their belts. People were being sacked left, right and centre. We saw 14,000 people go in the first budget.

At that time those opposite were spending \$20 million on an advertising campaign which ultimately was all about Strong Choices—that is, the Strongest and Smartest Choice. We found out later that Strong Choices was the wrong choice. It was absolutely wrong. It was never going to fly because people in Queensland had made their position very clear when it came to asset sales in this state. However, what we have not seen from those opposite is any positivity. If they want to talk about a litany of failures, they need look no further than the Leader of the Opposition when as treasurer he was the able lieutenant to Campbell Newman, who was shown the door—quite rightly—by Queenslanders in general and in particular in the electorate of Ashgrove. We are very thankful to have the member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones, as the member who actually cares about her electorate.

Again, there has been no mention from those opposite about the 40,400 net new jobs we have created since coming to office—none of that. This morning I challenged the shadow Treasurer to come up with a way to spin the negativity around the very positive preliminary growth figures of 3.2 per cent. All he could say was, 'It's been reduced. It's been forecast down.' He still cannot get over the fact that in the last full year in government that those opposite had—the 2014-15 year—what did they have? They had growth of 0.8 per cent. If those opposite want to talk about litanies of failure, they really need to have a good look in their own backyard before throwing rocks over this side of the House.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (6.10 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. We do not have to look much further for a complete failure than the Minister for Child Safety, but what we thought was a tragic failure in Child Safety has now spread to the critical portfolio of Domestic and Family Violence. At a time when we see the government spending more than \$1 million on motels for victims of domestic violence, we have evidence that this government is discouraging DVConnect from using the network of private crisis shelters and yet at the same time across Queensland we hear more and more stories of victims being turned away from government funded shelters because they are at capacity. I have spoken with private shelters from Far North Queensland down to the Gold Coast and they all confirm the referrals have stopped despite more and more victims being pushed into unsafe motels. What makes this situation worse is that, on the minister's own admission, in the last 12 months there were at least three incidents at motels where victims had been placed that required police to attend. How long will it be before someone is killed because of this government's hopeless management of domestic violence crisis support? We have a crisis in this state when it comes to domestic violence. Under this government, breaches of protection orders that are designed to protect victims have jumped almost 40 per cent to more than 22,000 in just one year. These so-called protection orders mean nothing if they do not protect the victim, and this government and this minister continue to ignore this serious issue.


The complete failure of this minister to manage her portfolio does not end there. We know that under this minister's watch the performance of Child Safety has slipped to levels of the previous Beattie-Bligh era that gave rise to the Carmody inquiry. The latest Child Safety quarterly data showed that 65 per cent of the 13,279 Queensland children suspected of abuse are not being seen within the recommended time. These figures were the worst since the bad old days of the Bligh Labor government and, like the train disaster which continues to unfold, the buck stops with this minister. The minister has tried to spin the figures every which way, but the fact remains that too many vulnerable Queensland children are being left in danger for far too long, and that is just not good enough.

Under this embattled Labor minister 79 per cent of suspected abuse cases requiring action within 10 days are not being seen. This minister knew at least two weeks before its release that the data was going to be bad but chose to release it in the middle of the Queensland Rail crisis and under cover of a tragedy at Dreamworld. Labor has had 20 months to ensure the child safety system is doing its job. Instead, it is going backwards in every regard. We know for a fact that in places like Caboolture case loads for Child Safety sit at more than 60 as recently as June/July 2016. In a recent visit to Roma it was revealed to me they were carrying a case load of more than 30. If this minister claims that the average case load is 19, why is she refusing to provide a breakdown of case loads by Child Safety service centre? She is either deliberately hiding the truth on front-line centre case loads or she does not want to know.

Under this minister Queenslanders are asking: are our children really protected when the department is closing more files than ever before, with no investigation or assessment outcome? In the June data this had hit a high of more than 1,400. This is a 20 per cent jump on the year to date ending data in March. How could a department with cross-relationships with police, Health and federal agencies like Centrelink and Medicare not be able to locate or find families? These are files with enough evidence to have a regional intake service to classify the case to the notification threshold, but they were closed with no outcome. This now means that more than 1,400 children at risk of abuse waiting for Child Safety to come knocking were never, ever seen.

Just when we thought the minister's failure had stopped, it just keeps going. We then had the minister grandstanding on the issue of increasing the number of women on boards in a shameless attempt to distract from her own performance. Where was the Minister for Women when it was a female CEO who fell on her sword for the failure of the embattled Minister for Transport? Is this the sort of women's policy we can expect from this government going forward—'Get involved but just know we will throw you under the bus or the train to protect incompetent ministers'? I say shame, Minister, shame! Whilst I would love to detail more and more failures of this minister, I am conscious of time. I support the motion before the House.

(Time expired)


 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.15 pm): This evening I am delighted to rise to oppose this motion. If the LNP wants to talk about failure, let us talk about success for a little while and the success of the Palaszczuk Labor government. The LNP wants to whinge; the Labor Party works. It whinges; we work. What an extraordinary 18 months of achievement it has been in the Health portfolio. When we were elected we promised to rebuild health services after they were thrashed and trashed—decimated by the LNP Newman-Nicholls government—and we are getting on with the job.

What is the legacy so far? In this year's budget a record \$15.274 billion was allocated to Health, an increase of 7.7 per cent. We have employed an additional 3,179 nurses and 903 doctors. Through our \$361 million specialist outpatient strategy we have reduced the number of people waiting longer than clinically recommended for a specialist outpatient appointment by over 40 per cent. We have introduced safe nurse to patient ratios. Through our \$212 million nursing guarantee and Refresh Nursing initiatives, we have recruited our first round of nurse navigators and seen 2,000 nurse graduates offered a position. We have employed an additional 115 ambulance officers and commissioned an additional 155 ambulances. We are investing \$200 million to close the gap in life expectancy and infant mortality rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. We have done all of this while delivering a surplus of \$51 million across the Queensland health system. What a contrast.

If there is one song that would characterise the Leader of the Opposition, it would be *The First Cut is the Deepest*. Who will ever forget his stunning contribution to public policy when he delivered his first budget as Campbell Newman's treasurer? Who will ever forget the pompous swagger as he came into the chamber, loaded his record majority into his fiscal cannon and flattened the Queensland economy? Who will forget the protest rallies outside—the thousands of people who gathered outside to protest against him? Who will ever forget how Campbell Newman and the LNP dishonestly misled public servants in this state—betrayed nurses, fought the judiciary and started a war with doctors? Who will ever forget the cuts? So impressed were Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey with the member for Clayfield's brand of howitzer economics they used it as a blueprint for their own first budget—widely regarded as the worst federal budget in history, policies that continue to be pursued by Malcolm Turnbull. However, I do not want to mislead the parliament. I do not want to say that the only thing that the Leader of the Opposition did was cut. Of course he increased things, and we need to recognise that. He increased unemployment, he increased government debt and of course his masterpiece—he increased the threshold for declaring political donations by an impressive 1,200 per cent. He kept the donors of the LNP happy, didn't he? Now he is back: Dr Nicholls's travelling circus is bringing the snake oil back to Queensland! That is what he is doing—fulfilling his life mission to sell Queensland assets and right size the Public Service. That is his mission.

We saw through the member for Clayfield. The people of Queensland saw through the member for Clayfield. They see through him again as the Leader of the Opposition. It is not difficult to see why he has been described as the invisible man. He was happy to go to lunch last week, but he is happy to disappear from the public landscape. He would be on the missing persons list if he did not turn up to parliament this week. The reality is, being lectured on economic management and government delivery by the member for Clayfield is like being lectured on personal responsibility by Clive Palmer or on women's rights by Donald Trump.

Instead of moving a motion about a litany of failures, the Leader of the Opposition should be focusing on his own legacy of horror—something that the people of Queensland will not forget. He should do the right thing and apologise to Queensland for what he did, which was wrong. He should have the courage and integrity to apologise to the people of Queensland for the disaster he rained down on the people of Queensland across a whole range of areas.

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (6.20 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The member for Woodridge talked about the extraordinary record of the Labor Party. It is an extraordinary record. We have an incompetent housing minister who axes the Logan Renewal Initiative and an incompetent Child Safety minister who, when there was a child safety crisis underway, goes to Splendour in the Grass. That is how extraordinary the record is. Today we see the agriculture minister breaking the record for incompetence. Today the minister admitted she did not pay the bill; it was the ALP that paid the bill. In question time we asked the Premier was she aware of any other debts or obligations owed by this minister. 'No', she said, 'I am not aware. Are you aware of any?' Now we know there were other obligations. She was aware that she did not pay the rates, that the ALP paid the rates. Tonight her own colleagues were reported on the TV news. They expect multinationals to pay their rates. Why did she not pay her rates? We heard the deputy opposition leader talk about this. How can the minister face farmers and demand they pay their rates when she has not paid them for three years and then she gets her mates in the ALP to pay for them? She does not even pay for them herself. What an extraordinary situation we have seen today.

How much does she now owe the ALP and her union mates? Will we find out? She was not truthful this morning. She did not come out and confess this morning. She was forced to come out. To answer the question of the Premier, 'Are you aware of any other obligations or debts she owes?', now we know she owes a massive debt to the ALP, which paid her rates. She could not even do it herself. Her own colleagues are condemning her. We have seen today the agriculture minister make a run for being the most incompetent minister in this government.

An opposition member interjected.


Mr EMERSON: I take that interjection. There are a lot of candidates. We all thought the Treasurer was the most incompetent minister in this government. The Treasurer was the happiest man in parliament this week because this week the transport minister was the most incompetent minister in this government. The bar keeps getting lower. He is a limbo master. He will get lower and lower in his incompetency. I have to say though that today the member for Bundaberg has taken the cake. She has taken the award. It is a slap in the face to every Queenslander who pays their rates. We have a minister on a ministerial salary who will not pay her rates for three years, then is forced to come out and admit the ALP paid her rates. That is the incompetence of this government.

That is the extraordinary record of this government that the member for Woodridge is pointing to: an incompetent housing minister, an incompetent child safety minister, an incompetent planning minister, an incompetent Treasurer, an incompetent transport minister and today what we see is an incompetent agriculture minister. The reality is what does it take to sack a minister in this government? Why will the Premier not sack the agriculture minister? When did the Premier find out the ALP had paid her rates? When did the Deputy Premier find out? When did the Treasurer find out the ALP had paid the rates? Did the Deputy Premier know yesterday that she had not paid the rates herself?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I do not think the member for Indooroopilly needs any encouragement or assistance in putting his case. I call the member for Indooroopilly.

Mr EMERSON: As I said, what does it take to get a minister in this government sacked? For God's sake, Premier, get rid of the agriculture minister. For God's sake, Premier, sack the transport minister.

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (6.25 pm): It was abundantly clear from how adamantly those opposite were not listening to the contribution of the member for Indooroopilly that he has very little support amongst the backbench. I note that the member for Kawana seems to be coveting a leadership seat here tonight. Can I point out that that is probably the closest the member for Kawana will come to leadership in this place.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: We all get the message, members. We are all on show at the moment. I think we have had enough. I call the Deputy Premier.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I think it may also apply to both sides of the House.

Ms TRAD: From those who brought you Scott Driscoll, from those who brought you—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: This morning I think I named numerous members. I might start again if we are going to continue. I call the Deputy Premier.

Ms TRAD: From those who brought you Scott Driscoll, from those who brought you Bruce Flegg, from those who brought you Michael Caltabiano, they come into this place—

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, there is a point of order by the member for Callide.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I am not sure about you, but I find it rather disconcerting for the member for South Brisbane to be saying 'Mr Speaker' when she is looking at the back wall. Mr Speaker, you spoke this morning about members speaking through the chair. I think, Mr Speaker, that it is disrespectful to the chair to say 'Mr Speaker' when she is looking at the back corner. I think the member for South Brisbane should be called to order.

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order. I want to see whether the view is different from that side for the member for Callide because I remember very clearly when he was on this side of the chamber he hardly ever looked at the Speaker. This is hypocrisy at its best and I ask you to treat it with contempt.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. There is no point of order. Thank you, members, one and all. I would urge the Deputy Premier to make her comments through the chair.

Ms TRAD: Eighteen months on from their historic state election defeat those opposite still have not learnt. They have learned nothing and they have forgotten nothing. To come here and move a motion that talks about a litany of failures without feeling any sense of shame about the Newman years is nothing short of breathtaking. Those opposite came into this House last term with 78 seats and now look at them: one term in government and Queenslanders consigned them to opposition and that is where they will stay with that attitude.

When will those opposite apologise for sacking 14,000 Queenslanders? When will they apologise for closing the Barrett Centre, a decision that actually cost lives? When will they apologise? They are so disconnected from reality that their former leader Campbell Newman—let us not forget Campbell Newman—thinks that Queenslanders should be thanking him. He thinks that they should come up to him and thank him for sacking them. That is how delusional they are. If they want to come in here and talk about a track record, all I have to say is that they should be holding up a mirror as they are so disconnected from reality.

Unlike those opposite, we are firmly focused on the future and we are firmly focused on building Queensland up to be the great state it can be. Our economic task is to thrive as a state in the fastest growing region of the world. In just 15 years, we will have two-thirds of the world's middle class living on our doorstep. That will mean abundant and significant opportunities for our state. We are going to match what the world needs with what we have and what we can provide.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Deputy Premier. Members, I have already mentioned the issue about appropriate behaviour. If members are going to be warned and named by me, that will continue through the evening. Member for Everton and member for Toowoomba North, if you persist you will be named. That applies to everyone.

Ms TRAD: As a government, our complete focus is to secure Queensland's prosperity in the region that will house the economic epicentre of the world in the coming years. This side of the House is up to the task. We will be building up our state through innovation, investment and infrastructure. There will be \$405 million through innovation for the jobs of the future, as well as making sure that our traditional industries are up to the task in the modern world. We have established Building Queensland and the State Infrastructure Fund, with \$40.7 billion to be spent on infrastructure over the next four years. That is what this side of the House does. Those opposite want to build a tower to themselves. Their No. 1 infrastructure project was 1 William Street. Our No. 1 infrastructure project is Cross River Rail.

