

## TUESDAY, 24 JULY 2018

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### ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE—LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

#### Estimate Committee Members

Mr LP Power (Chair)  
Mr RA Stevens  
Ms NA Boyd  
Mr ST O'Connor  
Mr DG Purdie  
Ms KE Richards

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#### Members in Attendance

Mr JP Bleijie  
Mr MC Berkman  
Mrs DK Frecklington  
Mr TL Mander  
Dr CAC Rowan  
Ms A Leahy  
Mr JP Langbroek  
Ms SL Bolton

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#### In Attendance

Hon. CW Pitt, Speaker  
Mr G Hasanakos, Executive Officer  
Mr N Laurie, Clerk of the Parliament  
Mr M Ries, Deputy Clerk of the Parliament  
Mr C Atkinson, Director Corporate Services and Electorate Office Liaison  
Mr S Johnson, Director Property and Facility Services  
Ms J Prowse, Director Information Services and Parliamentary Librarian

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#### The committee met at 8.59 am.



**CHAIR:** I declare the estimates hearing of the Economics and Governance Committee open. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet. My name is Linus Power, member for Logan and chair of the committee. Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach, is the deputy chair and other committee members are Nikki Boyd, the member for Pine Rivers; Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry; Kim Richards, the member for Redlands; and Sam O'Connor, the member for Bonney. The committee has granted leave to non-committee members to ask questions at the hearing today so other members may be present over the course of the proceedings.

Today the committee will consider the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2018, the Appropriation Bill 2018 and the estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility. I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcasting of proceedings are available from the secretariat. I ask that mobile phones and other electronic devices be turned off or switched to silent. I also remind everyone that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber.

The committee will examine the portfolio areas in the following order—the Queensland Legislative Assembly from 9 am to 9.45 am; Premier and Cabinet and Trade from 10 am to 1.30 pm; Treasury and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships from 2 pm to 6 pm; and Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs from 6.45 pm to 9 pm. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2018 for the Queensland Legislative Assembly. The committee will examine this portfolio area until 9.45. Visiting members present are the member for Kawana and the member for Maiwar.

I remind all those present that the hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament apply in this hearing. I specifically refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in that regard. Questions should be brief—and I will enforce this—relate to one issue and not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be fully explored and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members.

On behalf of the committee I would like to welcome the Speaker, the Clerk, parliamentary officers and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask that officials and advisers identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Speaker or the Clerk. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area administered by the Speaker open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Mr Speaker, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

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

I am very pleased to appear here today at this estimates hearing for the examination of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service. This is my first opportunity to do so in my capacity as Speaker. I also welcome our Clerk, Mr Neil Laurie, and all other officers of the Parliamentary Service who are here to assist in answering the committee's questions today regarding the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill.

We sit here today eight months to the day since the 2017 state election. That election signalled the most significant change to the parliament itself in over 30 years following the 2017 electorate boundary redistribution and the decision to increase the number of electorates in the current parliament from 89 to 93. However, beyond institutional changes, the parliament is facing a changing world around it. As I have said previously in statements to the House, our public institutions including governments and parliaments not just here but around the world face new and rapidly changing demands and expectations. These changes to the landscape of the parliament coincide with a significant milestone in the history of this parliament when on 4 August 2018 we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first sitting of parliament in Parliament House. A number of events are planned to mark this occasion, and I encourage all members to participate in our roles as custodians of the current parliament.

In the short period of time I have had the honour of serving as Speaker I have gained new perspectives on the importance of technology in supporting the work of members not just here in Parliament House but, more importantly, across the breadth of our great state. One of the first major decisions in my role as Speaker was to approve a new ICT strategy to guide the future direction of the Parliamentary Service in using technology to improve services to members, to engage with the public in a modern way, and to replace and improve traditional processes with smarter ways of doing business.

I briefly want to turn to the 2018-19 budget estimates for the parliament. The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill provides the funding for the salaries and allowances of members of the Legislative Assembly as well as funding for the Parliamentary Service, which provides administrative and support services to the Legislative Assembly. The total appropriation sought for the parliament in 2018-19 is \$97.178 million. This is an increase of \$5.5 million on the 2017-18 budget. The increase is due primarily to additional costs associated with the increase in the number of members following the 2017 election, which I alluded to earlier, including direct salaries and allowances, and the provision of electorate office accommodation and electorate office support staff.

In addition, the proposed 2018-19 budget includes additional funding to effect a number of progressive electorate office relocations arising from the 2017 electorate boundary redistribution. Major capital works to be undertaken include the continuation of the program to install fire suppression systems in Parliament House—I know most members would be aware of this; it has caused some inconvenience to some—and commencement of a program to upgrade and restore the heritage perimeter fence following completion in 2017 of the 25-year program to restore the exterior Parliament House stonework.

In 2018-19 work will also commence regarding a number of information technology improvements underpinned by the new ICT strategic plan, which I alluded to earlier. These improvements will build on a number of technology upgrades delivered over recent years such as Parliament.TV, members' video on demand services and extracting members' speeches for upload to social media platforms. I again thank the chair and committee members for the opportunity to appear before you today to speak to the parliamentary appropriation. I welcome any questions you, your members or guests of the committee may have.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. We now turn to questions. I remind members that questions should be addressed to either the Speaker or the Clerk, and they may refer to other officers of the parliament. Firstly, I call the deputy chair and member for Mermaid Beach.

**Mr STEVENS:** I will defer in the first instance to the Manager of Opposition Business.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Good morning, Mr Speaker, Mr Clerk and officers. Mr Speaker, can you please advise this committee whether preventing an MP from participating in the estimates process would constitute an obstruction under standing order 266(10) or 266(19)?

**CHAIR:** May I have a reference to which part of the parliamentary budget you are referring to there?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** All of the budget, because the process of estimates questions with respect to the administration of the estimates is fundamental to the role of the Speaker and the role of the Clerk, who is sitting to the left of the Speaker. It is pretty fundamental to the entire estimates process for the next two weeks

**CHAIR:** I will turn to the Speaker, but it should be addressed to the inquiry we are having today.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Mr Chair, I am happy to respond to the member's question, if you so desire. It is quite a broad question, member for Kawana. If the rights and privileges of any member are impeded, as the custodian of the standing orders it is important that those are upheld at all times. However, the question is broad. Without any specific elements to that, it is very difficult for me to provide any advice to you, and I am sure the Clerk will be in a similar position. I may turn to him in a moment to discuss the relevant standing orders. At this stage I am not aware that there is anything of the nature you are suggesting, but I will be happy to pick up on that if you have any specifics. I will ask the Clerk to refer to the relevant standing order.

**Mr Laurie:** Standing order 266(10) says 'obstructing or molesting a member or an officer of the House in the discharge of the member's or the officer's duty' and standing order 266(19) says 'assaulting, obstructing or insulting a member coming to or going from the House or a Committee proceeding'. If a member is obstructed or impeded in any way, the appropriate mechanism for the member is to write to the Speaker under standing order 269 and request that the matter be referred to the Ethics Committee. The Speaker in due course would then either refer that matter to the Ethics Committee and advise the House or, alternatively, advise the House that the Speaker considered the matter and the matter would not be referred to the committee.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, with respect to the answer you provided to question on notice No. 1 regarding travel and proposed travel, you have spent or are proposing to spend over \$30,000 on international travel in your first year. That appears significantly more than what your predecessor, the

former member for Nicklin, spent in his entire term. Why is the parliament paying you as Speaker to attend trade and investment meetings which are completely unrelated to your role of Speaker? Is it that you do not have confidence in the Premier, who is also the trade minister?

**CHAIR:** I remind the committee that questions shall not contain arguments, inferences or imputations. Can you put your question and not have this kind of debate or argument.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, why is the parliament paying for you to attend trade and investment meetings which are completely unrelated to your role of Speaker?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will answer this question in a couple of ways. First of all, I believe that every Speaker brings a different element to the role of Speaker. Some Speakers have never been in the executive prior. Others have a different set of priorities they may wish to look at. The role of Speaker primarily for me is broken into three components. One, as I said earlier, is being the custodian and guardian of the standing orders and ensuring that the House is run in an orderly fashion. The second relates to the administration of the parliament and all of the elements that go along with parliamentary security. It is a very important function to ensure that all members have access to the sorts of facilities and resources they need.

The third element is what you make of it. What I intend to do as a proud Queenslander, if I am in a position where I will be conducting business as Speaker—and in this case I have been very transparent and have outlined the travel foreshadowed for this year—is take the opportunity to promote Queensland. Queensland is a great state, and it is one that I think everyone who is in a position to open doors to support further investment into our state should enjoy but it is also about building those relationships.

The other element of being Speaker, this third area that I have mentioned, is the very important diplomatic role that is played by the Speaker as the presiding officer over this parliament so relationships are formed both in a parliamentary sense as well as some which may open doors for other people across Queensland, private businesses and others.

It is important to note the primary purpose of the travel. The first relates to the Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference, which I attended in Wellington a couple of weeks ago. That is an important conference for Speakers and Clerks across Australian state and territory legislatures as well as for Pacific nations and New Zealand, who were our hosts. The second relates to the National Conference of State Legislatures in the United States. It is a first for a Queensland Speaker to attend this. However, it is not unusual for other jurisdictions to have previously attended. Again, this comes back to the forming of relationships with state legislatures in the US. One thing I learned when I was in New Zealand is that we do not know everything. There are many things, including improved technology and improved engagement, that we can learn from jurisdictions, not just those that have a pure Westminster system.