I am enormously proud of the significant work that this side of the House is doing to ensure that Queensland is set up for the future and that we all share in the prosperity that will come from the fastest growing region in the world. If those opposite come in here to talk about a track record of failures, there are 14,000 sacked workers who represent their failures. Community organisations are rebuilding, having been slashed to the ground by those opposite.

Mr Dick: And gagged.

Ms TRAD: And gagged. Those opposite have absolutely no credibility when it comes to governing this state and Queenslanders made that message abundantly clear at the last election. We will match our record with theirs any day of the week. This motion should go down.

(Time expired)

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

AYES, 40:

LNP, 40—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McEachan, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

NOES, 42:

ALP, 40—Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

Pairs: Bailey, McArdle; de Brenni, Powell.

Resolved in the negative.

Sitting suspended from 6.38 pm to 7.40 pm.

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INCLUSION OF 17-YEAR-OLD PERSONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 4186, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (7.40 pm), continuing: Before the debate was adjourned I was advising the House of the ridiculous situation where we have this legislation being debated as a result of a knee-jerk reaction to a television show which was actually all about the Northern Territory. The old saying goes that when you act in haste you get to repent at leisure. In typical Labor fashion—

Mr SEENEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention to the state of the House.

(Quorum formed at 7.42 pm)

Mr STEVENS: I congratulate the Leader of Opposition Business on noticing the paucity of government members here after their extended dinner break, to the detriment of the debate in the Assembly. Unfortunately, it shows how they treat this very important piece of legislation that I am talking to tonight. Unfortunately, members of the government are not prepared to have a quorum to listen to my few words of wisdom.

An opposition member interjected.

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

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! There are several points of order. I point out to the member on my left that if you are going to interject you must take your seat. What is your point of order, Minister?

Mr DICK: I take personal offence at those words. I ask that he withdraw. There are at least six members of the Liberal National Party opposition standing outside the chamber deliberately not in the chamber.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The words were not directed at the minister individually. He cannot take a point of order. He cannot take offence at a general statement, and he knows it. He knows what the rules are.

Mr STEVENS: To clarify my words, I made no mention of any individual in any capacity whatsoever.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has taken offence and I ask you to withdraw.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. You cannot do that. The minister cannot take offence unless he is individually named.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If you wish to dispute my ruling, I ask you to write to the Speaker. The member for Mermaid Beach has the call.

Mr SEENEY: I give notice that I shall move dissent from your ruling. That is an absurd ruling. The member was not named individually and you cannot expect—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I warn you under standing order 253A for showing disrespect to the chair.

Notice of Motion, Dissent from Deputy Speaker's Ruling

Mr SEENEY: I give notice that I will move dissent from your ruling.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may wish to do so.

Mr STEVENS: In relation to the youth justice—

Mr SPEAKER: I understand a withdrawal has been requested. Will you withdraw?

Mr STEVENS: I withdraw. As I reiterated previously, the youth justice bill is a knee-jerk reaction to a television program related to matters that happened in the Northern Territory. Quite clearly, when you act in haste you repent at leisure. The Labor Party's answer to repenting at leisure will be to throw a truckload of money at this just as it did with the Health payroll system. The \$80 million or whatever it was that was originally planned for the Health payroll system turned out to be \$1.2 billion.

We have had some advice from the shadow opposition spokesperson on the matter that there may well be a \$400 million brand-new facility built for these 49 miscreants of society who have been sent to jail as a last resort as youths. We all know that the judiciary are very keen to keep these juveniles out of our prisons. However, at some point in time society says, through the judges, 'Get them out of society.' They are not innocent, shrinking violets, sweet little 17-year-olds in our jails. Some of the lads are bigger than me. They make me look like a tiddler.

We are going to take those serious criminals—and they are there because they are serious criminals—and we are going to put them into youth juvenile detention with 10- and 12-year-olds. The same thing will happen again. These serious criminals will have to be isolated from the juveniles in those youth detention centres. What we will end up with is another nightmare of mixing hardened, difficult young criminals—yes, they are 17—with 10-year-olds. They will be a very bad influence.

If this legislation passes, we are going to put these 49—I believe there are—17-year-old detainees in the same compound as juveniles. I find no logic and no sense in that at all. It will be another Labor failure that they will throw a lot more money at again and again. It will be exactly the same as the train disaster. There will be so much money thrown at this train disaster because it will be ongoing. For us it will be the gift that keeps on giving. I can assure members that I am looking forward to it.

The problem is that Queenslanders will pay through the nose and the Treasurer will get a sore hand writing cheques to fix up another Labor Party failed, ill-thought-out, mad scheme to address a problem that was not there. It was a Northern Territory problem where we all viewed the brief video clip of the problems with one particular 17-year-old in a Northern Territory jail.

The people in Townsville and Cairns—areas that are probably, I would say, over-represented by the Labor Party—will not be very happy at all about seeing this soft-on-crime-and-criminals government. They are already watering down the VLAD laws on the Gold Coast. We have seen our popularity go through the roof. I am giving the Labor Party members some free advice here. In the interests of the Gold Coast, in terms of crime and treating criminals—

Mr POWER: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It seems that he is breaching the standing orders on relevance and also pre-empting a debate before the House at the same time.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the member to come back to the matter that we are debating.

Mr STEVENS: I was drawing the corollary and unfortunately I concentrated too much on other mistakes that the Labor Party have made rather than this one that they are making here tonight. For 49 miscreants, they are going to throw probably half a billion dollars at it by the time they are finished this exercise. That is Queensland taxpayers' money. The people in Cairns and Townsville will tell them what they think at the next election. I cannot wait for the next election. I lie awake at night thinking we will talk about youth justice at the next election. We will talk about crime and the treatment of these 17-year-olds.

Mr Dickson interjected.

Mr STEVENS: Exactly. The trains will still not be running on time, I am sure, at the next election. I think this is terrible legislation but it is typical legislation. I certainly will not be supporting the legislation before the House.



Mrs GILBERT (Mackay—ALP) (7.51 pm): This bill is important to bring 17-year-olds out of adult prisons and the adult criminal justice system. Seventeen-year-olds are considered children in every other area of law. This is the right thing to do. Children should not be incarcerated with adults. This bill will reduce exposure to adult criminals.

Stakeholders and submitters to the bill are supportive of these long overdue reforms. Queensland is the only jurisdiction in Australia that continues to treat 17-year-olds as adults. It is time that we treated our children as children. The opposition's statement of reservation stated—

Additionally, non-government members of the committee are concerned about the lack of vocational education opportunities available at youth detention centres and the impact this will have on recidivism rates of youth offenders.

Those opposite who are on the committee have spoken about going to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. I, too, have visited the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in my previous work as an organiser with the Queensland Teachers' Union. I used to go there to visit the classroom teachers and the TAFE teachers. During my time as a union organiser, the teachers there were very distressed during the time of the Newman government. It was the Newman government that put measures in place that stopped them from being able to have TAFE teachers in their centre.

They have spoken about seeing the outboard motor covered in dust. Of course it is covered in dust because that lot over there, who are so concerned and know all about youth and vocational training and all the rest of it, did not care two hoots about those children at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. The then member for Townsville got on the media and said he was very concerned. He was going to make sure that TAFE teachers could still work at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. That information must have fallen on deaf ears, because he is no longer the member for Townsville. They have a member for Townsville now who will stand up for the teachers and the children at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre.

It is a bit rich for members opposite to come in here and say that there is no vocational training in the detention centres when it was their measures that took it out. They stopped them from having those TAFE teachers go into the centre because of the way that they paid TAFE teachers and the way that courses were paid for. It made it impossible for the detention centre to keep those teachers on. I believe that those measures stopped the teachers going to the Stuart detention centre as well. They had no commitment to the rehabilitation of our young people. They should be quite ashamed of themselves standing up here today talking about vocational training in detention centres.

Those teachers rallied. They were on the media. Kevin Bates, the QTU president, came up. He tried to get a meeting with the education minister. Nobody wanted to listen. This situation in our detention centres is the making of those opposite and they should be ashamed of themselves. Now it is time to turn this around and stand up and vote for this bill.



Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (7.55 pm): On 15 September 2016 the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills introduced the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016 into the Queensland parliament. This bill was referred to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee for detailed consideration. The explanatory notes describe the objectives the bill as to increase the upper age of who is a child for the purposes of the Youth Justice Act 1992 from 16 years to 17 years and to establish a regulation-making power to provide transitional arrangements for the transfer of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system to the youth justice system. The minister said in her introductory speech—

The bill I present to parliament today supports the comprehensive reform work that has been developed over the past 18 months and contributes positively to the fulfilment of youth justice's strategic objectives.

She also said—

The bill will commence by proclamation 12 months after passage.

After 18 months of work, the minister still has no workable plan to transfer 50 persons, or rather, places—that is right: only 50—from the adult to youth detention facilities. I am not convinced that a further 12 months will be enough time for this asleep-at-the-wheel, do-nothing Labor government. This is, after all, the same government that opened a new train line but forgot to hire drivers for the new

trains. All along, while this abject Labor government failure was unfolding, the minister responsible—‘Having a Hoot Hinchliffe’—was enjoying himself trackside at a nice afternoon on the Gold Coast all while the department he bears ultimate responsibility for went into an absolute meltdown.

Mr POWER: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. We have a bill before us that I ask members to be relevant to. The speech is clearly straying far from relevance to the bill in front of us.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, I urge you to make your comments relevant to the bill before the House.

Mr DICKSON: I apologise for talking about the failed rail network in Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: The rail network has no relevance to the bill whatsoever. Please come back to the bill before the House.

Mr DICKSON: After 18 months of work, the Attorney-General is also not able to give an indication about the cost of the transfer of 50 people from adult to youth custody. From the explanatory notes, we learn that the ‘day-to-day operational costs associated with inclusion of 17-year-olds to the youth justice system is estimated to cost government in the order of \$44 million per annum’. The Labor government’s biggest guesstimate, based on the figure of an average of 50 17-year-olds in the system at any time, is \$880,000 per spot per year.

Is this government for real? If you want to do something meaningful, it should be about bringing this astronomical cost down. The department in its briefing also acknowledged that, at best, it is 300 per cent more expensive to keep people in youth detention facilities as opposed to an adult prison. Can we have a serious conversation about these figures? What is the Labor government doing to get these costs down to a more manageable level?

There has been no community consultation on the bill. The minister apparently was not able to organise this in the last 18 months—and I am not surprised. How do you sell that message to the community? ‘Sorry, folks, you cannot get a decent road to get safely to your local hospital, but we are spending \$880,000 per detention spot for 17-year-olds to be in line with the UN convention.’

There will be a review into this—a panel, of course; maybe two. I have lost count of the number of reviews undertaken by this inept Labor government but surely it must have passed a hundred by now. It is a great way of avoiding any immediate backlash from the community. It is a great way to avoid having to stand by the courage of your convictions because you can shift the blame to the panel. This ranges from ‘the panel is looking into it’ to ‘these were findings of the panel’.

I also have some serious concerns about the lack of planning and the lack of information about how the government will ensure the safety of very young detainees when all 17-year-olds would be transferred to youth detention centres. The real question is why this Labor government has rushed this motherhood statement piece of legislation into the House without a tangible plan relating to the practicalities of the proposed changes. It is not much more than half a plan for a plan. While we are debating these matters, no-one is holding ‘Having a Hoot’ Hinchliffe to account, and that is the real issue. For these reasons and more, I cannot support this bill before the House.



Mr MADDEN (Ipswich West—ALP) (8.00 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. This bill amends the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Youth Justice Act 1992 and the acts mentioned in schedule 1. The youth justice system in Queensland currently applies to young people aged between 10 and 16, with young people alleged to have committed offences as 17-year-olds treated as adults in the criminal justice system. As a result of this bill, they will in the future be treated as children.

The bill was introduced into this parliament on 15 September 2016 and referred to the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee, which tabled its report to the parliament on 27 October 2016. While the committee was unable to reach an agreement on whether the bill should be passed, a statement of reservation by government members indicated that they strongly supported the bill be passed. However, the non-government members of the committee indicated in their statement of reservation that they oppose the bill. The non-government members of the committee have said they did not support the bill, hiding behind their supposed concern for the transition plan. It seems that they have totally missed the point of the bill.

The government’s plan is an evidenced based, multiagency response in collaboration with non-government service providers and advocates to ensure the needs of 17-year-olds and other stakeholders are addressed as 17-year-olds transition into the youth justice system. Once again, the

Palaszczyk government with leadership and determination to tackle this historic anomaly is doing so in a measured, sensible way to provide a transition to the new model. As the Attorney-General said in her introductory speech on the bill—

These amendments will bring 17-year-olds into the youth justice system. This bill speaks to our values as a community and as a parliament. Queensland is the only jurisdiction in Australia that treats 17-year-olds as adults in the criminal justice system. In Queensland the law defines adulthood as commencing at the age of 18 except in the criminal justice system.

By treating 17-year-olds as adults in the criminal justice system, we are inconsistent with not only all the other laws of our state but also the laws of the rest of Australia. We are also in breach of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides that for the purpose of the convention a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

The bill changes the definition of 'child' for the purposes of the Youth Justice Act from under 17 years to under 18 years. The bill creates a framework for the transition of 17-year-olds into the juvenile justice system, but this will not be an easy process with 50 or more 17-year-olds from adult custody and 200 or more 17-year-olds on supervision orders. The bill also provides for the management of this change by dealing with three cohorts of 17-year-olds—firstly, those who have not yet been charged; secondly, those for whom proceedings are in progress; and, thirdly, those who have been sentenced and are under a Corrective Services supervision order at the time the bill commences.

The government will work with stakeholders to ensure our infrastructure and services are ready to safely meet the increased demands that will accompany the 17-year-olds. The bill establishes heads of power for a regulation to provide the necessary detail of the arrangements. Final arrangements will be needed to ensure a fair and safe outcome in transitioning young people for whom proceedings have already commenced in the adult system.

The Queensland youth justice system provides a number of special protections to children and young people that are not available to adults in adult correctional centres. These include an increased ability to divert young people from the court system; reduced exposure to adult criminals; the provision of education and rehabilitation to young people through access to mandated specialised programs; and more intensive staff support and supervision while in custody.