To get back to the crux of your question, you may say that those matters are unrelated to my role as Speaker. I would respectfully disagree. My role as Speaker is to be a representative of Queensland as a whole—to do things across the state of Queensland but also ensure that at all times Queensland is being held up in the appropriate light that it should be on the global stage. I absolutely will take that opportunity, which is why the offer was made to the Premier, who specifically approves that travel, to undertake some of those meetings. That offer would be made to any premier of the day as a result of the fact that this is the state of Queensland, and we should be celebrating and acknowledging who we are and the important role we play in terms of future development of the state.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I have no doubt the Premier has approved the travel. She seems to be a jetsetter herself, if the paper this morning is anything to go by.

**CHAIR:** Hold on, member for Kawana. We have a point of order from the member for Pine Rivers.

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order. The member for Kawana is being argumentative, expressing an opinion and also is not directly asking a question. I ask for your guidance to bring him back to the matters at hand.

**CHAIR:** I will remind members that our job is to put questions—standing order 115(b) asks us not to put forward argument, inference, imputation or hypothetical matters. I ask all members to respect the standing orders, especially 115, and to simply put their question, not to make commentary on answers and not to make extraneous argument.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You have confirmed through your answer now that the travel to America is some \$24½ thousand to \$25,000. I saw the program in the answer to the question on notice where you compared the New Zealand system to the American system. The fundamental difference, of course, is New Zealand is in the Commonwealth and the Americans do not have our system of democracy. You

are also delivering a speech to Columbia University. I understand it is during their summer break. Mr Speaker, who is attending the seminar? What is the seminar about? It may be that if it is during their summer break it would have been far cheaper for the Queensland taxpayer to fly those participating, as I suspect it a limited number being in the summer break, over to Queensland to listen to your address. Mr Speaker, what is the conference about?

**CHAIR:** The member for Pine Rivers has a point of order.

**Ms BOYD:** I have a point of order, Mr Chair, under standing order 115(b). There is a lengthy preamble. I ask you to bring the member to the question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I was getting there. Mr Speaker—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, we are not here to have a discussion about the professional development of the summer programs of American universities. Can you put the question?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order, Mr Chair. The Speaker's answer to the question on notice—that is what his travel is about. The Queensland taxpayer is paying the Speaker to go and deliver a lecture to the Columbia University, which this committee is investigating.

**CHAIR:** If you could put your question without a lengthy preamble, then you would be within the standing orders.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I refer to the lecture you are delivering to Columbia University. What is it on? Who is attending? Is it during the summer break for the university?

**Mr SPEAKER:** The answer to the last part of that question is that it will be coming out of the summer break. I am certainly very aware though, speaking to associate lecturers at the university, that there is interest in my delivering this lecture. I am not sure if you have ever been asked to deliver a guest lecture at a university of that nature, member for Kawana, but I believe it is a great platform to again talk about our parliamentary democracy, which will be a very large part of that, the differences between our predominantly Westminster oriented system—what has often been described as a 'Washminster' system given that it has elements of the United States' parliamentary democracy as well. Of course it is also an opportunity to talk again about Queensland's position on the global stage. I would struggle to understand what main concerns you do have about that given that this is an opportunity again to talk—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The expense—\$30,000.

**Mr SPEAKER:** It is not all related to that particular element, member for Kawana. As I said to you earlier, the primary purpose of that trip is the National Conference of State Legislatures. I take you back to an earlier answer. It has not been uncommon for representatives from other legislatures in Australia—other states and territories—to attend this and they have found the experience invaluable. I am one of those people who will freely admit that I am relatively new to the role of Speaker, although I have been in this place—this is now my fourth term and I believe I know my way around the place. Ultimately, even the Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference in New Zealand has been a very valuable insight for me in terms of what we do well and what we can improve on. I think it is to the benefit of all members of this House to ensure that this parliament is as cutting edge as possible. I would like to believe that those are the sorts of elements I will bring during my time as Speaker into the Queensland parliament.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Mr Speaker, can I very quickly get you to outline whether any non-government or crossbench MPs have received additional staff above their entitlement under the rules in the remuneration handbook?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I might ask the Clerk to deal with that directly if that is okay.

**Mr Laurie:** Section 2.5.2 of the *Members' Remuneration Handbook* provides that—

The Premier may allocate additional resources to a cross bench Member as defined in section 79 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act*. Should the Premier wish to allocate such resources, they will advise the Clerk formally in writing outlining the nature and extent of resources to be provided.

A cross bench Member will only be considered eligible for additional resources if they retain the same status as when elected at the most recent election ...

That is the provision in the handbook. In the 55th Parliament following the 2015 state election the Premier wrote to me confirming additional resources to be provided to the members of the Katter's Australian Party and the Independent member for Nicklin. In letters dated 12 March and 14 April

respectively the Premier confirmed the number of staff to be provided—a total of seven—and the salary classification levels for those staff. The Premier also asked that the staff be employed by the Parliamentary Service, which would be the appropriate employing authority.

In the case of the additional electorate office staff—and I outlined that for the Katter's Australian Party—it was Mr Katter: one additional electorate officer at AO4 level, one additional research officer/policy adviser at AO7 level; one additional electorate officer at AO4 level, one additional research officer/policy officer at the AO7 level for Mr Knuth; and as the leader of the party, Mr Katter was also to get one research officer/policy officer, so a total of five staff for the Katter's Australian Party.

In the case of the additional electorate office staff, it is clearly advantageous for these staff to be Parliamentary Service employees like all other electorate office staff. In the case of the research officers, because they are permanently stationed within the parliamentary precinct rather than in other city buildings, it was considered reasonable to employ them as Parliamentary Service officers. As a result, the Premier requested that the Clerk employ them as these officers.

In 2015 CBRC approved additional funding to meet the ongoing costs for these staff. In terms of this parliament, in the absence of formal advice from the Premier to the contrary, the additional resources—that is, five FTEs provided to the Katter's Australian Party members in the previous 55th Parliament—remain unchanged. Obviously those resources are no longer given to the member for Nicklin given his retirement.

**CHAIR:** Are there any questions from other members of the committee? I note the member for Kawana.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Clerk, in terms of your role under the standing orders with respect to giving advice to members of this committee for the estimates process, could you please clarify the standing orders as far as they relate to the estimates process? Are members required to state in every question what part of the SDS their question relates to, or simply be relevant to the particular appropriation under consideration?

**Mr Laurie:** Obviously questions of order in the first instance are a matter for the chair and, ultimately, for the committee. However, there is no requirement in the standing orders for reference to the SDS. What is required is that the questions be relevant to the actual appropriation under consideration.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Further, a number of committees have adopted timetables that might restrict members from asking questions about certain topics during certain times. I am concerned that this leads to decreased scrutiny. Do the standing orders give committees the power to restrict what questions may be asked? For the benefit of the committee—

**CHAIR:** With respect, the question before the committee is, 'That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.' It is a practice that we seek from the Speaker, the chair or the Clerk rulings on procedure, but this does not necessarily take up this time. There might be other opportunities to seek this advice.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No, Mr Chair. If I direct you to the departmental overview, the scrutiny of which we are looking at, it states that the Clerk's responsibility is to discharge a range of important constitutional, legislative and constituency responsibilities; and the Parliamentary Service is to support the Legislative Assembly and its committees and members. I am simply asking the Clerk about that. Mr Chair, I seek leave to table a document of which I have copies for each committee member and for the Clerk. It is already a tabled document. It is the estimates hearing program for the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee.

**CHAIR:** Certainly. I just want to look at the document. Do we have the required number of copies for all members of the committee to have a look?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** There are 10 copies there so it should be sufficient.

**CHAIR:** Do we need the Clerk to have a copy?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is just the schedule of tomorrow's hearing.

**Mr Laurie:** Tomorrow's hearing?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yes.

**Mr Laurie:** I have that.

**CHAIR:** I cannot see any problem with it being tabled for the advice of committee members. Leave is granted. The document is tabled.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Clerk, with respect to the final three areas after the break from 4 pm to 7 pm, you will see the one minister, the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, but it is broken into Natural Resources between four and five; Mines, five to six; and Energy, six to seven. Would a member of a committee be prevented, for instance, from four to five asking the minister or the DG an Energy question?

**Mr Laurie:** I preface my answer by saying, as I said earlier, questions of order and procedure for each portfolio committee's examination are in the first instance for each chair and, ultimately, for each committee. By way of information, I note that the order in which portfolios and organisational units are considered is a matter for each committee. If possible, committees are urged to limit the need for chief executive officers of statutory authorities and government owned corporations to attend for all of the time that they are to be examined. Indeed, committee members are encouraged to advise the committee secretary of the relevant areas of the portfolio they wish to examine in detail. This will assist ministers to ensure that relevant advisers can be present.

Despite all of that, at the beginning of each hearing the chair must put 'declare proposed expenditure open for examination'—that is standing order 180(1)(a). Any questions relevant to that area of expenditure should be permissible. Of course, the real risk is that questions are put to ministers when the relevant officers or advisers have departed and the minister is thus unable or unwilling to respond in such circumstances.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** There is nothing to prevent—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, if I could make clear perhaps for your benefit in this committee we have indicated that after the lunch break the Deputy Premier will also be taking questions on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. That is not to preclude that there should not be more questions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, merely that the officers will be present for that period from 2 pm to 4 pm. I certainly would encourage members of the committee to put forward questions about the portfolio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships during that period.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Can I very quickly add something?

**CHAIR:** Certainly, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Kawana certainly wrote to me seeking advice on this matter. I think it is a very fair question to ask. It is of note that schedule 7 outlines those witnesses who are able to appear before estimates committees. That is an exhaustive list that has been added to over the years. Obviously, in the same way we would like to see efficient and orderly running of the House when it is session, estimates committees and their business will get the most out of estimates if as much forewarning is provided by members of committees as to which areas they would like to examine. I think it is important to note that having those officers on hand will only add to the amount of scrutiny and the sort of responses we will see through the estimates process.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, do you have any final questions?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I do.

**CHAIR:** A quick one.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is a quick one. Mr Clerk, following that theme again with respect to ministers answering questions, as I understand it, if a director-general or CEO is asked a particular question, under the standing orders the committee member is entitled to ask that particular person a question. However, we have seen in the past in all governments ministers then wanting to add to the answer to the question. My reading of standing orders is the addition of information is purely when a question is taken on notice with respect to the standing order 181(d), 183(2) and 183(3). I want clarification, Mr Clerk, that if a DG or a CEO is asked a particular question, the minister cannot jump in at the end of such question if the question was not asked of that individual.

**Mr Laurie:** Once again, I preface my answer by saying that each committee's chair and the committee itself are ultimately responsible for their own procedure. Standing order 181(d) says—

a committee member may ask the Minister, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer questions;

In other words, standing orders are framed so that there is one question to one of those nominated officers.

Standing order 181(f) says—

advisers may answer questions referred to them by the Minister, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer;

so if you ask the chief executive officer a question he may refer it to another officer; if you ask the minister a question he may refer it to the director-general or any other officer. Our rules are predicated on one question, one answer. That does not mean, however, that the committee itself cannot then ask the minister a follow-up question to supplement the answer. Does that make sense?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yes, it does. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** For example, at that point the chair could ask the minister if he wished to clarify any point.

**Mr Laurie:** 'Do you wish to add anything to that, Minister?,' or something like that, but that would then be a government question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** That is my point. The chair is not able to ask the minister to just add, because under standing orders 183(2) and (3) the only way that a minister can then add information is if the question was taken on notice and the additional information is to be provided in writing. In the past we have seen ministers wanting to add for whatever reason, whether filibustering or whatever—

**Mr Laurie:** If the chair asked the minister if he wanted to add anything to the answer, I think that is a legitimate question for the chair to ask, but it is a question then put by the chair.

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order, Mr Chair. Quite clearly, that would then come under the government's question time.

**Mr Laurie:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. For the sake of clarification that is important. I now wish to ask a question of my own which will count as a government question. I refer to page 4 of the SDS, which refers to the program of activities you alluded to in your introduction outlining the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the House and the first parliamentary sitting. I ask the Speaker: what significant events or activities are planned to mark the occasion?

**Mr SPEAKER:** As I alluded to in my opening remarks, the 150th anniversary of this Parliament House will occur on 4 August this year. We will celebrate it in a number of different ways, the largest and most public of which will be an open day here at Parliament House on Saturday, 11 August. This will be a free open day for all members of the public, who will be able to take tours and enjoy entertainment between 10 and three. For those who would like to see a throwback to years gone by, His Excellency the Governor will arrive in a horse-drawn carriage, just like his counterpart would have done 150 years ago. It is a change from his usual mode of transport. There will be free self-guided tours of Parliament House, including areas that are not usually accessible to the public.

There will be lots of activities on the Speaker's Green throughout the day, including stone masonry demonstrations and entertainment featuring dancers, school bands and choirs. There will be a range of children's activities, including drawing and building Parliament House in Lego, quoits, croquet and face painting. As the parent of three young children I am pushing for even further engagement with our young people, because we need them to understand that this is their place. There will also be two special high teas for the public in the Strangers Dining Room.

There are a number of other peripheral events and activities. On 9 August there will be an official handover of the Edison tube display by representatives of Engineering Heritage Queensland. For those who are not aware, during the course of excavation for the Queen's Wharf development at William Street sections of long-abandoned underground electric mains called Edison tubes were uncovered. These tubes were first laid in 1883 to supply permanent electricity to the government printing office in William Street, and in 1886 they were installed to supply electricity to Parliament House, replacing gas lamps. I think something that people definitely would not be aware of is that we are in very good company in terms of being the first legislative building in the British Empire to install electric lighting. At this time the only other cities that used Edison tube systems were New York and London, so we have always tried to have pride of place on the world stage. The Edison tubes will be placed on public display so they can be viewed by all visitors to the parliament.

There will be a celebratory cake, which will be available for all members of the Parliamentary Service at a special afternoon tea to be held at the port-cochere, and interested passers-by, including the parliamentary press gallery, will be invited to join us in front of the people's house. On 10 August there will be a 150th anniversary commemorative dinner held in the Strangers Dining Room which will feature an 'old meets new' degustation menu with matching wines. The Parliament House chefs will recreate a series of culinary delights using modified and modernised recipes from when parliament was first opened.

The garments of Gilbert Eliot, the first Speaker of the Queensland Assembly, including his robes, court jacket, waistcoat, stockings and lace accessories, were donated by Eliot's great-granddaughter to the Queensland Women's Historical Association in 1955 and subsequently gifted to us last year. There will be a small ceremony to unveil those garments, which have been meticulously conserved, and they will be on public display at parliament for all of our visitors, including school groups, to inspect.

There is also the launch of a commemorative coffee table book, which I have seen the drafts of. This book features behind-the-scenes photographs of Parliament House. We all meander through the rooms of Parliament House on a regular basis and these rooms become part of the workplace for us, but the history that they contain and the significant scale of how this place was constructed are quite impressive. I think that is why it is so exciting that this 150th celebration is occurring. When Parliament House was being built it had its struggles. It was important at that time that parliament showed the aspirations that we had, not just as a parliament but also as the state of Queensland, in terms of how it was constructed, over what period and what materials were used. This place is obviously more than just the home of our parliamentary democracy in Queensland; it is a symbol of who we are as a state and what we aspire to, and I think that continues today.

Details of all of the events I have mentioned will be available on our website. For those members of the committee and anyone who is interested in today's estimates proceedings, if you are in the South-East Queensland area and are able to attend, particularly on 11 August, I encourage you to participate because this is the people's house. It is a place where we want all Queenslanders to feel welcome and understand how we all contribute to carving out the future of our state.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Mr Speaker, in your opening statement you touched on the new information technology strategy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of IT services. We are in a changing world with new risks emerging all the time. Could you please outline the key elements of the new IT strategy?

**Mr SPEAKER:** In April this year I endorsed a new three-year ICT strategy for the Queensland Parliamentary Service. As members would know, the Parliamentary Service is responsible for providing a range of technology services throughout the precinct in Brisbane and also to electorate offices right across the length and breadth of Queensland directly to members themselves. These services are provided in what can only be described as a very dynamic and ever-changing technological environment. I think one of the key tenets of the strategy is its flexibility to ensure that we are not left behind.

Modern work practices and communications and the demands those bring with it require us to have adequate infrastructure to deliver these services. I am sure all members would agree that you can be frustrated at times with the speed of your wi-fi delivery, but ultimately times have changed significantly from when members in this place used to receive faxes and email was a relatively new tool. Of course, now there are additional platforms including social media on which we conduct community engagement. The key elements of the new strategy are: firstly, it is a blueprint for delivering IT enabled services to ensure that we keep pace not only today but also in the future; secondly, the strategy will guide investment decisions to ensure there is sound governance in place to ensure we are receiving maximum benefit and value for money for the investment we are making; and thirdly, it will seek to improve the lifecycle management of the Queensland Parliamentary Service's systems and its assets.

It is also important to note that modernisation and making the place as mobile friendly as possible—and by 'mobile' I do not mean cellular mobile phones—includes being portable and the ability to conduct business in the far-flung reaches of someone's electorate, particularly in some of the more remote parts of the state, and also ensuring portability of information between electorate offices and Parliament House when members are here during sitting weeks. For all of those reasons this ICT strategy is very important going forward. It will not only guide us over the next three years but also dictate what happens beyond that time.

I would like to mention those members who have had an opportunity to engage with the Convene system. A 12-month trial of Convene has commenced. This may depend on whether members prefer to read a screen or whether they like to have traditionally printed paper, but this is really about trying to modernise and ensure that we reduce paper and have paperless meetings wherever possible. The trial has commenced and it will cost approximately \$40,875. Early feedback has identified a number of efficiencies as a result of using Convene. These relate to time saved in the collation of meeting papers, sending large volumes of material to members such as submissions to inquiries, and the conduct of meetings in terms of voting and preparation of minutes. I would say that if Convene is going to make

its mark anywhere it will be in the committee space, and hopefully members of this committee have already seen the benefits. If it is successful we will obviously have to make a decision whether to continue with its use. The subscription and licence fee thereafter would be approximately \$38,575 per annum. I think that is quite a small price to pay for a system which at this stage is certainly proving itself.