There were 15 written submissions to the committee and they all supported the bill. As the Queensland Law Society said in its submission to the committee, the society strongly supports the removal of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system. The introduction of this legislation recognises the special vulnerability of children and young people, including 17-year-olds, and reflects the evidence that increasing the severity of punishment is ineffective in reducing recidivism. The youth justice system is significantly better placed to provide appropriate and effective management of criminal behaviour in 17-year-olds. The Queensland Law Society also noted that the transfer of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system to the youth justice system brings Queensland in line with all other Australian jurisdictions and is in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As submitted by the TC Beirne School of Law's UQ Pro Bono Centre, a significant number of adult prisoners do not adequately provide for 17-year-olds by way of education or health care. They also noted that a substantial body of research indicates that most children's neurological development is incomplete until well after adolescence. That means that a typical 17-year-old's culpability is lower than an adult's as their decision-making capacity is impaired and they are more susceptible to suggestion by peers. The Council for Civil Liberties submitted that the issue of having 17-year-olds in adult correctional centres in Queensland 'has been a running sore since 1992' and 'the failure of successive governments to deal with this issue over the last 24 years is unjustified'. I commend the bill to the House.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Resignation



Hon. LE DONALDSON (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries) (8.07 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. This morning I met the Premier and Deputy Premier to discuss the issue of my unpaid property rates and was asked to advise if there were any other issues of which they should be aware. Following question time, I became aware that my vehicle registration had not been paid by the due date last week and I took immediate steps to rectify this issue. However, last week I had driven the vehicle on the day after the registration had expired.


Clearly, this does not meet the high standards set by the Premier for all members of the government. I therefore inform the Premier tonight of my decision to resign as a minister. I wish to take this opportunity to thank my departmental staff for the work they have done and the support they have given me during my time as minister. I also thank my ministerial staff for their hard work and the sacrifices they have made.

I have enjoyed my time as minister and look forward to supporting the good work of the government for the people of our state. This government is achieving so many good things for Queensland. I will continue to serve my community and will continue to stand up for the people of Bundaberg.

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INCLUSION OF 17-YEAR-OLD PERSONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p 4196.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (8.08 pm): I rise to speak against the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill. To be clear, I support the concept that Queensland be brought into line with other states regarding the treatment of 17-year-olds in our justice system but not in this way—not as a kneejerk reaction to the negative press around the treatment of juvenile offenders in another jurisdiction. This government is on track to worsen the risk for young offenders as a whole with this ill-thought-through, kneejerk response.

Firstly, the government cannot guarantee the safety of much younger detainees—some as young as 10—if 17-year-olds are moved into the juvenile justice system without properly considered planning. Secondly, the cost of transition as proposed by the government is not able to be properly determined. Why? Because the transition plan is yet to be properly established and put into place.


Whether we are talking about 17-year-olds or younger people, the majority have come from very different lives than most in this House have experienced. In my investigations into the area of recidivism, the message comes through very clearly—the majority of these young people are damaged. They have been damaged by the treatment they have experienced when very young—sexual abuse, physical abuse, malnutrition, a home life or a lack of a home life that just beggar belief. I have spoken to people in our justice system who have never experienced the love of a parent or a significant other. They have never been told that someone cares and as a result they have never cared for anyone else. The life they have lived from a young age eventually causes mental health issues or drives them to seek refuge in drugs. Most are suffering in a state of comorbidity. Drug taking has brought on mental health issues, or mental health issues have caused them to become drug abusers. The research confirms that a huge proportion of these young people experience both mental health issues and drug addiction. So many of them have become young offenders due to their mental health issues, drug dependence or a combination of both.

The broad objectives of this bill are to increase the upper age of who is a child for the purposes of the Youth Justice Act 1992 from 16 years to 17 years and to establish a regulation-making power to provide transitional arrangements for the transfer of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system to the youth justice system. That is all fine and dandy, but the issues in our youth detention centres are already incredibly complex—the point being we have not properly dealt with the problems that are there now and this government wants to introduce the complexity of these additional older offenders from our adult prisons and place them alongside our juvenile offenders without proper thought and planning.

The unintended consequences—consequences that we cannot even imagine—could be far more devastating for our young people. Our juvenile detention centres have mainly remand prisoners in them. On average, more than 80 per cent are in this category. Many, perhaps most, are first-time offenders or second-time offenders, so it follows that with less than 20 per cent of young people in our youth detention centres as sentenced prisoners why then would we mix in so many additional prisoners? The number of sentenced prisoners who would transition would be in the order of 20 or so, added to the 30 or so current sentenced prisoners who are already in our youth justice system. That is a huge percentage increase—and, remember, we are talking about the oldest cohort in the system. We are likely to see issues arise around control where this older cohort will look to dominate others in our facilities. That is a real concern to me—as are the many issues that need to be properly considered.

In terms of where to start, I believe alternative options should be considered to reduce the number currently in our youth detention centres. It can be done. By way of comparison, I looked at Tasmania. In Tasmania just a few years ago, the number in youth detention was approaching 40 young people. Today that number is around 10. That is something like a 70 per cent reduction in numbers achieved through a focused approach in the knowledge that detention is not the best option for many young people who find themselves in the youth justice system. If Queensland achieved just a 30 per cent reduction, we would have far more alternatives available to us to transition 17-year-olds into the youth justice system, but do that first before we start looking to transition. We could perhaps use this \$44 million that has been talked about as an annual cost, or the \$400 million lump sum, to go towards these other programs that could reduce the numbers in our youth justice system now before we then move 17-year-olds across in an orderly fashion.

As I stated at the outset, I am supportive of the transition of 17-year-olds to the youth justice system but this is the wrong way to go about it. Slow down, Attorney-General. Consult with stakeholders. Work to reduce the number of those already in detention and then act. In conclusion, I note the report talks about the financial cost of this proposal. My fear is that the real cost will be further damage to the young people in our juvenile justice system, young people who by many measures are already the most marginalised in our society. This kneejerk reaction, this ill-thought-through plan, should not proceed until a thorough and complete transition plan has been properly formulated.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (8.15 pm): Whilst a government's success may be measured by its popularity, its character is measured by the quality of its legislation. That is why I am very pleased to rise in the House tonight to support the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill. In our system, there will always be debate about what constitutes good government and there will always be disagreement about individual decisions and policy directions in the political contest of ideas, but great governments are defined by the presence of one quality—that is, courage. Political courage compels us to do what is right rather than what is merely expedient. Before the last election, the Premier promised that if elected her government would move to transfer 17-year-olds to the youth justice system—an action that would bring us into line with every other jurisdiction in the country and satisfy our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We know the LNP's arguments against this important reform—that it is expensive, that it is administratively difficult, that the cost is disproportionate to the number of people affected. Statistics tell us that the criminal justice system is too often an extension of social disadvantage, with those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and, most alarmingly, those from Indigenous communities disproportionately represented in it so we punish them for failing in a system that in some ways has failed them. That is not to say that those who break the law should not be punished and incarcerated where that is appropriate. Certainly, that is not what this bill is proposing to do. What it is proposing to do is to remove the inconsistency about what it means to be a child.

We tell our young people that they cannot vote until they are 18 years of age and they cannot drink alcohol. We tell our 17-year-olds that they cannot go to a polling booth or a bar but they can go to an adult prison. We should not forget that these are young people still going through the process of working out who they will ultimately become. We have an obligation to be consistent. While traditional sentencing principles applicable to young people—such as personal responsibility and accountability—are vitally important, the youth justice system must focus on rehabilitation and reintegration and the future prospect of young offenders serving a useful, productive and contributing life in our community. It is hard to see how these objectives could be advanced by experience in the hardened world of an adult prison.

The Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016 finally fulfils the intent of the Youth Justice Act passed in this parliament in 1992, which had intended to include 17-year-olds in the youth justice system but was defeated by the complexities then involved. I am delighted to say that our Attorney-General, the member for Redcliffe, and the Palaszczuk Labor government are taking up that challenge. We are committed to transferring 17-year-olds from the adult justice system within 12 months and this bill sets up the transitional pathway to achieve that goal.

Under its terms, a key agency's whole-of-government panel, led by Youth Justice in the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, supported by a stakeholder advisory group and drawing on the expertise of the Childrens Court committee, will oversee the implementation of programs to safely integrate 17-year-olds into the youth justice system. Our plan is evidence based and seeks to engage with a wide variety of agencies—government and non-government—to chart a way forward that is measured, realistic and focused on outcomes that are fair, effective and economically achievable.

We recognise that there are risks and that there is a significant difference between a child offender who is 10 or 11 and one who is 17. However, these are risks that have been managed, sometimes for many years in other jurisdictions, and they are a poor excuse to continue to do nothing.

Whilst there are costs involved in this reform there are also savings, with early indications suggesting the transition to success program, which encourages young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system to re-engage with education, training and skills, reduces reoffending rates by up to 85 per cent. That is precisely what we want from our justice system, that any person engaging with the justice system does not reoffend, that they get off the path of recidivism and onto the path of positively contributing to our community.

This is an important and overdue reform whose time has come. It is yet another marker on the road to building a modern, more inclusive, more responsive Queensland and another component of our youth justice reform agenda. It is about leadership and compassion, responsibility and public safety, justice and civil rights. It is about doing the right thing. It is very disappointing that the LNP members of the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee chose to oppose this bill and leave their party trapped in a time warp, chugging along in the ethical slow lane. Whilst this government is pressing on with its program of progressive reform, those opposite remain anchored in the past in an endless nostalgic throwback to the Bjelke-Petersen years when being tough on crime meant being tough on young people.

I was also very disappointed indeed to hear other members of the LNP, including the shadow Attorney-General, condemn previous attorneys-general in previous Labor governments for not taking the steps to progress this reform.

Mr Cripps: What about the Goss government that did nothing about it? What about the Beattie government that did nothing about it and the Bligh government that did nothing about it?

Mr DICK: I will take the interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order!

Mr Cripps: He took the interjection, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I warn you under standing order 253A for showing disrespect to the chair.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. The minister took the interjection. The member is perfectly entitled to continue if the minister takes the interjection.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not wish to justify my rulings to you. The member has, by the way he spoke to me then, shown disrespect to the chair and that is my ruling. The member for Woodridge has the call.

Mr DICK: I took the interjection because I believe it again demonstrates the ignorance of the LNP when it comes to the history of this matter. The member for Hinchinbrook called out the Goss government, he called out the Beattie government and he called out the Bligh government. During the history of those governments the attorney-general was never responsible for the youth justice system.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Hinchinbrook, you have already been warned under standing order 253A. I ask you to leave the chamber for a period of 10 minutes.

Whereupon the honourable member for Hinchinbrook withdrew from the chamber at 8.23 pm.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. The minister took the interjection. The minister said on the record that he took the interjection.


Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I warn the member and the repercussions are clear.

Mr DICK: I want to address my comments to the LNP members in this chamber and outside. During the course of the Beattie, Goss and Bligh governments the attorney-general was never responsible for youth justice. I was so disappointed to hear the member for Mansfield, the shadow Attorney-General, attempt to conflate the idea that the attorneys-general in those governments, including myself, were responsible for youth justice. We were never responsible for youth justice. There was a clear separation in government between the attorney-general responsible for the adult justice system and, of course, the minister for communities, who was responsible for the juvenile justice system and then the youth justice system. The attorney-general has never been responsible for the corrections system and that is precisely what we are talking about. We are talking about the corrections system, either managed in the juvenile justice space or in the adult system. I find it staggeringly ignorant of the

member for Mansfield not because he is a member of this House but because he was a lawyer of very senior standing, a partner in a very large Queensland firm—a very distinguished firm—for decades and yet he does not understand the basis of the juvenile justice system and the criminal justice system.

Thankfully, we have someone of the calibre of the current Attorney-General, who has the capacity, the ability and the skill to bring this legislative reform before the House. It was so terrible of the member for Mansfield to seek to belittle the Attorney-General in his comments in the debate, saying that this had been forced on her by others. It demeans an Attorney-General with great capacity and great skill who has driven a very significant law reform program in this state, and she continues to drive that program through this reform. I commend and congratulate her.

What we are seeing is that government is a practical art. This is a practical bill. It sets out a clear pathway to reform, a transitional road map that will finally, after years of deferral and delay, bring the Queensland justice system, including the youth justice system, into line with other states. One by one, issue by issue, bill by bill the Palaszczuk Labor government is emptying the too-hard basket ignored by our predecessors. This is a government prepared to fight for its principles of fairness and social justice and it is a government that is prepared to stand up for young people. I commend the Attorney-General for her leadership again. What we are doing in this House tonight demonstrates political courage. I commend the Premier and the Attorney-General for bringing this bill forward and I urge all members of the House to support it.

 **Mr GORDON** (Cook—Ind) (8.26 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate tonight. I rise to speak to the bill and offer my full support to the youth justice and other legislation amendment bill. I would like to express my appreciation to the Attorney-General and her government for bringing to the House this historic bill, bringing Queensland into line with the rest of the country and, more significantly, bringing this great state of ours into line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.


The government, with the essential support of my colleagues on the crossbench, and I look to restore a little more humanity and dignity to how we as a society look after our most vulnerable. Seventeen-year-olds do not belong in adult prisons. Just because previous governments and previous attorneys-general did not feel the need to change the legislation around this issue that is not a justification to keep the status quo. It was wrong then just like it is wrong now.

In Queensland Indigenous children make up eight per cent of the total youth population but make up 65 per cent of young people incarcerated. This means that one in every 68 Murri kids in Queensland will be sent to detention. It is a lot higher for Indigenous girls, who are 33 times more likely to be in detention than their non-Indigenous peers. This important bill is one thread of a greater fabric of legislative reform in the area of criminal justice. More needs to be done. Adult prisons are different to youth detention centres in regards to access to basic rights. To quote my good friend Rodney Dillon, Amnesty Australia's Indigenous rights adviser—

Sending kids to adult prisons doesn't give them the best chance of leading positive lives, and it's part of the reason why Indigenous kids find it hard to get out of the quicksand of the justice system ...

Perhaps Queensland should follow through on this important reform by following in the footsteps of Western Australia and establishing an office of the independent custodial inspector. In 2003 the Western Australian government passed the Inspector of Custodial Services Act, which empowers the office and the inspector to inspect and report to the parliament on all of the state's prisons, juvenile detention centres, court custody centres and prescribed lockup facilities at least once every three years. I encourage the Attorney-General and my colleagues to look into the merits of establishing a body such as WA's office of the independent custodial inspector here in Queensland.