If you can indulge me for a moment, there is one last point I would like to add in relation to the question. Recently at the Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference we noted there are things that we do well and things that we are well ahead of other jurisdictions in relation to. We have done extremely well here in terms of e-petitions, but the New Zealand parliament is only just venturing into e-petitions now. It is a relatively new and exciting thing for them, but we have been doing it here for 15 years.

The elements that we did pick up related to the engagement piece, and if I have an opportunity I would love to talk about that later. It is really exciting that we have social media platforms and other methods of engagement to ensure that people are aware of what is being discussed in this place, the orders of the day, what pieces of legislation are before the House that people may be interested in following debate on and the very important work of committees to ensure that, where there are opportunities for people to provide evidence or sit in, they are informed about matters that affect them. A significant degree of that engagement piece relating to technology was brought up at the Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference, and that in itself was an invaluable effort.

**Ms BOYD:** My question is to the Clerk. I notice that the parliamentary website indicates that information in relation to the former member for Kallangur, Mr Trevor Ruthenberg, was last updated on 17 July 2018. I am concerned that the website contained misleading information based on Mr Ruthenberg's claim to a medal that he was not awarded. My question is: what process is in place to ensure that misleading claims regarding valour awards are not published on the parliament's website?

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order, Mr Chair. I put it to you that that question has no relevance to the Appropriation Bill whatsoever. It is out of order.

**CHAIR:** In relation to the argument that the member for Kawana made previously about the expenditure of the parliament, certainly the maintenance of the website is part of the expenditure of the parliament. We have just had an ICT question, so I rule the question in order.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order, Mr Chair. The very member who complained about a previous line of questioning being argumentative and subjective has just done exactly that.

**Ms BOYD:** It is factual.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The question should be ruled out of order because she complained about that type of question less than 15 minutes ago. If it is a matter of point-scoring—

**CHAIR:** The question has been put. I find that the question is in order. I call the Clerk.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Of course it is, because it is a Labor question. It is a government question, so of course you are going to allow it.

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order, Mr Chair. The question clearly contains an imputation, and I believe on that basis alone it is out of order.

**CHAIR:** It is not out of order. The way I read the question, it spoke of a factual inaccuracy on the website.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No, it did not, Mr Chair. Point of order: the member clearly said that there was a misrepresentation. She alleged that the former member for Kallangur—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, there is no point of order. I call the Clerk.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order, Mr Chair. It is a point of order.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, if you are dissenting from my ruling we can adjourn the committee and withdraw to deliberate in private. I am not ruling that way. I call the Clerk.

**Mr Laurie:** The basic process for biographical information to be submitted by members is that it commences essentially when they become a new member. They get an information pack and included in that information pack is a form for them to fill out with their biographical information. That biographical information is then translated into a document which then goes back to the member for checking prior to its insertion on the website. The website is updated reasonably regularly—that is, at the request of the member—so there may be updates through the course of the year when the member wants something updated and on occasions there is information that is not correct, so there is a request made to alter it. That is the basic process. That information is information supplied to us by the member. We do not publish anything until we send back to the member either the first version or the amended

versions and they sign off on it. That is the basic process. There is also a hard copy document created at the end of every parliament—the parliamentary record, if you like—and I think we have just finished the record for the last parliament for example. That is a hard copy capture of those biographical details at a point in time.

**Ms BOYD:** So it would have been signed off by the member and any amendment would have been double-checked by the member?

**Mr Laurie:** Yes.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Worried about the polls, are you? Worried about Longman on Saturday?

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, you are a guest of this committee. I ask you to follow the standing orders.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Absolutely, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. The time allocated for our consideration of the proposed expenditure area of responsibility administered by the Speaker has expired. I note that there were no questions taken on notice by the Speaker. I thank Mr Speaker, the Clerk and parliamentary officers for their attendance. The committee will now adjourn for a break and the hearing will resume at 10 am.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Mr Chair, would you mind if I just briefly thanked some people?

**CHAIR:** My apologies.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No, that is okay. I just wanted to ensure that I thank the Clerk and all of those at the front table today for their assistance in providing answers to the committee but also pre-emptively and in advance thank this committee and all of the other committees for the work that you are going to be doing over the next two weeks. I just want to stress as Speaker how important I believe the estimates process is in terms of scrutinising the executive but also all of the workings of the Queensland parliament. There are going to be many hardworking people here—the secretariats for committees, Hansard, attendants and other service staff around the parliament—who will work very hard and long hours over the next two weeks. Again, just in advance I want to say thank you and thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The committee will now adjourn for the break. The hearing will resume at 10 am with the examination of the estimates in the portfolio areas of the Premier and Minister for Trade.

**Proceedings suspended from 9.47 am to 10.00 am.**

## ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE—PREMIER AND CABINET AND TRADE

### In Attendance

Hon. A Palaszczuk, Premier and Minister for Trade

Mr P Nibbs, Acting Chief of Staff

#### **Department of the Premier and Cabinet**

Mr D Stewart, Director-General

Mr M Cridland, Deputy Director-General (Policy)

#### **Public Service Commission**

Mr R Setter, Commission Chief Executive

#### **Trade and Investment Queensland**

Ms V Greville, Chief Executive Officer

 **CHAIR:** The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2018 for the portfolio areas of the Premier and Minister for Trade. The committee will examine the Premier's portfolio areas until 1.30 pm but will suspend proceedings for a break from 11.45 am to 12 noon. The visiting members present are the member for Maiwar and the member for Nanango. I remind all those present today that the hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy and subjective preambles, arguments or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure that there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members.

In the previous session there was discussion about whether the relevant minister could answer a question put before the committee or clarify an answer. Any member of the committee may seek a further answer from the relevant minister or the relevant departmental officer who is answering the question—the director-general or someone else—may seek the minister to make a clarification. On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Premier, the director-general, officials and departmental officers and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials and advisers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Premier or the director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of Premier and Cabinet and Trade open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, Chair. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the 2018-19 budget, my government's budget. This is my government's fourth budget and the first of our second term. Like the budgets that have preceded it, its focus is clear to invest in Queenslanders, in Queensland services, in Queensland jobs, in Queensland infrastructure. We have made strong progress on all of these key priorities. Our budget delivers the services Queensland needs. Our record \$17.3 billion Health budget will mean 3,500 more nurses and better hospitals. Our record \$14.1 billion education and training budget will mean 3,700 more teachers and better classrooms and students who have the skills to get rewarding jobs.

Since we were first elected we have seen 162,300 jobs created in Queensland. We will continue to support jobs growth right across Queensland. Our Advance Queensland initiatives are a \$650 million suite of programs designed to ensure that the industries of the future see Queensland as the best place to grow the jobs of the future. We have provided \$40 million additional funding for the Advance Queensland Industry Attraction Fund and the Jobs and Regional Growth Fund. We are investing \$26 million to extend the payroll tax rebate for apprentices and we are boosting Skilling Queenslanders for Work by \$180 million. We are delivering a \$45 billion infrastructure program over four years—the biggest since the 2011 flood recovery. That infrastructure program will support 38,000 jobs and 65 per cent of our infrastructure budget will be spent outside greater Brisbane in 2018-19.

We have almost completed the task of restoring the front-line services slashed under the Newman LNP government and we are committed to growing them in line with Queensland's population growth. The latest quarterly figures in line with the figures in last month's budget clearly show that measured, benchmarked growth is occurring, with Public Service growth 1.7 per cent in line with our population growth of 1.75 per cent. That includes 1,370 extra nurses, 732 extra medical interns, 480 extra allied health professionals, 84 extra paramedics and 1,007 extra teachers. This reflects our measured and responsible provision of services to Queenslanders no matter where they live in the most decentralised state in Australia.

These achievements do not in any way detract from the task ahead of us. Queensland's size and decentralisation presents challenges in the provision of vital government services that are unique, certainly in Australia and possibly the world. We know the economic success enjoyed by some parts of our state is not always shared by all and for every community doing well there is another that is struggling. We must ensure that we help the most disadvantaged Queenslanders, whether it is in getting a hospital for their sick child or a job for themselves, and we must be ever vigilant in our stewardship of one of the greatest natural assets—the Great Barrier Reef.

We have to confront and tackle the major challenges facing our state with a strong sense of purpose, focus and commitment. Failure to prioritise and address these challenges now will only make them more difficult to tackle in the future. These are the priorities for our Queensland community—to create jobs in a strong economy, to give our children a great start, to keep Queenslanders healthy, to keep communities safe, to protect the Great Barrier Reef and to be a responsive government. These are the priorities for all Queenslanders. They reinforce the commitments we took to the 2017 election, especially around jobs and our economy, education, health and community safety. These priorities will be reflected in what we do as a government and what we deliver for Queenslanders no matter where they live in this great state.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Premier. I call the member for Mermaid Beach and the deputy chair to put any questions to the Premier.

**Mr STEVENS:** Thank you, Mr Chair, but I will defer to the Leader of the Opposition.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you, Mr Chair, and thank you to the Premier and departmental staff who are here today. If I can seek leave to table the Queensland Family and Child Commission report.

**CHAIR:** Do you have copies?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I do have copies, but it is already a tabled document of the parliament.

**CHAIR:** So why are we tabling it?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I do not have to.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is already tabled.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Premier, my question to you—and I refer to this document—is when did you first read the Queensland Family and Child Commission annual report, *Deaths of children and young people Queensland 2015-16*, which showed four out of five of the deaths attributable from assaults were known to the child protection system in Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much for the question. From the outset can I say that any death of a young child is an absolute tragedy and that is why we have been very concerned about restoring the front-line services, especially in Child Safety, that were slashed under the former government that you were a part of. I think the work that the commission has done is excellent work and it is something that my government is definitely responding to.

In relation to our investment for Child Safety, the latest data that we just presented showed that Child Safety case loads have dropped from over 20 cases per Child Safety officer at the end of March 2014 to 18 cases at the end of March this year. I know when I go around the state and meet Child Safety officers they have a very big job to do. There is nothing more important than looking after the children in our state and that is why in last year's budget we announced \$200 million over four years as the largest funding injection to support front-line Child Safety jobs in over a decade. To date, this investment has resulted in an extra 292 new Child Safety staff. When combined with the 129 new Child Safety staff from 2016-17, this brings the total to over 421 new Child Safety positions.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you, Premier.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, do you have any further questions?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Yes, I do have a further question. I refer to that same report and my question to you, Premier, is what action did you take after reading that nine of the 21 youth suicides were known to the child protection system and, further, that 10 of the 19 drowned children were known to the child protection system?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I will just have to get a copy of that report from my officers here, but can you just repeat those?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** In relation to the deaths of children and young people in Queensland, nine of 21 youth suicides were known to the child protection system and, further, what did you do when you read or learnt that 10 of the 19 drowned children were also known to the child protection system?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** From memory I remember we released this report with the child and family commissioner and I think it was just over here at the gardens. In relation to youth suicide, I think this is a very big issue. In fact, one of our key priorities is to keep Queenslanders healthy and we want to aim to reduce the number of youth suicides. I think it is a tragedy when anything like that happens and that is why we continue to invest in Health. We have a record investment in Health making sure that young people can get the help that they need. The member for Nanango would clearly remember that it was the former government that you were part of that cut the youth adolescent centre. This was the place that people—families—sent their most vulnerable young children to in order to get help and I sat there around the table talking to young people—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question, Premier, relates to when you—

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, the Premier is clearly directly answering the question on youth suicide and the expenditure in the budget. I ask you to respect the process and allow the Premier to answer the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right, and this is really relevant, Leader of the Opposition, because your government cut that service. This was the service that we had an inquiry into and now my government is building a new centre because this is where people can send their most vulnerable young people who are on the verge of taking their life. We are restoring that service that unfortunately your government cut and we have had an inquiry in relation to it.

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** The deputy chair has a point of order.

**Mr STEVENS:** Quite clearly your advice previously was we are not going to get into argumentative situations.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, not at all.

**Mr STEVENS:** Excuse me, Mr Chair, but I have the floor at the moment.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes, sure.

**Mr STEVENS:** There is a point of order.

**CHAIR:** What is your point of order? I do not wish you to make an argument, Deputy Chair; I wish you to put the point of order quickly.

**Mr STEVENS:** I was explaining that already you have made the point that we are not going to involve this committee in argumentative—

**CHAIR:** With respect, there is no point of order. The Premier was looking at budget expenditure as compared to previous budget expenditure and was asked directly about what initiatives this government had taken with regard to youth suicide and clearly the answer that the Premier was giving was absolutely relevant to the question. I do not wish you to put these points of orders that are spurious and not serious. Let us just stick to the process. Premier, do you have anything further to add or have you completed your answer?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As I was saying, this is a very big issue. It is one of our key priorities and one of our measures is that we want to look at reducing suicides. One of the ways we can help reduce and prevent them is to re-establish a service that was savagely cut by the former government. I believe that this is a very important issue. That is why my government has acted on this report. Cabinet has considered this report and we are implementing the recommendations.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My next question to you, Premier, is this: were you yourself or the department aware or consulted on the plan to table the Queensland Family and Child Commission annual report during the Commonwealth Games, some five months and 12 days after it landed on your desk?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Sorry, but can you ask that again?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I can. Was your office or your department aware or consulted on the plan to table the report—the Queensland Family and Child Commission report—during the Commonwealth Games, five months and 12 days after it landed on your desk?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I would have to seek clarification, but my understanding is that the Queensland Family and Child Commission now sits, after the change of government, with the Attorney-General and therefore my understanding is you would have to direct that question to her.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** That is correct, Premier, but I note that you are the chair of the cabinet and the head of this government.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. You would have to ask her.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will continue.

**CHAIR:** I ask you to put a question rather than argumentative statements that are not relevant to the question.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** If I can clarify, the chronology of events is that the Family and Child Commission was in your portfolio. You received the report on 31 October 2017 and the only action that has been taken by you is to move the commission out of your department.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is not true. That is deliberately misleading. I ask you to rephrase that question or I will write to the Speaker.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Is it the case, then—

**CHAIR:** Can you withdraw the question and rephrase the question?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am happy to rephrase. Premier, is it the case that, after the release of this report—this damning report into the deaths of children—you moved the commission out of your portfolio?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No. That is an imputation. I reject that.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** You did not move it out?

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order, Mr Chair. The Premier has answered the question, to my count, five times now. I ask that we move on.

**CHAIR:** The member for Maiwar wishes to ask a question. If we are going to repeat the same question, we might have to move to the member for Maiwar. Member for Nanango, do you have any further questions that are not repetitive in nature?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am happy to move on. Premier, after the previous child death annual report was released you said in the media—I have here the media release of 20 February 2017—that the ‘downward trend only strengthens her government’s resolve’. Given the increase in the number of deaths of children known to the child protection system in the latest report, will you concede that your government is presiding over a child safety system in crisis?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is an opinion and I reject that.

**CHAIR:** We need to rephrase the questions so that they are about the expenditure that is before us. If the questions ask for opinions, they are clearly out of order. Can you rephrase the question so that it does not contain an argument, inference, imputation or a hypothetical matter, in accordance with standing order 115?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** That is fine. I will move on. Would you like me to rephrase?

**CHAIR:** This is really a pattern—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Can I just add, if would you not mind, that at the last estimates committee we had Cheryl Vardon here. My understanding is that she said that the system is not in crisis. You have seen from my government key investment in child safety in this state. As I said very clearly, we are restoring the services that had been cut. With the increase in child safety officers we have seen that the pressure on the case loads is coming down. We consider every single report that the Family and Child Commission brings down to be an important report. That is why we go to cabinet and then they are released.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** I remind the member for Nanango—you may have missed this, but I made it clear in my introduction this morning—that, under standing order 115(b), I would be ruling on questions that contain argument, inference, imputation and hypothetical matter. Questions should be put about expenditure in a reasonable manner without argument, inference or imputation.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you. It goes to my point. My question was clear. It pointed to the fact, Premier, that your government held on to this damning report for over five months and released it during the Commonwealth Games.

**CHAIR:** I am ruling that question out of order. The wording is exactly the same. The member for Nanango is repeating the same question. In this case, it is word for word.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am happy to move on.

**CHAIR:** I call the member for Maiwar and I will return afterwards to the member for Nanango, who I hope will have questions that are not repetitive.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Premier, last year you made and announced your decision to veto the NAIF loan to Adani, but you have subsequently refused to rule out public money to support other coalmines in the Galilee Basin that will have the same climate impacts. Why not commit to veto any NAIF loans or public funds for all Galilee Basin coal projects? Can you offer a single clear explanation for your reason for blocking the NAIF loan to Adani?

**CHAIR:** Member for Maiwar, I note that that is a relatively long question. I will not ask you to rephrase it. I note that questions should not contain preambles, arguments or multiple questions. Because of that, the Premier has multiple questions to answer and I ask her to answer in a way that is at least answering part of the question. I warn you that questions should not contain multiple questions.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member very much for the question. It is a very important question. As I said, our position has remained unchanged. The project must stack up financially and it must stack up environmentally. I think everyone is well aware of that. We made a very clear commitment that there would no taxpayers' funds that would be used for the building of that railway line for that project. We are very clear and we are on the record for that. In contrast, the former LNP government was committing taxpayers' money to building that railway line.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Mr Chair, might I ask a quick follow-up question?

**CHAIR:** Member for Maiwar, if we have time. I ask if the member for Nanango has any further questions.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Yes, I have lots of questions. My next question is to the Premier. I refer to Chief Health Officer Jeannette Young informing Queenslanders on 22 June that, mistakenly, inappropriate heart tissue from an organ donor with brain cancer was transplanted into three babies and one adolescent, exposing them to the risk of brain cancer. When was your office, or when were you, first informed that that inappropriate heart tissue had been transplanted? I am looking for the time and the date.

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I do not have those particular details on me, but I think—

**CHAIR:** Premier, I will deal with the point of order first.

**Ms BOYD:** This does not go to the SDS or the budget before us.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am happy to refer the Premier to page 3 of the SDS where it says that the DPC will lead active collaboration across Queensland, including 'keep Queenslanders healthy' and to 'give all our children a great start'.