I have heard a lot of silly talk in the House about this bill being soft on crime. Today my colleagues in this House who have chosen to support this bill are not showing that they are soft on crime; rather, they are showing they are strong on love, they are strong on compassion and they are strong on empathy. I commend the bill to the House.


 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (8.30 pm): I rise tonight to contribute to the debate in relation to the youth justice and other legislation amendment bill 2016. The objectives of the bill are to increase the upper age of who is a child for the purposes of the Youth Justice Act 1992 from 16 years to 17 years. The bill also seeks to establish a regulation-making power to provide transitional arrangements for the transfer of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system to the youth justice system. The LNP representatives who have spoken here earlier today, including the deputy chair of the committee, have outlined the reasoning behind the statement of reservation at length so I will not go into that any further.

There are two primary objections to the passage of the bill: firstly, the government cannot guarantee the safety of detainees as young as 10 if 17-year-olds are moved into the system; secondly, the cost of the transition is not able to be determined as a transition plan has not yet been proposed. The failure to properly plan is the most egregious of the objections, but the failure to properly plan for the transition is entirely consistent with the government's failure to stay strong on youth crime. They repealed the LNP's 2014 youth justice reforms, which included making breach of bail an offence and making childhood findings of guilt for which no conviction was recorded admissible in court when sentencing a person for an adult offence. These 2014 LNP reforms were essential to address longstanding concerns around youth justice. We know that they actually made a difference to youth crime in Queensland, and you only need to look at the Childrens Court 2014-15 annual report. President Michael Shanahan reported that Queensland witnessed an 8.7 per cent decrease in juvenile defendants disposed of in all Queensland courts as compared to the previous year. Moreover, the trend year in relation to the 10-year comparison of the number of charges against juvenile defendants continued to rise, although in 2014-15 there was 4.9 per cent decrease from the previous year.

This issue matters to me as the member for Toowoomba South because Toowoomba has historically faced significant challenges when dealing with youth crime and recidivist criminality. Longitudinal research undertaken by the Australian Institute of Criminology in conjunction with Griffith University tracked over 14,000 children born in 1990 who had contact with the justice system between the ages of 10 and 20. This report provided the most comprehensive empirical analysis ever undertaken in Queensland on juvenile delinquency. It highlights that one in four Queenslanders born in 1990 had some contact with the justice system between the ages of 10 and 20, and that includes everything from a caution from the police to appearing in the court system itself. On average, offenders committed 21 offences each and appeared in the court system on seven occasions. This particular research placed Toowoomba, Cairns, Townsville, Strathpine and Cherbourg as most impacted; Toowoomba was at the top of that list. Chronic juvenile criminals operating in Toowoomba between 2000 and 2010 were confirmed to have cost over \$14 million, which is the highest level in Queensland. What is most concerning for the Toowoomba community is that the research revealed that each offender was costing the state approximately \$120,000 between those ages of 10 and 20 when factoring in police, courts, medical costs, property damage and other related costs. What is most sad is that such offenders were trending always towards a life of adult crime.

From my discussions with so many who are working in the youth justice system in Toowoomba, including the Queensland Police Service, the Toowoomba Community Justice Group, Indigenous elders and the local legal and court system fraternity, it is clear that they believe in a coordinated, consistent and comprehensive youth justice system. I believe that the system deserves better than a government pulling together a rushed and underprepared piece of legislation that raises more questions than it answers. Has the government considered that day-to-day operational costs associated with including 17-year-olds in the youth justice system will cost the government in the order of \$44 million a year? On recent analysis there were 49 17-year-olds accommodated in Queensland Corrective Services, which means that the government proposes to spend \$44 million for 49 people.

Given that the current position held by the Labor Party has been their policy for over 20 years, before seeking to change the law I argue that there needs to be a proper review of the justice system that welcomes wideranging consultation with stakeholders from across Queensland. Regional Queensland has lots to say if only the government would listen to it. In Toowoomba I reckon that I could find about 20 stakeholders who would love to provide significant contributions to any review on the youth justice system. This bill and the half-baked approach contained in it is another slap in the face for regional Queensland, and for that reason alone I cannot support the bill.

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (8.36 pm): I rise to support the youth justice and other legislation amendment bill 2016. Children have absolutely no place in an adult prison, yet to Queensland's shame the treatment of 17-year-olds in the adult criminal justice system has been an issue in our state for more than two decades. Queensland is not only out of step with all other Australian jurisdictions when it comes to this question but it is also inconsistent, as we have heard several times tonight, with the internationally recognised United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The placement of 17-year-olds in adult prisons is even more inconsistent with every other definition that we have for an adult in Queensland for other purposes. It is time we did something about it, and I am proud to be part of a Labor government that is once again taking the lead to tackle an injustice. I congratulate the Attorney-General for taking such a strong stance to address this issue.

The role of the state when it comes to youth in detention should be to provide young people with targeted programs to give them the greatest opportunity to rehabilitate themselves, find that second chance and make the most of the lives they have in front of them. Placing young people in an adult prison clearly denies them access to the critical targeted services that help do just that, making rehabilitation and change that much more difficult.


I am on the public record with regard to my concern about the continual over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system, in particular the youth justice system. No matter how you look at it, the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the justice system is unacceptable. Despite representing just eight per cent of children aged 10 to 17 in Queensland, young Indigenous people currently comprise two-thirds of all young people in detention. Unarguably this represents an incredibly complex issue with many facets, but it is also a reflection of decades of inaction or misdirected action from governments at all levels and of different persuasions. Everyone has a right to basic human dignity regardless of their circumstances, and I am committed to working with my parliamentary colleagues to find solutions to this complex moral issue.

Our government has already restored a number of measures to help reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system, not least of which is the re-establishment of the Murri Court. We know that the Murri Court is an important intervention tool for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The Murri Court was thoughtlessly discarded by the LNP, and we are proud that we have reinstated it. Keeping 17-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth out of adult prisons is a big step in helping to deliver improved outcomes once they are released from detention. That is why this bill is so important for all communities right around the state.

The reforms in this bill are part of the government's broad reform agenda in youth justice and represent significant and progressive reform for how 17-year-olds are treated in the justice system. The Attorney-General has recently ordered an independent review of Queensland youth detention centres. Once again I acknowledge the commitment she has to young people in our state.

The ongoing reform agenda is very clear in its objectives. It is about reducing offending and reoffending and reducing the number of young people on remand. It is also about increasing the number of children and young people being successfully supported in the community and increasing community safety. This is a great step forward for Queensland, and only the Palaszczuk government has committed to working on this long overdue reform.

Children and young people who commit offences will still be held accountable for their offending. Of course, courts will continue to appraise appropriate outcomes for offending. The difference, however, is that this government is committed to reducing the number of children and young people—and of course that means reducing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people—who find themselves in the youth justice system and providing the support they need to turn their lives around and positively contribute to their communities. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. JA TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment) (8.41 pm): I rise to speak in support of the youth justice and other legislation amendment bill 2016. I thank the Attorney-General for bringing forward this very important piece of legislation. I begin by saying that I am incredibly proud to be able to stand here as a member of the Palaszczuk Labor government on this issue particularly. We are a government that has proven time and time again that we will not shy away from hard reform. This legislation stands as a testament to this.

The fight to remove 17-year-olds from Queensland's adult prisons has been ongoing for more than two decades. It has been fought not just in this place but also in courts, schools, prisons, homes and communities right across this state. It is my hope that today is the day that we do the right thing and end, once and for all, the shameful practice of locking up children with adults.


Like millions of other Australians, I watched the *Four Corners* report into the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre, and I was horrified by what I saw. As other stories emerged in the following weeks about similar treatment in juvenile justice centres and prisons across the country, it became clear that we as a government had to act. Seventeen-year-olds in Queensland cannot drink alcohol, cannot vote for politicians to represent them and cannot serve on a jury, but they can be locked up alongside adults. This is a fundamental problem. By treating 17-year-olds as adults we remove the protections afforded to them by the youth justice system. We are removing these protections for these children's lives with absolutely no tangible benefit, with many studies indicating that detaining young people increases recidivism and criminal behaviour later on in life.

There are significant welfare concerns with keeping juvenile offenders in adult prisons. When housed in the general prison population they are often targeted and victimised, which means the practical effect is that these children often serve their sentences in solitary confinement. This is a position which is inconsistent with all other Australian states as well as with our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It is time it is stopped. It is archaic and it is wrong. Today's bill is part of our far-reaching juvenile justice reforms that are overhauling our approach to juvenile offenders. It is a sensible, compassionate approach to justice, because this government is focused on rehabilitation, not punishment alone. These reforms are aimed at breaking the cycle of crime, poverty and recidivism that is all too common for juvenile offenders. They are sensible reforms, with full transitional arrangements to ensure that this process is transparent and methodical.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the people who have worked for decades to get us to this point, particularly Debbie Kilroy and Anne Warner from Sisters Inside and Damien Atkinson of the Youth Advocacy Centre, all of whom have been tireless advocates for this reform over very many years. I also acknowledge the work of Labor activists who have pursued this issue within our party, especially the member for Sunnybank, Peter Russo, who has been instrumental in pursuing this reform in this term of government.

We want to ensure a bright future for every Queensland child, regardless of the mistakes they have made or the situation they have been born into. This is legislation that has been an incredibly long time coming, and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (8.44 pm): I rise to speak to the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. I note that the committee could not reach agreement on the passage of the bill. I share the concerns of the committee members from this side of the House with this particular bill.

This is a significant issue. It is a significant issue not only for offenders but more importantly for communities such as Townsville. Over recent months we have seen the residents of Townsville subjected to an unrelenting and rampant crime spree that shows no sign of ending. On a daily basis I receive calls from residents and families expressing their concern with the constant break-ins, the out-of-control stealing of motor vehicles and the virtual impunity with which these young offenders are currently acting. In short, the residents of Townsville have had enough. They are sick and tired of waking up to find that their homes have been broken into or their vehicles have been stolen and trashed. Many of these residents are virtual prisoners in their own homes, fearful of going out in case these juvenile criminals should target their home whilst they are out. It is so bad that residents are now receiving psychological counselling to deal with the stress of having their property stolen and their homes broken into. Disturbingly, residents have threatened to take matters into their own hands. It is only a matter of time before this ticking time bomb explodes on the streets of Townsville.

The youth justice system in Queensland currently applies to young people aged between 10 and 16 years, with young people alleged to have committed offences as 17-year-olds treated as adults in the criminal justice system. I have grave concerns with this bill relating to the inclusion of 17-year-olds in youth detention centres. I was formerly a mentor at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in Townsville, so I have firsthand knowledge of how youth detention centres operate and the interactions between youth offenders within these centres. I spent many hours and many days in that centre, and I came to know all of the inmates at that centre during that period of time.

It is bad enough locking up 16-year-olds with 10- and 11-year-old offenders. I have witnessed the standover tactics, the passing on of the tricks of the trade and the way these older offenders influence and manipulate younger offenders. The last thing we need to be doing is bringing 17-year-olds into youth detention centres, because this will simply exacerbate the situation and lead to a further erosion of rehabilitation programs.

I remind the chamber that 17-year-old offenders in the adult prison system are currently segregated, so any suggestion that these offenders are somehow subjected to abuse or improper conduct with adult offenders is rubbish. These offenders are where they belong: in an adult prison where they can access the appropriate adult rehabilitation programs including vocational training. The youth justice system is facing mounting criticism from Queenslanders, and this bill will do nothing to address the escalating crime problem in centres such as Townsville.

The question that also arises regarding the proposed changes is that of parole eligibility. At present, 17-year-old offenders would be eligible for release from prison on parole. This gives some degree of control over offenders when they are released from prison and provides an immediate return-to-prison option to police should the offender commit further offences whilst on parole. I am led


to believe that, if this bill were to proceed through parliament tonight, 17-year-old offenders would be processed through the juvenile justice system, meaning that they would not be released on parole, effectively giving them free rein should they resort to the commission of further offences.

In order to accommodate 17-year-olds in youth detention centres in Queensland it will be necessary to construct a new centre, as there is no capacity in current centres across the state. It defies logic that this government will spend in the vicinity of \$400 million to construct a new youth detention centre, with an additional \$44 million per annum predicted in operational costs. I am sure there are many programs and initiatives throughout Queensland that would appreciate and put to good use \$444 million in funding.

The minister cannot elaborate on the operational details of how these 17-year-olds will be accommodated in youth detention centres and that is a clear indication that this government has not thought this through. It is clear that this government has no plan to address spiralling youth crime rates in Townsville and no plan to transition 17-year-old offenders from adult prisons to youth detention centres. You cannot make up policy on the run and it is obvious that those opposite in their rush to bring this bill before the House have not done their homework. I have said many times in this place that the time to target juveniles who are heading down a path of crime is at primary school age. As a former police officer, I can unequivocally say that some of the 15- and 16-year-old youths that I spoke to and mentored at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre were hardened criminals with several pages of criminal history and they certainly knew the ropes and they knew the legal system inside out. We are not talking about angels here; we are talking about young offenders who have committed the most serious of crimes, and here we are today contemplating the transition of 17-year-olds into our youth detention centres to further poison the minds of these young offenders.

There is no question that our youth detention centres are struggling to rehabilitate and reintegrate youth offenders back into mainstream society. We hear reports on a daily basis of offenders who are released from prison in the morning and who are back offending later that day, and that is not good enough. Why we would add to that problem by introducing 17-year-olds into the mix simply defies logic. We need fundamental changes to the way we deal with juvenile offenders. We need to stop these kids from breaking into houses, stealing cars, trashing people's property and running rampant throughout our community, and we need to get that right before we can even think about bringing 17-year-olds back into youth detention centres. You reap what you sow and the dismantling of legislation brought in by the previous LNP government such as breach of bail for youth offenders has led to an increase in crime and a Police Service which is at its wit's end in trying to deal with this issue.