**CHAIR:** There is no point of order. Member for Nanango, I ask you not—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am happy to put that on notice.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, I ask you not to make arguments like that when a point of order is being ruled on. The question is in some detail and may be better referred to the day when we look at the Health portfolio. If the Premier has anything to add—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am happy to say that that is a very important issue. I understand that the Chief Health Officer addressed that issue as quickly as possible. I do not have the exact time I was told. It would have been within a 12- to 24-hour period, but it was very important that the information came out, to the best of my recollection, as quickly as possible. I endorsed that information coming out to the public as quickly as possible.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Premier—

**CHAIR:** I call the member for Nanango.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you. Sorry, I am a bit keen. Premier, were you, your office or the department consulted on the decision to make the scheduled public announcement on a Friday afternoon?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am not aware of those details. I would have to check for you and get back to you.

**CHAIR:** Premier, that might be something that you return to, if we can, later in the session.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will place it on notice.

**CHAIR:** I note that we have not yet placed that on notice. It is the role of the committee to place a question on notice. I have asked the Premier to return to that question when further information can be sought.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am happy to do that.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Premier, will your government now fully indemnify the families whose children are at risk of brain cancer for any current and future medical expenses associated with screening and testing for brain cancer?

**CHAIR:** I think we are getting to a level of detail that probably is better addressed to the Health section.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am happy to—

**CHAIR:** If the Premier has an answer, I am happy with that.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes. I understand that Queensland Health is undertaking a review into the Queensland heart valve bank after four patients received tissue. My information from Health is that there is a very low risk to patients. My understanding is also that all of the families were personally briefed. The review is expected to be finalised by the end of the year. In the meantime, Queensland Health has implemented a process to ensure patient safety and, of course, they will be keeping these families involved.

I am more than happy for you to talk to the Minister for Health in his estimates appearance, but my understanding is that the clinicians have said that there is very low risk. I would hate to think that the Leader of the Opposition is trying to escalate this and put fear into the families when they are getting the best clinical advice in relation to this matter.

**CHAIR:** I call the member for Nanango if she has any further question.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Yes, I do. Premier, on what date did your government decide to adopt the Queensland Competition Authority's recommendation to jack up bulk water prices by up to \$90 over the next three years? Why was the public announcement delayed until the first State of Origin, when you were overseas?

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** Member for Pine Rivers, what is your point of order?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** There was a lot of imputation in that.

**Ms BOYD:** Thank you very much for your assistance, Premier. There are many imputations in that question. I ask that, under standing order 115, you bring the Leader of the Opposition back to the relevant way to ask questions.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, this seems to be a pattern of behaviour. I ask that you put the question in accordance with questions that we are asking in this committee about the relevant expenditure. I ask you to rephrase the question.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I am happy to rephrase it. My question is to the Premier. On what date did the Premier or her office—I am happy to extend it to her office—decide to adopt the QCA's decision or recommendation to increase bulk water prices by up to \$90 over the next three years?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am happy to answer the question about bulk water.

**CHAIR:** There are only a few minutes left for opposition questions.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The bulk water price path remains lower under my government than it did under the previous LNP government. Bulk water prices make up around a third of the cost of water bills.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am answering the question. Operator distribution and retailer costs make up the remainder—

**CHAIR:** Sorry, Premier. The member for Nanango has a point of order.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Chair, my point of order is that I asked for the date. When did you decide?

**CHAIR:** There is no point of order.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I might just explain to the Leader of the Opposition, if I can, how government works. Ministers actually can make decisions and announce things.

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order, Mr Chair. That is absolutely not on.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** That is right, yes.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I know you were an assistant minister.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** What was that, sorry, Premier?

**CHAIR:** I seriously hope that this is not to simply interrupt the Premier. The questions we are asking are about whether we should support the expenditure. If this is simply to interrupt the Premier, I will be very disappointed.

**Mr STEVENS:** Mr Chair, I would hate to disappoint you, but the fact of the matter is that none of us here needs a lecture on government.

**CHAIR:** There is no point of order.

**Mr STEVENS:** Standing order 118 is relevant, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** Deputy Chair—

**Mr STEVENS:** Pay attention, please, to the standing orders.

**Ms BOYD:** That is a reflection on the chair.

**CHAIR:** I think we need to have a private session to settle this down. I see that as very close to dissent from the chair's ruling. The committee will have a brief break. It is important that we do not get heated in that way. That was a direct repetition of the previous point of order. The committee will now adjourn for a short break and the hearing will resume in a few minutes. I am really disappointed, but we will adjourn.

**Proceedings suspended from 10.28 am to 10.40 am.**

 **CHAIR:** I wish to make clear for all members of the committee, including those who are guests, that we put the question in accordance with the standing orders and we also listen to the answer of the minister or the director-general or other officers. Let it be clear that no chair can rule on relevance in the first few seconds of the member or minister's answer. I ask that anyone making those points of order allow time for the answer to actually evolve. I want to make that ruling absolutely clear. Premier, do you want to complete your answer?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Could I come back to a couple of issues the Leader of the Opposition raised, if I may, for clarification. I am advised in relation to the tissue issue that the Minister for Health was advised on 20 June. They then immediately started contacting the families. My office was advised on 20 June and once all the families were contacted and the issue was discussed with all of the families then the Chief Health Officer stood up on 22 June. I wanted to clarify that for you.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you. So, to the Friday afternoon.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** You heard on the Wednesday.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That was very quick indeed. As you can appreciate, those families did need to be consulted and that is the right thing to do rather than hearing that through the press.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Absolutely.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In relation to the QFCC report, I can advise from the Attorney-General's office that the report was reviewed by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, a briefing note was signed by the director-general of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General on 15 March 2018. It was then provided to the office of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice on that same

day. The report had to be tabled within 14 sitting days, meaning by no later than Wednesday, 16 May. In fact, it was tabled by the Attorney-General on Thursday, 12 April, within one month of receipt and review of the report, so all in accordance with the standing orders.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Premier. I have a question. On page 3 of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet Service Delivery Statement it notes the government's objective to create jobs in a strong economy. Will the Premier provide details on how the government's flagship Advance Queensland initiative is contributing to this objective?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much, Chair, for that question. Of course, we know how important Advance Queensland is. It is the overarching concept of everything that we do as a government in terms of where do we want to see our state into the future, how do we want to create those jobs in a strong economy and how do we want to give young people the best start in life when it comes to getting jobs and training.

The Advance Queensland program has achieved many benefits and we have also added to it over the years with the total level of funding now being \$650 million. We have allocated an extra \$40 million for our Business Development Fund; \$60 million for our Industry Attraction Fund; and an extra \$50 million for the innovation portfolio. Through this funding increase we have expanded our innovation precinct in Fortitude Valley. I would encourage members of the committee to visit the precinct if you have not been down there to see that; it is definitely worthwhile. In fact, I think even a former Premier might be a tenant down there at the moment.

We have also continued our successful Ignite Ideas program that will provide funding support for Queenslanders to develop their ideas and established a hub to develop our capacity, especially when it comes to AI and robotics. Our Advance Queensland programs are supporting our broader economic priorities: creating jobs, strengthening our economy and attracting private sector investment. In fact, in terms of where we are looking at positioning Queensland for the future, I think one of the key issues when it comes to Advance Queensland is the ability to have attracted Rheinmetall here to Queensland. The Land 400 contract means Rheinmetall will build the Australian Army's next generation of combat reconnaissance vehicles here in Queensland. The project is expected to create 450 advanced manufacturing and engineering jobs for Queenslanders and put an extra \$1 billion into the state's economy in the first 10 years.

What is really good about that project is that even the members from Rheinmetall said that if it had not been for Dr Lynham going over to Germany it would not have actually been on their radar. Thank you to the Queensland government for putting forward such a strong bid to the federal government in collaboration with Rheinmetall. As we also know, that project also means a lot of jobs in terms of the wider small business community. Just recently I was out in Darra speaking to the companies out there. They brought together a lot of companies that are interested in getting the flow-on contracts from that. They are now purchasing warehouse space to actually attract more and more business there. Rheinmetall I think down the track is looking at seeing Queensland as an Asia Pacific headquarters which will mean even more contracts into the future. I do not think we can underestimate how important this contract is for Queensland and the ongoing jobs that it can bring.

**CHAIR:** There is certainly warehousing space available on the Logan Motorway if they are servicing Ipswich as well.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I might conclude with our investment in industrial biotechnology as well. As we know, we are trying to create new industries here in Queensland. I think biofuels is another really important industry. We have attracted companies such as Northern Oil, which was called Southern Oil, Amaris and MSF Sugar. Amaris is a direct result of some of the trade missions that we have taken over to the US putting them in contact with some of the mayors as well. What we will see is more expansions of these projects into the future.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Premier. Member for Pine Rivers?

**Ms BOYD:** Thank you, Chair. I refer to page 3 of the SDS and the role of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in helping the government to create jobs in a strong economy. Will the Premier outline how the government's investment in the Back to Work program has created jobs throughout Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much, member for Pine Rivers. I know you know how important jobs in our communities are. Back to Work is one of the signature projects of my government in terms of getting as many people back into work as possible, especially those who have been impacted by the downturn in the resources boom, but also too to give young people that great opportunity and start that they need.

I am very pleased to announce today that since the introduction of the program in 2016 we have created 15,002 jobs through our Back to Work program, which is an incredible story, something I am incredibly proud of and a great milestone. If we are talking about small business, this is about backing small business because most of these payments go to small businesses that have seen how important it is to get more people working in their small business, growing jobs, and also giving them the opportunities to, if they wanted to down the track, export as well. These payments have gone to some 7,458 employers across Queensland and, importantly, includes 9,849 young people through our Youth Boost. Over three and a half thousand apprentices and trainees have been assisted through the Back to Work program, representing 23.9 per cent of applications. There are some great examples. Recently I visited the Wellshot Hotel in Ilfracombe and met one of the young people who is working in that hotel. They have got their choice to get secure employment because of this job.

We have other successes right across Queensland. Every time I meet people they say to me that the Back to Work program has been a great example of the government working with business to create jobs in our strong economy. We are also adding to our Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which has led to tens of thousands of jobs. We will continue to boost that with \$180 million over this term of government. Member for Pine Rivers, as you can see there has been very good progress with this program.

**Ms BOYD:** I refer to page 8 of the SDS of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Will the Premier please outline the government's progress in implementing the veterans' initiatives?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This is a very important issue for my government. I think everyone sitting here today would agree that we need to do more for our veterans. I am very proud to say that Queensland is leading the way when it comes to programs to look after our veterans. We are delivering a range of initiatives to support veterans, ex-Australian Defence Force personnel and their families and current ADF personnel in recognition of their service and sacrifice. Queensland has the highest proportion of veterans in Australia, including dependent beneficiaries. In the 2016-17 financial year, 1,600 of the approximately 5,000 personnel transitioning out of the ADF were from Queensland. More than 80,000 Queenslanders use the services of the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Our veterans face many unique challenges, including high unemployment, an elevated risk of social isolation, drug addiction and suicide. That impacts not just those men and women but also their families. That is why, prior to the last election, I committed to introducing a suite of measures to support our veterans, ex-ADF personnel and their families. These measures include providing 50 per cent of public transport discounts for the Department of Veterans' Affairs white card holders, a \$1.5 million Queensland veterans' memorial grants program over three years for the upkeep of memorials and monuments, and a Public Service employment program that identifies jobs for 100 veterans. A one-stop-shop online portal to help veterans navigate services available in Queensland will be launched in December 2018.

I am pleased to announce that we are delivering on our commitment to create a Public Service employment program for veterans. The Queensland government is the largest employer in Queensland and our new veterans' employment pathway will support veterans and ex-Australian Defence Force members to participate in public sector employment. The pathway aims to increase the participation of ex-ADF members in the sector by identifying employment opportunities and showcasing their skills and capabilities to hiring managers and human resources practitioners across the sector.

Veterans have a lot to offer. They already have a demonstrated commitment to public service and they have a wide range of transferrable skills and qualifications that would benefit each and every one of us. However, understanding and translating Defence Force ranks, experiences and capabilities in civilian environments has historically been a barrier to their employment. As part of this program we have developed online veterans' employment pathway resources to help veterans and ex-ADF members match their skills with available roles in the public sector. Plans are also underway for a centrally managed recruitment campaign and careers fair later this year.

I think everyone will agree that this is something that we will definitely be leading the country in. I am very proud that already we employ some people who have served Australia. We will try to capture that information more readily. I have spoken to my director-general about that. In one of our documents we have a clinical support officer from the Queensland Ambulance Service. He joined the Australian Army in 2005 as a reserve infantry soldier. He has completed peacekeeping missions, where he used his skills to treat locals and wounded soldiers. He said that he found that he had the passion for a medical world. Whilst still on deployment, he applied to the Queensland Ambulance Service and began training in 2011. Now he is working for our Public Service as an ambulance officer.

I want to see more veterans employed across our Public Service in Queensland. I want to see them employed right across the state—not just in Brisbane but right across regional Queensland. I think in Townsville we will see a large uptake by interested people. I hope that other states follow Queensland's lead.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Like biofuels, renewables is an exciting space. I refer to page 4 of the SDS. How is the government delivering to stimulate the advancement of a renewable, reliable and low-cost energy supply to support Queensland's community and industry growth?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Redlands for the question. I know that she has a deep passion when it comes to renewable energy. We are seeing people invest in it in Queensland, creating thousands of jobs. A trial is happening at the moment in her Redlands electorate—I might talk about that a little later—where Sumitomo is working in partnership with QUT.

In relation to renewable energy, the Queensland Renewable Energy Expert Panel report found that between 4,000 and 5,000 megawatts of new large-scale renewable generation capacity would need to be delivered between 2020 and 2030 to meet a target of 50 per cent of renewable energy by 2030. That is in addition to a target of 400 megawatts prior to 2020. Since the report was released, Queensland has made considerable progress in meeting those targets.

At the election, we committed to establishing a third government electricity generator, CleanCo, to ensure that government maintains a strong share of generation capacity to provide for energy security and affordability. CleanCo will initially deliver an additional 1,000 megawatts of renewable energy, including through the delivery of government owned and operated renewable generation infrastructure. I know that the Treasurer and the Minister for Energy are currently finalising that structure.

As we know, this is happening right across Queensland. Recently the director-general and I were in Longreach, where a 15-megawatt project supported 30 jobs during construction and \$29 million of investment. That project is now operational. There is the 50-megawatt first stage of the Kidston solar project, supporting 100 construction jobs and \$126 million of investment, which is now operational. There is the 58-megawatt Whitsunday Solar Farm. There is the 25-megawatt Oakey Solar Farm. Those projects will provide enough power for 78,500 homes and prevent just under 343,000 tonnes of carbon emissions each year. I will soon be opening the Sun Metals zinc refinery near Townsville. It is a \$200 million investment in a 125-megawatt solar farm.

Since we have come to office this brand-new industry has emerged in Queensland, and it is worth billions of dollars. It is not happening just here in Queensland; it is happening all around the world. You only have to travel to other states to see large-scale investment in solar and it is happening around the world. This is not unique to Queensland; however, what is unique to Queensland is the fact that we have so much interest, because the government had set that target. I think we will see further announcements about this in the very near future.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Continuing on from that, I refer to page 4 of the SDS and the work of the Queensland government to diversify Queensland's economy. How is the new hydrogen energy sector being supported to further diversify Queensland's economy?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Hydrogen has the potential to be the next growth industry for Queensland, following on from the LNG boom that we saw here under previous governments. On my recent trade mission to Japan I gave a speech at the University of Tokyo. I spoke about our commitment to renewable energy. I also had the opportunity to hear from professors and companies about the need for Japan to really pursue this agenda for hydrogen. They have a commitment to seeing hydrogen used in some of their vessels and fleet in time for the Olympics in 2020. They want Queensland to partner with them in this new multibillion dollar industry.

Let us think about the potential for jobs. The technology is being developed. As I said, a trial is happening in the member's electorate. We will continue that partnership. That is why we have invested \$750,000 to investigate opportunities to deliver jobs across Queensland from the new emerging technologies for the development of hydrogen fuel.

We know that in countries such as Germany they are looking at hydrogen for their vehicle fleets. If we can look at similar opportunities for our partnership with Japan, it could lead to long-term, secure jobs. Essentially, Queensland sunshine would be powering Japan. It is a great story. It is a new industry. The director-general and I would not have known the full details of this project if we had not spent that time in Tokyo, talking to the proponents. The Japanese government is investing a lot of money in this.

They want the companies to come up with the goods and they are looking for partners. I am saying very clearly that Queensland is looking forward to that partnership, because we can see the opportunity for regional jobs as an outcome.

**CHAIR:** Premier, I want to ask a further question on energy. Referring to page 4 of the SDS, how is the Queensland government working to promote reliable and low-cost energy supply to support the community and especially job-creating industries across Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As part of our plan to create jobs, the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy last month released another 44,000 square kilometres of land for exploration for resource development. The greater availability of energy delivers lower cost energy and that means investment in jobs in Queensland. We have both renewable energy and gas and government ownership of the generation assets which provides us with the unique opportunity to attract jobs and invest by providing security of supply and competitive energy prices.

The announcement made by the minister builds on the work we have already done in Queensland to lead the nation when it comes to bringing more gas development online, including an initial 58 square kilometre tender for domestic supply followed by another 395 square kilometres last year. The LNP in contrast did not do this in government. They failed to unlock any gas exclusively for the domestic market to support local manufacturing jobs.

Senex won our initial domestic tender and last month committed to partner with Jemena on a \$140 million gas plant and 60 kilometre pipeline to bring on 40 terajoules of gas per day. The project will deliver 200 jobs through construction and commissioning. This investment and these new jobs would not have happened without our government's policy on intervention.

In conclusion, when you are talking about having a national energy focus—that is, all of the states working together—it is unfortunate that New South Wales and Victoria have not opened up their gas reserves and Queensland is doing the heavy lifting. When I was out with Santos recently opening one of their new gas infrastructure pipelines they actually showed me the pipe where if we turned off the nozzle it would stop gas extending down into Victoria and they would have huge issues with their gas supply. Queensland is doing the heavy lifting. We are prepared to open up and make gas available for the domestic market. It is a pity in the Federation that everyone is not pulling their weight and doing the same.

**CHAIR:** Are there any further questions for the Premier?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Yes, there are. My next question is to Mr Rob Setter, the Public Service Commission Chief Executive. I refer to the repeated delays in the release of data by the Public Service Commission. It actually took 111 days from the end of the March quarter for the Public Service Commission to publish the workforce data for March. Mr Setter, why was there such a delay in publishing that March data?