As members of the Legislative Assembly we have an obligation to our fellow Queenslanders to ensure our police have the tools they need to do their job, that our judiciary has the legislation and the power to deal with the offenders and that our prisons are doing the job that they were set up to do. Unfortunately, we are falling well short of the mark and, despite its rhetoric, it is clearly obvious that this government needs to do a lot more to keep our community safe. Members on this side of the House have a proven track record of getting tough on crime, of stepping up to the plate and making the tough decisions, because that is what our community expects and that is what it demands. Transitioning 17-year-old offenders back into youth detention centres falls well short of what is required to address the crime problem that currently exists in our community. This is an ill-conceived, knee-jerk reaction to a broader crime problem and for that reason I oppose the bill before the House.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (8.52 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill which will finally transition 17-year-olds from adult correctional facilities—a place they should never have been. As a Labor member of parliament and also as the Minister for Youth, I welcome this decision by the Palaszczuk government. As the Premier said when she announced this reform, this issue has finally been taken out of the too-hard basket. This is not a new issue and in fact there are many members of this House, myself included, who have been fighting for this legislation for years and, in some cases for some members, decades. At my first Queensland Labor conference removing 17-year-olds from adult prisons was the first motion that I spoke on. It was one of the issues that convinced me to join the Labor Party. It is a great feeling standing here in this House today as a member of parliament speaking in favour of this legislation.

As we all know, Queensland is the only jurisdiction in this country that treats 17-year-olds as adults within our criminal justice system. No other state or territory treats 17-year-olds as adults and imprisons them in adult facilities. We also know that this anomaly in Queensland has meant that for more than 20 years we have been breaching the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2012 the UN committee overseeing the Convention on the Rights of the Child tabled its report on

Australia's progress on child rights and once again the UN committee condemned Queensland's inaction on this issue. It took Queensland to task for failing to remove 17-year-olds from the adult justice system, and sadly it was not for the first time.

Increasing the age at which young people are transferred to adult prison from 17 to 18 will bring us into line with nationally and internationally accepted law. This will increase the age at which children and young people are subject to periods of detention under the Youth Justice Act 1992 to be transferred to adult corrections from 17 to 18 years of age and empower a court on application to delay a young person's transfer for up to six months. This bill will ensure that Queensland is offering appropriate legal protection to 17-year-olds. Another consequence of 17-year-olds being treated as adults in our criminal justice system is the fact that they are excluded from youth restorative justice programs. We know that restorative programs like youth justice conferencing do have an impact on reducing crime and reducing recidivism because they give young people a chance to be accountable for their actions. They also give young people who have done the wrong thing a second chance, because 17-year-olds are not adults. They are still maturing. Their brains are still developing and they are still vulnerable to the expectations and influences of others.

In 2004 while campaigning for 17-year-olds to be removed from adult prisons in Victoria, Father Peter Norden from the Victorian justice coalition said—

You put a 17-year-old who is vulnerable in an adult prison and he will make heroes of criminals.

By putting 17-year-olds in our adult prisons, we run the risk of setting our young people up for a life of crime. We will set up our society for higher recidivism rates, an increased chance of more serious criminal offences and more young Queenslanders stuck in a cycle of crime. We have listened. We have listened to the Queensland Family and Child Commission which in its submission to the committee supported the transfer of 17-year-olds from adult justice to youth justice, citing Queensland's responsibilities under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We have listened to the Queensland Law Society which in its submission once again supported removing 17-year-olds from adult prisons, as it has for many years. We have listened to those on the ground who work every day with young people whose lives may have gone off track.

As the Minister for Youth this issue has been raised with me time and time again by the youth sector. The legislation is yet another example of the government not only listening to the community but also valuing its contribution. Through discussions with organisations like Brisbane Youth Service, YETI in North Queensland and YANQ, I have heard loud and clear that this change is needed. I also want to acknowledge the advocacy of Sisters Inside and in particular the work of Deb Kilroy. Deb has been a tireless advocate for this change for many years and has bravely shared her personal story many times over the years with the hope that this day would come. Deb, hats off to you and all the campaigners in the youth and legal sector who never gave up on advocating for this change.

I also want to thank the tireless advocates in this House. I want to particularly thank the Attorney-General for introducing this legislation. I want to thank my good friend Peter Russo, the member for Sunnybank, who has been instrumental in keeping this issue on the agenda. I want to extend my particular thanks to Damien Atkinson at the Youth Advocacy Centre. The passage of this legislation will be a testament to his many years of work and I want to join with Damien and call for a bipartisan approach to youth justice. As Damien said in the Youth Advocacy Centre submission to this bill—

A situation where youth justice policy 'chops and changes' in order to assuage populist opinion rather than all sides of politics properly understanding the evidence base, and assisting to educate the broader community in relation to this, does a great disservice to the Queensland community, including its young people.

We have a clear evidence based plan and I call on the LNP to put this important issue above politics. I commend this bill to the House and I am again proud that the Palaszczuk Labor government is creating a fairer and more just Queensland.

Interruption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Deputy Speaker's Rulings



Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Before proceeding with the debate I wish to make a short statement. Standing order 234 provides that imputations of improper motives, personal reflections and unbecoming or offensive words in relation to another member are disorderly. A member

has a right to require the withdrawal of such personal reflections. Generally, if the affected member believes a statement is a personal reflection and objects to the words used, then the chair will require withdrawal and not make an objective assessment. However, to be personally offensive, the offensive statement must name or identify the member personally. Earlier this evening after a quorum call the member for Mermaid Beach made certain comments in his speech about the quorum call. I did not hear all of the member's words as I was distracted by members on my near left. The Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services rose on a point of order finding the member for Mermaid Beach's comments offensive. I asked the member for Mermaid Beach to withdraw because even though I had not heard all of the member's words I erred in favour of the aggrieved minister.

I have, however, reviewed the early transcript of proceedings and can confirm that there was no personal reflection. The comments of the member for Mermaid Beach were generally about government members. Therefore, I apologise to the member for Mermaid Beach for seeking the withdrawal and vacate my ruling in that respect.

I now turn to another matter. The member for Callide did not accept my ruling and eventually moved dissent to my ruling. That is the member's right. My review of the record reveals that the member for Callide went much further than necessary and clearly disrespected the authority of the Chair. As it turns out, the record reveals I was in error, but that does not justify disrespect. I warn the member for Callide, and all members, that any such disrespect in the future will result in the member being named.

Withdrawal of Notice of Motion

Mr SEENEY: In light of your ruling and under standing order No. 68, I seek leave of the House to withdraw the notice of motion that I moved.

Leave granted.

Mr SEENEY: Therefore, I withdraw the notice of motion.

Mr DICK: Insofar as it is necessary, I withdraw my objection to the words said by the member for Mermaid Beach. I have listened to your ruling and I accept it completely.

Ms DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INCLUSION OF 17-YEAR-OLD PERSONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 4205.



Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.00 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. I do so as a North Queensland member of parliament representing part of the great northern city of Townsville, which unfortunately in recent times has experienced an increase in instances of crime. In particular, the city of Townsville has been afflicted by a rather concerning increase in the number of juvenile crime offences that have been recorded, particularly against property owned by the residents of the city of Townsville. For that reason I felt it necessary to make a contribution to this debate and to ask why on earth those members opposite representing parts of the city of Townsville, in particular the member for Townsville, the member for Mundingburra and the member for Thuringowa, would be motivated to support this particular piece of legislation which does not prioritise the issues relating to crime and, in particular, youth crime in North Queensland and in the city of Townsville.

Of course, my concerns about the behaviour and the priorities of the member for Thuringowa, the member for Townsville and the member for Mundingburra have been heightened for a period of time and have not been particularly associated with this bill coming into the House. My concerns were first raised when those three members supported the passage of the previous juvenile justice legislation introduced by the Attorney-General earlier this year which did three retrograde things to water down the efforts of the previous LNP government to address the juvenile crime issues in Queensland, in particular in North Queensland and the city of Townsville. That legislation removed boot camps as an option in the Youth Justice Act well before the trial had been able to provide any meaningful data for proper and objective assessment, it removed breach of bail as an offence for young offenders and it removed the discretion of the courts by mandating that detention would be a last resort—all things that have subsequently frustrated the efforts of the police in terms of addressing these concerning spikes in juvenile crime rates in the city of Townsville and in North Queensland generally.

While those three Labor members of parliament representing the city of Townsville have prioritised changes to the Youth Justice Act that make it harder for the police, the communities that they represent have been continuing to cry out for something to be done about the offences against themselves and against property. They have pretended to do something about it. We had, of course, the infamous Strike Force deployed to the city of Townsville. Thirty police officers were diverted away from doing jobs in other communities in the state of Queensland and a number of constables conducted a doorknocking campaign. I am not trying to take away from the efforts of those constables to raise awareness amongst the residents of the city of Townsville about personal safety and the safety of their property, but they are hardly to be encouraged by the actions of the member for Thuringowa, the member for Townsville and the member for Mundingburra who do not provide them with the relevant tools in terms of youth justice legislation to make a meaningful difference. More recently they have been crowing about increased charges in Townsville, but we do not know what has been happening subsequent to these additional charges being laid. It is okay for the police to go out and catch these young offenders, but we do not know how successfully they are being dealt with through the juvenile justice system after they have been caught because the legislation has been watered down which means they cannot be dealt with effectively.


As I was saying, instead of prioritising the needs of the victims of crime, this government, and in particular those three members from the city of Townsville with whom I share the responsibility of representing the residents, is prioritising the welfare and circumstances of the perpetrators of those crimes. It is quite extraordinary. It makes one want to take the member for Townsville, the member for Thuringowa and the member for Mundingburra to one side and say, 'What on earth are you doing?'

The contribution of the member for Townsville during the second reading debate for this particular bill was very interesting. I know he shares some responsibilities and burdens as the chairman of the committee to make a contribution to the debate in support of the government's bill. He used the word 'inconceivable' a lot to describe his proposition that nothing would be done about moving 17-year-olds back to youth detention centres. For me it is inconceivable that the Palaszczuk government would be prioritising the welfare and circumstances of the perpetrators of crime rather than prioritising the victims of crime, which is exactly what progressing this legislation through the parliament is all about, at the same time that this concerning, heightened rate of juvenile crime is affecting the people of Townsville.

Costs have been discussed on several occasions throughout the course of the debate on this bill. In particular, figures associated with \$400 million worth of proposed capital works for the expansion of juvenile justice facilities have been suggested and \$44 million for less than 50 juvenile offenders currently in adult prisons has also been proposed. I must say that while the member for Townsville says that it is inconceivable that those funds would not be expended to accommodate this juvenile justice initiative, I say openly—I say it notoriously—that I would rather see that \$400 million worth of capital expenditure spent on police and other resources to prevent crimes being committed in the first instance and to try to reduce the rate of juvenile offences affecting the people of Queensland, the people of North Queensland and the people of the city of Townsville. The member for Townsville also said that there was some sort of extremely concerning inconsistency in the fact that the Juvenile Justice Act applied to 17-year-olds on the north coast of New South Wales and that it did not apply to 17-year-olds at the southern end of the Gold Coast. He said that for some reason this inconsistency had to be resolved immediately.

I do not think that juvenile offenders in northern New South Wales necessarily get up in the morning and warn each other that, if they are going to commit an offence on the southern Gold Coast, they have to be careful because the Juvenile Justice Act does not apply to them in the state of Queensland and they would be tried, charged and incarcerated as an adult. That is absurd. That sort of argument is very thin. I do not think it really reflects well on the member for Townsville to put forward such a thin argument in support of the legislation proposed by his Attorney-General.

I have constituents approaching me about the youth crime rate in Townsville. I do not have any constituents approaching me to express concern for juvenile offenders of 17 years of age who may be serving a sentence in adult prisons. I do not have any constituents at all expressing concern about them. I do have the people of my electorate and the people across the city of Townsville expressing grave concerns about the level of crime and, in particular, juvenile crime that is affecting their welfare and circumstances, their personal safety and the safety of their property. I think that should be the priority of this government and this parliament. The welfare and circumstances of 17-year-olds in juvenile detention or adult detention is not the priority of the people of Queensland. I do not support this bill, because it is not a priority.

 **Ms FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (9.11 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. I do so with the greatest admiration for what the Attorney-General is aiming to do through this legislation. These issues are not easy issues to fix. This is not like the quickie political stunt put up by the member for Kawana, contrary to the advice of the department—that is, the boot camps. The Auditor-General's report was absolutely scathing of the tender process for that option. If we are going to talk about outrageous costs for youth justice, I do not know a better example than the member for Kawana's boot camps. It was simply a race to the bottom so that the LNP could look like it was tough on crime.

Our young people are far too important to treat like political footballs. We cannot say that youth justice is so hard that we should not change the current arrangements, which is pretty much what the LNP is saying. It started with the member for Mansfield and, one after another, they all said the same thing. They said that 20 years ago it was like this and this Premier did not do anything, and 15 years ago it was like this and that Premier did not do anything, and we should not do anything now because it is too complex. As a member of parliament that is not good enough for me, it is not good enough for this Attorney-General and it is not good enough for the Palaszczuk government.

If even one of my constituents came to me—and many more than one have spoken to me—to say that their child had got into trouble and they desperately wanted to get that child out of the cycle, I could not face myself if I had to say to them, 'I'm sorry, it is just tough bickies. It is too hard to change the system. We're going to have to keep them in there. We'll have to leave that child in there. There's no hope for them. They're just going to be stuck for the rest of their lives.' Essentially, that is what the LNP is saying. The Attorney-General acknowledges that it is hard and really complex. Much of this strategy has such long-term goals that they do not really fit into the political cycle. Therefore, if we were motivated to do this by political expediency, which is what motivates the LNP, we would not do it because it would not be worth our while.

I have said before that the reason I got into politics was that when I was quite young, early in my working life, I realised that there are some things that only government can fix and there are some things that only government can achieve. I realised that with some things there is no other institution in our society that can make a difference. Legislation such as this is exactly why I got into politics, because only a committed effort from government can make a difference for those young people in our society.

Yesterday I was at one of my local schools, handing out certificates for the Premier's Reading Challenge. I made a speech about how we need to encourage our children to be the best that they can be. They were very cute little kids who were very excited to get their certificates. We need to say to young people of all ages that we want to help them to be the best that they can be as well.

We do not deny that some serious offenders under 18 should be kept separate from younger people. We acknowledge that that is a problem. Are we saying that the community should not be subjected to violent crime, no matter the age of the offender? Yes, we are. Are we saying we need to be tough on those crimes? Yes, we are. This bill addresses all of those issues. We are making sure that community expectations are met in regard to the justice system, but it is much more than that. This is about diverting young people from the court system via rehabilitative diversionary strategies, interventions and options. This is improved access to more age-appropriate education, training and specialised programs, and it is about bringing Queensland's treatment of 17-year-olds into line with the rest of Australia and in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I want to specifically answer something that the member for Mansfield raised in his speech. I was shocked that he was willing to make such a claim and to make such a fool of himself, when clearly he is an intelligent person. Therefore, I must answer the particular point that he raised. He should know that if you make accusations about people you had best make sure that some of them are true, otherwise you lose your credibility. I refer to his maligning of the Attorney-General and her ability to achieve huge strides for Queensland. I want to list some of the things that the Attorney-General has already achieved which have made a huge impact on Queensland.


She has introduced the Serious and Organised Crime Amendment Bill, the 17-year-olds into youth justice bill, an institutional child sexual abuse bill and discussion paper, domestic and family violence reform, and a domestic and family violence review and advisory board. She has introduced the domestic violence strangulation offence, overseen the creation of the Queensland Training Ombudsman, introduced class action law suits into Queensland, moved to curb offensive advertising and instituted political donation reform. I have two more pages here. I am not going to read them all out, because on this side of the House we already know all about it.

I urge the people opposite to think about our young people and, if you are going to put up a case, put up a case that is credible. I commend the bill to the House.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member


 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (9.17 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege. During the course of the speech of the member of Hinchinbrook tonight, I believe he misled parliament. He made accusations and claims that I used the word 'inconceivable' several times throughout my speech. I have viewed the *Hansard* transcript of my speech and the word 'inconceivable' does not appear in my speech at all. Therefore, I shall be writing to the Speaker with regard to that matter.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Thank you, member for Townsville.

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INCLUSION OF 17-YEAR-OLD PERSONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.17 pm), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to this important debate of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. I would like to address some of the matters raised by honourable members during the course of this debate. I must say how disappointed I am that the opposition is not supporting this bill. The shadow Attorney-General started off so promisingly, recognising that the status quo is in breach of our international obligations, is different to every other Australian jurisdiction and, indeed, is contrary to other Queensland laws that define 17-year-olds as children. However, once again, the member for Mansfield has been thwarted by the member for Broadwater and the conservatives in the LNP.

Our plan stands in stark contrast to that of the LNP. The opposition fails to acknowledge the overwhelming support in Queensland and around the world for transitioning 17-year-olds to the youth justice system and finds itself isolated in its disgraceful stance against this important change. They have learnt nothing from the arrogance of their three years in government and are still unable to listen to what the people of Queensland want. The Leader of the Opposition's lack of conviction to simply do the right thing has once again left him on the wrong side of history.

It was of no surprise that the issues raised by the other side were nothing but the same tired, old and desperate tough-on-crime rhetoric—lock them up or send them off to boot camps. These were the tired old suggestions offered by the LNP when they were in government. 'It worked,' proclaimed the member for Everton and others. No, it did not.

They quoted from the same crime statistics from the same year that they quote every time. They try to defend the appalling mess created by the member for Kawana. The LNP love to cherry-pick their statistics. The truth is that 75 per cent of sentenced boot camp participants reoffended, a percentage that is worse than those in youth detention. They introduced a program that was not evidenced based and that went against all credible criminological research and evidence. They say that it worked and it was simply the name that we had an issue with.

I can assure members that when I visited the boot camp at Lincoln Springs I was told, 'We do not believe in evidence based policy. We do not believe in the no-touch policy. It is appropriate if a 15-year-old girl needs a hug that it be from a grown man who is not a trained counsellor.'

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: That is exactly what I was told. There were witnesses there when it was said.

Mr Last interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! Pause the clock. Members!

Mrs D'ATH: They might not like to hear these facts, but I went up there and saw what was happening.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Take your seat please, Attorney. There will be no further interjections. The next time there are, whether they be from members on my left or my right, I will be warning members.

Mrs D'ATH: Those on the opposite side like to quote the president's overview in the annual report of the Childrens Court. They did it during the debate on the youth justice legislation earlier this year. I thought they would have learnt their lesson by doing so, but apparently not. Once again, I will draw their attention to the rest of the quotes in that report. In relation to 2014-15 report, under the section titled 'Legislative matters', it reads—

The new Queensland Government has announced that it will be reintroducing the Childrens Courts' power to refer a matter to Youth Justice Conferencing. As noted in the last two Annual Reports, such a mechanism is an extremely useful (and successful) diversionary mechanism as well as being a tried and tested method of restorative justice.

These comments follow on from the president's overview in the 2013-14 annual report of the Childrens Court. In relation to the Youth Justice Act introduced by the then LNP government, the president stated—

Several of these changes cause me grave concern.

The principle that detention should be a sentence of last resort in relation to a child is of long standing in the common law and recognised in all other Australian States. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (to which Australia is a signatory) provides that, in relation to a child, deprivation of liberty should be used only as a measure of last resort and only for the shortest appropriate period of time. The principle is based on the recognition of the well established fact that the capacity of young people to regulate their behaviour and make decisions after considering consequences is not as developed as an adult. Child offenders are not little adults. That is why juvenile justice systems are developed separately from the adult criminal justice systems.

The report later goes on to state—

Rehabilitation is also a fundamental aspect of a juvenile justice system as it is clear that the earlier rehabilitative steps are taken, the better are the prospects of turning a person from a criminal path and particularly from developing into an adult criminal.

An overly punitive juvenile system poses the danger of placing rehabilitation behind punishment and retribution with the consequent risk of long term recidivism. In any event, the data in relation to the 10 year trends in relation to juvenile offenders and the number of charges against juveniles do not show a juvenile crime wave. The trend line in relation to the number of juvenile offenders is decreasing and, whilst the trend line in relation to the number of offences is increasing, it is probably a function of more offences being committed by a relatively small number of offenders. Also the trend line shows increasing detention orders over the last decade. In 2011/2012 the number of detention orders increased by 38.3% from the previous year, in 2012/2013 by 10.3% and in 2013/2014 by 4.9%.

The change was unnecessary in the light of the statistics and the principles of juvenile justice. It was argued against in almost all the submissions made to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's hearing into the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. It should be reconsidered.

If those opposite want to quote Judge Shanahan, President of the Childrens Court, they should quote him accurately. They should quote all of what he says about early intervention diversion programs and his comments in relation to the previous government's youth justice reforms.

What is really needed, and what we will deliver, is a multiagency response to address youth offending and recidivism, developed in consultation with key stakeholders and experts. Why are we taking this approach? Unlike those opposite, we actually want to reduce offending. By early intervention, education, training and health care, including mental health, we can reduce offending in the first place and help turn young lives away from entering the youth justice system. By targeting programs to reduce recidivism we also reduce future crime. By actually targeting changing behaviour and reducing crime, we do not only improve the lives of those individuals and their families but also build safer communities right across this state.

There were very few people on the other side of the chamber who even mentioned causation factors at all. They did not talk about why they are offending or reducing offending. They just talked about whether they should be in adult prisons and how to be tough on crime. We cannot address crime rates, particularly youth crime, without looking at the reasons these young people are committing crimes in the first place. We have to start looking at these factors. We have to do it early on.

We heard the comment that this has not been done before. Not passing legislation simply because previous governments have chosen not to do it is flawed logic. If we followed this logic we would never have made those progressive and historic changes to how we respond to domestic and family violence. We would not have introduced laws to allow the use of medicinal cannabis. Last night we would not have passed revised adoption laws to allow same-sex couples to adopt. We would not have passed legislation to finally address the age of consent.

Mr Boothman: Relevance.

Mrs D'ATH: I take that interjection—relevance. The shadow Attorney-General went through a long list of former attorneys-general and governments who they say never acted on this. Many speakers on the other side talked about the fact that the previous government had chosen not to act on this and that that was somehow a basis for saying we should not do it now. They cannot use that as an excuse or justification for not acting now. We would not be tackling the important issue of expunging historical homosexual convictions if we simply relied on: 'No-one has done it before.' We would not have a bill before this House on the statute of limitations on child sexual abuse or class actions if we took that approach.

Just because something has not been before is no excuse for not acting now. If we adopt the attitude of the LNP, nothing would get done. We would be frozen in time. Hold on, that is what the LNP actually wants. They want to try to take Queensland backwards because that is what they are comfortable with. By their logic I would not be standing here and we would only have a chamber of white, middle-aged men who would be debating the price of wool. That is if they had their way.

They carry on about costs. They talk about the \$400 million. I am sure they are going to go out with their little scare campaign about what \$400 million would otherwise pay for. That just shows that they have not paid any attention to this debate. They have not read the explanatory notes. They have not listened to the evidence before the committee. The \$400 million figure is based on if we did nothing but seek to pick up the 17-year-olds and transfer them then we would need to build a new youth detention centre and that would be the cost. We have said that we are not addressing it that way. We are not simply picking them up and moving them over.

Similarly, hiding behind an excuse that support legislation for reform cannot occur until the final costs are to come is nothing but a weak 'chicken and egg' argument because with this logic you would never consider changes again to domestic and family violence laws. This House introduced significant reforms in relation to domestic and family violence that led to a rapid increase in applications before our courts that came at a cost. Did we say we should not do that because we could not factor in what the total cost would be of those reforms? No. Without pre-empting discussion or debate on a bill before this House, if we use this same logic about costs and not being able to fully cost out what the implications are on a bill, then the opposition would not be supporting the statute of limitations bill next sitting week because we cannot fully comprehend what the cost implications are going to be for government on those sorts of reforms. No-one is going to be arguing that. It is a convenient argument for this occasion and this occasion only.

The last point on costs is that this government will not be lectured to by the LNP when it comes to costs by the party that spent \$16 million in 18 months on wasted boot camps that did not reduce offending or recidivism in youth in this state—\$16 million in 18 months. They knew it was such a failure that they did not even budget for it in the forward estimates. We came in and there was no budget in the forward estimates for it. That is how much they believed in it. We are not going to be lectured by the LNP when it comes to costs because they believe that budget savings should be made by sacking 14,000 public servants. That is their ideas of costs. They believe that the only way to make savings for this state is by selling assets. We will not be lectured to by those on the other side when it comes to costs on policies.

On the issue of managing 17-year-olds in youth detention centres, concerns have been raised about how we are going to manage 17-year-olds in the same facility with 10-year-olds. I wish they were as concerned about 10-year-olds when they brought in their policies that detention should be a first resort, that we should name and shame and that we should have open courts. When they were pushing through their youth justice legislation that applied to 10-year-olds, where was their concern then? When was there concern about 10-year-olds when they were pushing their youth justice changes through? Members do need to keep in mind that Youth Justice already manages this risk as there are 17-year-olds in the youth justice system already, and there were 17-year-olds in the youth justice system prior to the LNP changing the legislation in 2014. These changes will see that cohort increase—we do not deny that—which is why the transition is being managed in this measured way, but we cannot forget that every other Australian jurisdiction is able to manage these risks. Surely Queensland can too.

Currently, every young person is risk assessed and individually case managed to ensure the safety and security of the individual, other detainees, staff and the detention centre. This is critical because it is not as simple as classifying the risk of young people based on their age alone, as we have heard from some on the other side tonight. Young people in youth detention centres come from a variety of backgrounds, education levels, health levels, cognitive abilities and upbringing.

Reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people is a priority of all youth justice interventions and justice reinvestment. The Youth Justice First Nations Action Board established by my department is a first in Australia and comprises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members from across Youth Justice. The board ensures that all programs and intervention in Youth Justice are delivered in a culturally appropriate way and will serve to reduce over-representation.

We were asked what we were doing to address the high rate of recidivism and incarceration within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth who are within the youth justice system. We are delivering a wide range of programs in both youth detention facilities. These programs are designed to build confidence, develop skills and provide culturally appropriate support. That brings me to the comments from the opposition around education and training—comments that I find absolutely extraordinary.

In contrast, this government is committed to providing youth offenders with the education and training to help change their paths and to be able to contribute more to their communities. We are building up vocational education and training programs after they were gutted by the LNP. I cannot believe the LNP members, particularly those on the committee who actually wrote a statement of reservations complaining about the lack of vocational education in our youth detention centres. The first thing I did as Attorney-General was to visit the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre to see a brand-new trade training centre sitting there completely unused because the teachers and the trainers had been pulled out of there. It is absolutely astonishing that those on the other side would have the nerve to talk about vocational education and training. It is this government that is bringing it back in.

The training facilities were left sitting idle by the former government. The Cleveland Youth Detention Centre is currently offering courses in woodwork and hospitality, and Youth Justice is in the process of sourcing a provider to recommence small engine training—an important training opportunity that meets the interests of young people in detention in North Queensland, particularly for Indigenous communities.

I pick up the comments of the member for Pumicestone. He could not be more accurate when he talked about the importance of outboard motors and automotive farm skills. When I visited there, the staff were telling me that the way it previously worked was that the youth from Palm Island would be taught how to maintain and fix outboard motors—very important skills for when they go home. That is what they were learning. In woodwork, if they built a table or something else, the staff there would flat pack it and send it back to their regional or remote community so that their community could see the great work they were doing and they could be proud in their work. That is where we want to get back to, but we are having to rebuild from the mess that those opposite left behind.

The Brisbane Youth Detention Centre offers a range of vocational education and training opportunities, including construction and engineering, hospitality and horticulture. Both detention centres also provide a standard school curriculum which is tailored to the educational needs of children and young people in detention. Managing these risks and reducing harm is current practice, and Youth Justice will continue to manage these risks throughout the transition.

Unfortunately the argument from those opposite is not evidence based. It is also inconsistent depending on which member we listen to tonight. The member for Everton said how outrageous it is that police would go knocking on doors and working with communities to raise awareness, increase prevention and reduce crime through initiatives such as the Lock It or Lose It campaign. Yet we had the member for Currumbin saying how fantastic it was that her police and community were working together and it actually had resulted in a reduction in youth crime.

On the issue of over-representation, why do we care about VET programs for young people? We know when it comes to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people how important VET programs are because giving young Queenslanders, including those in youth detention centres, the skills and experience that they can use to re-engage in education or enter the workforce to build a career and provide for their families is vital for offenders to build a better life.

We have heard 'What is our plan? What are the initiatives?' Some on the other side even said that we did not talk about anything to do with reducing or stopping offending and recidivism. Those on the other side clearly were not listening, but I will go through it again for them. Transition 2 Success is a further example of this government's genuine commitment to education and training and its ability to transform the lives of young offenders. The results from T2S are very promising and will benefit the 17-year-olds coming into the system. We have had 160 enrolments in T2S courses across Queensland.

Ninety-one individuals have completed 121 certificates. Of the graduates, 19 per cent have transitioned into employment, 20 per cent have returned to mainstream education and 37 per cent have transitioned to further training. A total of 77 per cent have transitioned to further education, training or employment.

This bill will bring 17-year-olds into the youth justice system. It changes the definition of 'child' for the purposes of the Youth Justice Act from under 17 years to under 18 years and provides for the management of this change by way of a transitional regulation-making power. The benefits of including 17-year-olds in the youth justice system are nationally and internationally recognised. Research from the United States using a longitudinal MRI study found that brain development continues from childhood into our early 20s and that significant changes occur between puberty and adulthood to the parts of the brain responsible for self-control, judgement, emotions and organisation.

That study published in *Nature Neuroscience* in 1991 remains the seminal work today. While we have an efficient and effective adult corrective services system, we appreciate that 17-year-olds are not adults. The youth justice system provides reduced exposure to adult offenders, increased ability to be diverted from the court system, access to more age appropriate education, training and specialised programs, more intensive staff support and supervision in custody, and the sentencing principles of the Youth Justice Act which prioritise support and rehabilitation in the community wherever practicable and appropriate. There is no logical reason why the criminal justice system should persist with a younger age threshold. People who cannot vote, cannot purchase alcohol and cannot be sued because they are not adults should not be treated as adults in the justice system. It just does not make sense. This bill makes sense.

To summarise for those on the other side, we will start addressing this issue with a multiagency committee. I heard the member for Broadwater complaining that half of the cabinet will be sitting on a working committee. What is wrong with bringing education, health, mental health, housing, child safety, police and youth justice together to finally have a whole-of-government strategy to deal with offending and recidivism? What is wrong with bringing external stakeholders with expertise, front-line youth advocates such as those sitting in the gallery tonight and academics together to help us develop those programs? What is wrong with early intervention programs that we know are already showing early positive results? What is wrong with trauma informed care on intensive case management? What is wrong with the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program that specifically targets those in the youth justice system?

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! Member for Burleigh, you know the standing orders as well as I do. If you want to interject, do so from your seat.

Mrs D'ATH: We will address remand, offending and recidivism. To summarise the arguments on the other side, I have been told that I should hold a review but I am also holding too many reviews. I have been told to slow down but I am asleep at the wheel. I have been told that the police and Communities are just pushing the problem onto the community, but others say it is fixing the problem. The only consistency across opposition members' debates on this bill is the level of inconsistency in their debates. We have outlined our plan to address the transition of 17-year-olds into the youth justice system. It is a plan that we believe can work. It is a plan that is long overdue. Those on the other side just make excuses.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nanango, you are now warned under standing order 253A.

Mrs D'ATH: In conclusion, I once again thank all honourable members for their contribution to the debate on the bill but particularly those on this side who understand the importance of taking this action. I thank them for their support of the government and me in putting this bill forward and for their support in going forward to seeing these reforms through.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that interjection. Wait until they tell the people from Townsville. That just shows what those on the other side are really like. They could not care less. I will quote the member for Hinchinbrook: 17-year-olds in the adult prison system; the youth justice system is just not a priority. That shows why the LNP is sitting on that side of the chamber.

Rather than embrace these changes—a framework that operates in every other jurisdiction including under conservative governments—the Queensland LNP is determined to be on the wrong side of history. I thank the community advocates and legal representatives for their hard work,


dedication and professionalism over many years to see this to fruition. I look forward to working with them over the coming months to have these 17-year-olds transferred into the youth justice system. I look forward to working together in partnership with the community and across government for these positive outcomes.

I thank the front-line staff in government, youth justice, community education, health and mental health who devote their lives to supporting vulnerable Queenslanders, improving the lives of Queenslanders and strengthening our communities. Finally, I thank the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for the great work they do each and every day. This is a government proud to be delivering for Queensland. Once again, I commend this bill to the House.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.44 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. Subsequent to the member for Townsville's matter of privilege earlier this evening, he has been gracious enough to furnish me with a copy of his green and I acknowledge that the member for Townsville did not use the word 'inconceivable' in his speech. He did, in fact, use the word 'incomprehensible'. The passage of time between half past three this afternoon and nine o'clock this evening has seen my memory fail me, and I acknowledge that he did not use the word 'inconceivable'. I apologise to the member for Townsville for suggesting that he did so.

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INCLUSION OF 17-YEAR-OLD PERSONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed.

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

In division—

Mr SPEAKER: A temporary seat has been arranged for the member for Bundaberg between the member for Logan and the member for Gladstone.

AYES, 43:

ALP, 40—Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Crawford, D'Ath, Dick, Donaldson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hinchliffe, Howard, Jones, Kelly, King, Lauga, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Miles, Miller, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Pitt, Power, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Stewart, Trad, Whiting, Williams.

KAP, 1—Katter.

INDEPENDENT, 2—Gordon, Pyne.

NOES, 41:

LNP, 40—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Cripps, Davis, Dickson, Elmes, Emerson, Frecklington, Hart, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McEachan, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Perrett, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Walker, Watts, Weir.

KAP, 1—Knuth.

Pairs: Bailey, McArdle; de Brenni, Powell.

Resolved in the affirmative.


Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.52 pm): I move—


That the bill be now read a third time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.53 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.53 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.53 pm): Another day, another disaster for this asleep-at-the-wheel Palaszczuk Labor government—a government that is descending—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Saunders: Sit down, you idiot.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maryborough, will you withdraw that interjection?

Mr SAUNDERS: I withdraw.

Mr NICHOLLS: That was an interjection showing the level of application by the Palaszczuk Labor government here. Rather than dealing with the facts of the matter, rather than dealing with the issue, what we are seeing here is a government that is descending into chaos, crisis and catastrophe, led by a Premier who does not have the power to control her own cabinet, a Premier who cannot muster the strength to sack ministers who are incompetent or hopeless. First, it was the member for Cook—resigned. Then it was the member for Bundamba—resigned. Then it was the member for Cairns—resigned. Now the former agriculture minister, the member for Bundaberg—resigned. Were they sacked? Were they disciplined? Was the proper standard of integrity and accountability applied by the Premier? The answer is a resounding no.

This is a Premier who does not have the bottle for the job. This is a Premier who does not have the integrity for the job. This is a Premier who does not have a cabinet or a party room fit for the job. The only minister to have escaped so far is the one who should have been sacked and that is the member for Sandgate, the failed transport minister. He is a minister so incompetent that he could not, as leader of government business, muster the numbers to keep a quorum in this House. No wonder he cannot run a railway network. You would not give him a Thomas the Tank Engine train set to run. He would not know how to wind it up. The one that Premier Palaszczuk lacks the integrity and the guts to sack is the AWU factional mate, Stirling Hinchliffe, the member for Sandgate.

Why is it that the member for Bundaberg got one chance and the member for Sandgate has had 100 chances? Why is it that he can only learn about the failures of his department by Twitter but he cannot announce in this parliament today a further 113 rail services being cancelled? Why is it that, by all standards of Westminster accountability, by all standards of integrity, this minister refuses to fall on his sword and this Premier fails the test of leadership by failing to sack someone who should so obviously go? This is now the test for Annastacia Palaszczuk. Does she have the integrity to put Queenslanders first or does she put her own political survival first? This is a government that is held to ransom by the unions putting Queenslanders last.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (9.57 pm): Today we see that these incompetent Palaszczuk government members cannot even get up out of their seats and actually speak on behalf of their communities. What another fail. We have all of those people over there, but this Palaszczuk Labor government is so incompetent that they cannot even stand up and speak in this House. Instead, we see a government that is completely in disarray. It is incredible to see fail after fail after fail after fail. We are sitting here in the adjournment and they could not even get a quorum in this House. They were all asleep at the wheel because they all have their heads down. They are looking at their factional leaders. They are trying to work out who is going to mob for the position of the coveted agriculture minister here in Queensland. What about the fact that the previous Labor government did not even have an agricultural department, so let me start with that. I am sure all the superstars of the Palaszczuk Labor government are trying very hard to rustle for that coveted position.

The point of this is that we have a Premier who should have done the right thing this morning. She should have stood up in this House and she should have sacked the agriculture minister. What did she know and when did she know it? Why did the Deputy Premier not tell her Premier what was going on in her faction? Why was the Deputy Premier not up-front with the Premier when she found out that there was something that needed to be disclosed to the people of Queensland?

Like I said in my speech earlier in this House, there are people in Queensland who wanted to know the story and yet the Deputy Premier kept this Premier in hiding. It is typical that this Premier has no idea. She has no-one talking to her. It is just like when there is other bad news: where is the Premier? She is nowhere to be seen. She is usually off on some trade mission or she is missing in action completely. This Premier is completely asleep at the wheel. She needs to grow some intestinal fortitude and actually do the job. She should have sacked the agriculture minister instead of waiting for her to resign whilst we see all the factional movements that are going on in this House today. This is a Premier who is always hiding away when there is bad news.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Members, for your information, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was the designated second person on the speaking list.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: We will have no cross-chatter or we will be here til the wee hours of the morning.

Member for Bundaberg; Barron River Electorate



Mr CRAWFORD (Barron River—ALP) (10.01 pm): Before I get to my adjournment speech, I want to thank the member for Bundaberg for her contribution to our government.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the member for Barron River. It is not an invitation for people to try to speak.

Mr Cramp interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gaven, you are warned under standing order 252.

Mr CRAWFORD: I want to thank the member for Bundaberg for her contribution to our government, to our cabinet and to our backbench. For a while she sat next to me in the House and I value her as a friend. My phone is always on if she wants to have a chat. I think that applies for all of the members of our government.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Resume your seat, member for Barron River. Leader of the Opposition, I cannot hear the member for Barron River. You are warned under 253A. I cannot hear the member for Barron River because of your interjections. That is disorderly.

Mr CRAWFORD: In my adjournment speech I want to update the House on the Palaszczuk government's projects in the Barron River electorate.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Chatsworth, you are disorderly. I cannot hear the member. If you persist I will take the appropriate action. I call the member again.

Mr CRAWFORD: This could take a while.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment. Can you resume your seat? Who made that interjection?

An honourable member: Burleigh.

Mr SPEAKER: Will you kindly leave the chamber? You have been—

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order. The member made an interjection and, Mr Speaker, you have the power to warn. You have not chosen to do so; you have just instructed his dismissal. I ask you to give an indication of the standing order and the reason for the dismissal. In doing so, I reflect that when I got up to speak to deliver my adjournment speech there was a cacophony of noise for the entire three minutes that I was speaking and not once, Mr Speaker, did you take exception to the noise that was coming from over there. I ask you, Mr Speaker, most respectfully to reflect on the fairness of that.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. I will reflect on the fairness of that and I will withdraw that direction regarding whoever made that interjection.

Mr CRAWFORD: I wish to update the House on the Palaszczuk government's projects in my electorate. The Caravonica State School car park is well underway. For 30 years now this has been a problem that could not be resolved. It is now a \$3.8 million project. The education department, Cairns Regional Council and a private developer have combined their efforts to fix this issue once and for all. The car park needed to be filled with two metres of fill and compacted for nearly six months before construction of kerbing, drainage and the like can commence. The fill is complete. The compaction time is around halfway through. I expect that shortly after the return of school in 2017 works on the surface will commence with a new intersection, a new car park, a new bus drop and a new area with around a hundred car parks for families and parents to safely deposit their children to and from school.


The much anticipated Bill Fulton Bridge duplication on the western arterial is now ready to go. The contracts were awarded in the last few weeks. I anticipate construction of this to commence this month, during November. This will be a nine-month construction with a \$34 million price tag. By the second half of 2017 we should see this project completed.

The Smithfield fire station, which is a \$5 million fire station, is drawing close to commencement. The Trinity Beach classroom project—12 classrooms at Trinity Beach State School, a school which is overloaded with students in my electorate—is also underway. We also have a new boat ramp, which we are looking at facilitating on the northern beaches. There are a number of other projects happening that I have not got time to mention due to taking about a minute to get started. I look forward to informing the House on—

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Kawana, to be consistent with my rulings, the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, you are also warned under 253A for your inappropriate interjections earlier during the contribution.

Member for Bundaberg


 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (10.06 pm): As they say in the classics, let the games begin; let the auditions start. I can tell the member for Pine Rivers and the member for Sunnybank that they are okay after that presentation. I saw them looking over the shoulder of the member for Barron River hoping he would stuff up his speech just a little bit so they would still be in with a chance. After that presentation they are still in with a chance. We saw it earlier: the factions were meeting; the function rooms were booked out. Evan Moorhead was running in and out of the Premier's office. There were mice running around. It was more exciting than the Melbourne Cup. Of course, the winner of the sweep will be whoever ends up replacing the member for Bundaberg.

As the honourable opposition leader said earlier today, this is a test of character, integrity and leadership not of any of those members but of the member who sits in the Premier's chair, the member for Inala. The Premier has shown a complete lack of leadership over the last 18 months. We have had the member for Bundamba resign; she fell on her sword. At least the former minister the member for Bundaberg had the guts to resign. The Premier does not have the guts to sack them; that is the problem. If I was sitting where the honourable transport minister is I would be thinking, 'Gee, if she went for her sins in the last 24 hours, what am I here for? How come I'm still here? Why am I still sitting here?' I suspect it is not going to be for long.

I ask honourable members why is it that every time the Labor Party loses one of their incompetent ministers or members, the Premier is nowhere to be seen? She is MIA. The Premier did not even have the decency to come in here tonight and tell the people of Queensland why her minister resigned, that is, a minister of the Crown. What did the Premier know? I think I know what the Premier knew. I think the Deputy Premier knew a lot more than the Premier knew. I have heard that the resignation went to the Deputy Premier first to get approval. 'Will this be okay? The left still has someone.' They do because they have the member for Pine Rivers sitting there ready to come in and replace the Minister for Agriculture. I hope she has more than a veggie patch and a herb garden in her backyard if she is going to be the agriculture minister, or a couple of pot plants out the back that she is harvesting.

This is a test of the leadership of Annastacia Palaszczuk, the Premier. She is always missing in action from this crisis driven government—she is never around. I suspect she is already on the government jet to some remote part of Queensland and will be missing in action tomorrow. The transport minister should resign. If he is not going to follow the leadership of the member for Bundaberg, then the Premier has no choice but to sack the incompetent transport minister tonight.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (10.09 pm): As we have heard from the opposition leader and the member for Kawana and the member for Nanango, this is a government with a pattern of having a litany of failures. We have seen the failures today from the Leader of the House, who could not even bring a bill into the House with the correct Governor's message and now it has had to be withdrawn. We have had quorum problems from both the health minister and the Leader of the House, and of course there is the issue of two members of parliament who have left the Labor Party and two ministers who have now had to either fall on their swords or resign. We had the debacle with the agriculture minister, and as we have just heard from the member for Kawana, the transport minister does not have the decency to do the right thing and go. We have a 'do-nothing' government that is actually doing harm to the people of Queensland, and it is not just ministers but also backbenchers who are doing harm to the people of Queensland. We have issues with the member for Ferny Grove and standover tactics against the mayor of the Gold Coast and a Gold Coast councillor—

Mr FURNER: I rise to a point of order. I take offence to those comments from the member for Surfers Paradise and I ask that they be withdrawn.


Mr SPEAKER: I did not hear the comments. I understand they were personal. Will you withdraw?

Mr LANGBROEK: I withdraw. We also see people turning on each other within the government. The member for Capalaba, when asked today about the member for Bundaberg and her inaction and inability to pay her own bills, made comments which show the division within this government. A house divided falls, and that is what we see from this Labor government.

In health we have a minister who is slowly engineering the demise of the hospital and health services by giving them responsibility but no authority to do things. There is no better example of that than the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, where today the minister had the temerity to try to suggest that he can reduce an \$80 million deficit but not reduce any services. It really does beggar belief how they can suggest that Queenslanders will stomach this for much longer. In the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service 250 people are going to lose their jobs, yet the health minister is saying to hospital and health services, 'We will give you the responsibility. We will give you the board members.' It is going to be interesting to see whether the least experienced board member is appointed as the chair of the Bundaberg Hospital and Health Service. It is not good enough for the people of Queensland, who deserve to have services provided. That is what state governments are supposed to do.

Instead, we have a Premier—the member for Inala—who is actually just a puppet led by the factions and the unions. That has been exemplified by the things we have seen happening today. We have a Premier who knew less than her own Deputy Premier about how the member for Bundaberg had her bill paid and who has not come into the House this evening to explain anything. As the member for Kawana said, by tomorrow she will be saying to the media, 'I have already dealt with that issue.' The internal workings of the Labor party dealt with that issue; not the member for Inala. Queenslanders deserve better, and only the LNP will provide the stability and services that Queenslanders deserve.

Member for Bundaberg; Queensland Economy


 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumbidgee—ALP) (10.12 pm): I want to begin by paying tribute to the member for Bundaberg. I do not think you could find anyone with a better heart. This woman has the courage of a lion. I am proud to call her my friend and Bundaberg should be proud that she is their member.

I am going to talk about the great economic news that is happening in our state, and that is something that the other side cannot argue with. I want to talk about some great economic news from the electorate of Murrumbidgee. We have heard today how the economic conditions in Queensland have continued to improve under Labor, with economic growth up 1.2 per cent in real terms in the June quarter. This makes it 3.8 per cent higher this year, as we have heard the Treasurer say. It cannot be denied that we have recorded the strongest economic growth in four years. Our gross state product increased 3.2 per cent in 2015-16, up from 0.8 per cent growth the previous year. That is four times the growth rate under the failed former treasurer Tim Nicholls. Household consumption has risen 2.4 per cent, as we heard the Treasurer say, in 2015-16, and that shows that confidence amongst Queenslanders is growing. They are going to ignore the circus they are conducting over on the other side because they know what is happening out there.

We can see that that strong sentiment and strong growth is reflected in the local economy in North Lakes. The most spectacular example of this growing confidence is the massive expansion of Westfield North Lakes and the arrival of the new Ikea. The new \$170 million Westfield project was commenced last year after the completion of the \$80 million first stage. The new Ikea and Westfield will create 4,700 jobs in construction and a further 900 in retail upon completion. The North Lakes Sports Club is a \$25 million project that will generate 100 construction jobs and 120 hospitality jobs when complete, and stage 2 of the \$75 million Primewest North Lakes development is expected to be completed later this year. There is glowing economic news coming out of our area. Business is booming in Murrumbidgee and it is booming in North Lakes. That is something that the other side cannot run down. They cannot call this state the Spain of Australia anymore. There is also the Boutique Hotel at Lake Eden, which is a \$3.8 million construction. All of this shows that there is growing consumer confidence amongst my residents despite this mob opposite, who are trying to run down our economy just to prove a political point.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana and Minister for Industrial Relations, you are both warned under standing order 253A for your interjections.

Seniors Lawn Mowing Vouchers

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (10.15 pm): In 2012 the Newman government was elected, and it would have to be rated as the worst government in Queensland's history. They were elected with 78 members and they were reduced to 42. I can remember that almost the whole parliament was made up of LNP members with just a few Labor members in that corner. The first thing they did when they were elected was promise that they would be public servant friendly, but they sacked 16,000 employees. Then they built the \$700 million taj mahal and then they gave themselves a \$70,000 pay rise. After the announcement of the taj mahal, the sacking of 16,000 employees and their massive pay rise, they cut the pensioners' \$10 lawn mowing vouchers!

I do want to thank the Minister for Housing, who restored the trial and gave those vouchers back. The trial expires in December, and I have a letter here from Atherton Tablelands Home Assist Secure which says—

It is with pleasure that I can report that to date 132 Atherton Tableland Home Assist clients have taken up participation in the above mowing trial which runs from 1 June 2016 to 31 December 2016.

Remember that they cut it, so we are very appreciative that the minister came to the Tablelands and restored that lawnmowing voucher trial. The letter continues—


The fact that so many households in our service area, which represents approximately 10% of our clients households, have taken advantage of this trial ...

Mr Speaker, remember that they cut it. These are pensioners. These are disabled people that they cut the vouchers from. They cut the lawn mowing vouchers for disabled people! I table this letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 19 October 2016, from the Coordinator, Atherton Tableland Home Assist/Secure, Mr Danny Carleton, to the member for Dalrymple, Mr Shane Knuth MP, regarding a mowing trial [1998].

They are happy that the \$10 vouchers have worked and they are asking for them to continue.

Youth Development Foundation

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (10.19 pm): At this time of the year, many of us in this place are going around to our local schools attending graduation and awards ceremonies. I want to talk about a great local organisation in my electorate called the Youth Development Foundation, which works with young people in my community that we would not ordinarily see at these events. YDF specialises in

facilitating partnerships that improve outcomes for 15- to 29-year-olds—kids who are at risk of disengagement or who have already been disengaged from education, training and social inclusion. YDF creates a safe, neutral place where these young people feel supported and are able to explore solutions and find direction in their lives.


No sector can tackle deep-rooted social problems alone. Partnerships are really important for YDF, with stakeholders, sponsors and other community groups. YDF, like the Palaszczuk government, is very committed to lowering youth unemployment. Our schools report some of the highest levels of social disadvantage in Queensland. Those are things we are working on together.

Since September 2014, YDF has serviced 587 young people in our region, all of whom are deemed at risk or have major barriers to employment. YDF has worked with over 63 mentors and employers. Some 148 of their participants are women and 155 are from an Indigenous background. Some 194 have actually returned to study or school and 349 participants have commenced some form of employment. YDF aims to engage disengaged youth to retain education, employment and training. They tackle areas like our local shopping centre. They increase community awareness with government and non-government agencies. Really, it is about increasing the self-worth and accountability of these kids in our communities.

On top of that, YDF has an op shop, food hampers, community pantry for the needy, a soup kitchen and a social enterprise coffee shop. I want to give them a big shout-out today because the work they do in our community is absolutely fantastic. It is my pleasure to work with them. I know that other local members, such as the member for Kallangur, are working with them because we see what a difference they make in our community each and every day. The YDF 2 Do Crew is one of the ways we are working with them, with their yard and lawn maintenance programs. I want to shout out to Gerry Lister and Lachie Young. They do a lot of work with YDF. They are really driving it. Their passion and motivation can be seen through all in our community. They are doing a really fantastic job.

Their next project is to obtain a 25-year lease on a block and set up a community garden space and emergency crisis accommodation for local youth. I implore our local council and our mayor to come to the party and make sure we can continue to help youth in our community.

Premier and Minister for the Arts

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (10.22 pm): It really sums things up when the only people who are willing to defend Labor are the Katter party! What a disgrace. Where is the government's frontbench defending the Premier? We did not see the transport minister, the industrial relations minister, the innovation minister or the mines minister getting up to defend her. They were all quiet. We have seen the member for Woodridge scribbling away. We know why he could not make a buck at the bar: it has taken him half an hour now to write a speech to try to defend the decision tonight.

Questions have to be asked tonight about the integrity of the Premier. Twelve hours ago in this House I asked the Premier whether the minister for agriculture had any other debts or obligations, and she said that she was told no. Clearly, she chose not to know. Why was she not told? Why did she not know? What did the Deputy Premier know? They are the questions to be asked tonight. Why was the Premier not told that the ALP had paid? Why would Evan Moorhead not tell her that the ALP had paid? Why do they keep her in the dark over and over again? Why is the Premier in hiding tonight? She should be in the House defending her government and defending the decision, but she is hiding away.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am sure the member for Indooroopilly is very well aware that it is contrary to the standing orders to reflect upon the absence of a member.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the member for Indooroopilly to focus on his contribution and not reflect on someone who is not in attendance.

Mr EMERSON: The Premier should be defending the decision tonight but she has left it to her backbenchers. Not one frontbencher has defended the decision. Shortly the member for Woodridge will get up and try to recover the situation. That will be his audition to be the next premier.

I come back to the integrity of the Premier. Why does she not know? Why did she not ask? Why was she not told? They are the questions that have to be answered tonight. They are the questions she will have to answer in the coming days. Why does she know nothing when something happens? Why will she not sack ministers? Why does she wait for them to resign? She should know. She should ask. The Deputy Premier does not tell her anything. Evan Moorhead, the ALP state secretary, does not tell her anything. They like to keep her in the dark.

This is a clueless Premier. This is an incompetent Premier. This is a Premier who is out of her depth. If you cannot govern yourself, you cannot govern Queensland. That is the reality. This Premier is not up to it. This Premier does not have the guts to sack a minister. This Premier does not have the guts to defend the decision tonight. No-one from the front bench of the Labor Party has done it. We are about to see the guy who wants to be Premier try to recover it, but the Premier should be doing it.

(Time expired)

Liberal National Party



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.26 pm): Please wait, member for Clayfield. I have a little bit to say about you. That is three minutes of my life I will never get back, listening to the member for Indooroopilly!

Mr NICHOLLS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. You have just reflected that it is inappropriate to comment on people who are not in the chamber. I was outside of the chamber when the minister flouted the rules.

Mr SPEAKER: If you were not in the chamber at the time the member made the comments—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The point is taken.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It was very evident that the Leader of the Opposition was in the chamber.

Mr SPEAKER: I did not see the Leader of the Opposition leave. I have made a ruling.

Mr DICK: Of course, I am a bit rattled, having to speak after the vicious toy poodle from Surfers Paradise savaged me earlier tonight. It took three sitting days, until 10 o'clock at night, for him to speak for two minutes about the Health portfolio. He could not even speak about the Health portfolio for three minutes. This week he has had three hours of question time in which to ask me one question. Not only could the shadow minister not ask me a question; not one member of the opposition could ask me a question. If those opposite are not asking you questions, you know that you are doing something right as a minister.

If anybody needed to know that the Liberal part of the Liberal National Party was dead, they only had to see what happened in the Queensland parliament this week. They are anti gay, anti union, anti 17-year-olds, anti modernising the Adoption Act and, most of all, anti John Howard. They turned their back on the man who had the guts and the fortitude to reform the law of this country in relation to guns—their icon, their legend. It was left to the Australian Labor Party to defend the legacy of John Howard. We will continue to do that.

Mr SPEAKER: I have been observing the members for Beaudesert, Burdekin, Burnett and Mudgeeraba. It looks like you are trying to out-shout the member who is on his feet trying to make a speech. You all have an opportunity to speak during the adjournment debate. I ask you to show some respect.

Mr DICK: Most craven of all of course were the former members of the Liberal Party who had nothing to say about opposing same-sex couples adopting, who had nothing to say about repealing gun laws in Queensland that would make our state less safe and who had nothing to say about 17-year-olds going into the juvenile justice system—people like the member for Indooroopilly, the member for Surfers Paradise, the member for Southport, the member for Caloundra and, most of all, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr WATTS: I rise to a point of order. The member for Caloundra was paired at the time of the debate.

Mr DICK: I was speaking about three days of legislative action. Most of all, the Leader of the Opposition would not be heard on any of these things. He is absolutely captured by the hard right of his party. He is completely beholden. Of course he was elected with the full support of a third of his parliamentary party. He is trapped and captured by the old National Party. There would not be one elector in the electorate of Clayfield who would have opposed any of these reforms the Labor government put through—not one. He represents one of the most progressive electorates in Queensland and he cannot represent it. He is weak and he is unfit to be not only the Leader of the Opposition but also the Premier.

Mr SPEAKER: I think time has expired.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Butcher, Byrne, Costigan, Cramp, Crandon, Crawford, Cripps, D'Ath, Davis, de Brenni, Dick, Dickson, Donaldson, Elmes, Emerson, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Gordon, Grace, Harper, Hart, Hinchliffe, Howard, Janetzki, Jones, Katter, Kelly, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lynham, Madden, Mander, McArdle, McEachan, Miles, Millar, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Rourke, Palaszcuk, Pearce, Pease, Pegg, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pyne, Rickuss, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Seeney, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Trad, Walker, Watts, Weir, Wellington, Whiting, Williams