**Mr Setter:** The first quarter data for this year or the third quarter for the financial year was particularly challenging. We had an election, as you would know, and then MoG changes. Those MoG changes would have added three weeks to what we would have normally been available to do given the complexities of MOHRI—that is the way we collect our data.

There were the complications of MoG—and that included quite significant changes. Some of the corporate service areas that are servicing multiple agencies had to rejig sets of data. Even MOHRI in its basic form is complex when the data is coming from 10 different pay systems. If you add layers upon layers of complexity and the validity processes that we are required to go through to come up with a data form in a way that is consistent with the specification, it has added to the complexity this time around.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I note you said two to three weeks so that is 14 to 21 days. Does the commission consult with the Premier's office or DPC on the timing of the release of the Public Service workforce figures?

**Mr Setter:** I am required under the act to make available advice and recommendations to the Premier. In the case of the workforce data, I make that available to the Premier for her consideration once it has been completed and validated.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Could you tell me what date you provided that information on the March workforce data to the Premier's office?

**Mr Setter:** For the third quarter?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Yes, the March workforce data.

**Mr Setter:** It would have been in late June. It would have been around 25 June because of the delays. When I said an additional two to three weeks that is on top of the normal eight weeks for MOHRI. MOHRI takes eight weeks. The details for MoG added two to three weeks. That took us into mid-June. I am thinking it was around 20 June or 25 June.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My next question is to the Premier. I refer to the criticism from Together union secretary, Alex Scott, that the Public Service workforce statistics do not include public servants hired on contracts or through labour hire arrangements. How many public servants are hired on contracts or through labour hire but are not reported in those current statistics?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am glad you raised that Leader of the Opposition because that is exactly what I want to get to the bottom of. What I have asked Peter Coaldrake to do is look at our different sets of data collection, see whether we have a system that is reader friendly to everyone so that people can understand that data breakdown and get to the bottom of the rates of contractors who are actually hired through our government. That is exactly the work that cabinet has endorsed Peter Coaldrake to do. From memory, he will be providing his first report to me in August and his second report to me in November.

The other thing I wanted to make comment in relation to was the quarterly report that you asked the Public Service commissioner about. That data is also built into our budget. March to March is built into the forward estimates of the budget. That was taken into account.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Is it the case that you are currently unable to give this committee an answer as to how many public servants you actually have in Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We know how many public servants there are. Those figures are published. Even when your government was in office they found it incredibly difficult to give, when we were asking questions, the number of contractors—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** You now understand why I am asking you the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is exactly why Peter Coaldrake is now doing this work. We understand that we need to keep a lid on expenses growth. We need to make sure that we comply with our fiscal principles. That is exactly what we are doing.

I will tell you the one clear difference between our side and your side, if I may be so bold. It is that we really value the public servants in this state. What you will not see from my government is the slashing of people's jobs—some 14,000 that happened in your government's first budget. I think at the time you were the assistant treasurer and you talked about how proud you were of that budget. It is very disappointing that 14,000 people lost their jobs. I re-emphasise for the member for Nanango that these are real people who have families.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** That is the question. I raise a point of order, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** There is a point of order.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** It is quite clear that the Premier is unable to answer my question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, I said the work is happening.

**CHAIR:** Under which standing order are you making a point of order, member for Nanango?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Standing order 118.

**CHAIR:** In terms of argument—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Standing order 118 is to do with relevance.

**CHAIR:** I was listening very carefully to the Premier. Effectively, the question you asked about specific numbers was directly answered or maybe even anticipated by the Premier in her previous answer to your question. When you asked the question again I had the choice of saying that the question had been answered previously or allowing the Premier to expand on her answer. That is what the Premier did. I find her answer in order. Premier, you were interrupted by the point of order. Is there anything you want to continue with?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I just wanted to clarify that even when I travel out west, to places like Longreach, people tell me how those vicious cuts really hurt the community. In fact, people still talk about that to this day. What I am saying very clearly is that I value the Public Service. Some 90 per cent of our Public Service is in front-line or front-line support roles.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** How many contractors?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I have already answered that question. I have made it very clear that Peter Coaldrake is doing that work. I have also made it very clear that it was very difficult to get that information out of any government. We are doing that work to get that information. What I say very clearly is that we value the workers who deliver services to Queensland families across this state. Next week I will be travelling up to the Torres Strait. It is very important that I get out and listen to the needs of the people across Queensland and deliver. The last time I went to the Torres Strait there were issues on Mer. We got those issues sorted out. I plan to go there every term—

**Mr PURDIE:** I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. Are we still talking about the number of contractors here?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We are talking about delivering services to Queensland. We are talking about the budget of Queensland.

**CHAIR:** Member for Ninderry, I ask you to actually make a point of order and not a commentary. There is no point of order. Member for Nanango, I ask you to cease interjecting. The Premier is entitled to answer the question without interruption. I have also made it clear that where the question was effectively the same question—the Premier anticipated the direction of the question in answering the previous question—the Premier is entitled to expand on the answer with regard to public servants and their roles. Please continue, Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I will end on this point. For the cyclone recovery—and I might get my director-general to expand here a little as well—we actually had to employ extra people to help. There would have been contractors who would have been employed to help get that work done. It was a massive rebuild situation. In fact, there are still issues on the Sarina range. The damage that was done there is very complex.

Peter Coaldrake will be doing that work. The member for the Nanango does not have too long to wait. We will have that full report by the end of the year. That will be publicly released.

**CHAIR:** Are there any further questions from the opposition?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Yes. I might move on to the Premier's office expenses. Your office budget for the 2017-18 financial year was \$7.5 million yet from 1 July 2017 to 11 December 2017 you spent \$4.17 million. Then from 12 December 2017 to the end of the financial year another \$3.9 million was spent. That is a total of over \$8 million. Why did you blow your budget by \$500,000?

**CHAIR:** The time for opposition questions has expired. That question contained an imputation. It also had a long preamble.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will rephrase.

**CHAIR:** It has taken so long that the time for opposition questions has expired, unless the Premier wishes to add something briefly.

**Mr STEVENS:** I raise a point of order, Chair. The time for non-government members has not expired yet in terms of the block.

**CHAIR:** Just to clarify, we have a process of going backwards and forwards. We have had to recalculate the time due to the adjournment. The time was set to expire at that point.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Chair, I am really happy to answer this question. Are you ready for it, because it is a really good answer?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Give yourself a pat.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango! Premier, we will not engage. We will have questions and answers and we will keep that process. That is to the Premier and to the member for Nanango.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The increase in the budget for the offices, especially ministerial offices, is unfortunately due to something that the former LNP government entered into and that was the lease for 1 William Street. The office rent for the Brisbane CBD increased by around \$165 million in 2015-16 to \$222 million for 2017-18 due to the commencement of the 1 William Street lease. This is an increase of approximately \$57 million per annum, or 35 per cent, because we moved out of five government owned buildings into leased space. This is space that we do not own. This is what your former government did.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** You have been in it for longer than this year.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, I have talked about this—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** This is argumentative.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This is very important. Rent for 1 William Street will continue to increase by 3.5 per cent each year of the lease, which is 15 years. My government did not enter into that lease; your government did. This is the cost we are now paying for your bad decisions.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** We are talking about your budget. We budgeted for it.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, I ask that you cease interjecting. You may not like the answer the Premier is giving to your question—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** No, I am enjoying it.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Rent for 1 William Street is currently \$785 per square metre in 2017-18—signed up under your government. This is \$215 per square metre more than the average cost of other CBD leases for government office space—signed up by your former government.

**Mr STEVENS:** Cbus.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let me be clear: 1 William Street is the previous government's commitment. The LNP government's plans to move more private sector clients into 1 William Street were not commercially viable as there was no market interest in this approach. My government is making the best of the situation we have inherited. The implementation of the CBD accommodation strategy and the regional accommodation strategy supports my government's commitment to ensure expenditure is prioritised. As I say, this lease was signed up to by the former LNP government for 15 years and we will see an increase of 3.5 per cent each and every year of this lease because your former government failed to attract private sector interest in renting that space.

**CHAIR:** Both the Premier and the member for Nanango, I counsel you to use correct titles—'the member for Nanango' or 'the Premier'—not 'you', 'your' or 'she', as was used by both parties in that exchange. It is a way to ensure that we keep this discussion focused on the question at hand.

Premier, I have a question on the Education budget. Will the Premier please outline how the 2018-19 budget is supported by our principals, teachers, parents and children by providing a record Education budget?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In this year's state budget we have delivered a record \$10.1 billion for education across Queensland. This record funding will add 1,000 extra teachers to schools across the state as part of our four-year commitment to employ more than 3,700 teachers and see more than \$1 billion invested in school infrastructure. We promised to provide quality education for all students throughout Queensland and we are delivering on our commitments. We are building on our strong record in education. We have opened 11 new schools since coming to government in 2015. This year we have opened four new schools. Just recently I was at Baringa State Primary School. We have opened North Shore State School, Picnic Creek State School and Yarrabilba State School.

**CHAIR:** Hear, hear!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is wonderful to see these new schools opening. As we know, if you are opening new schools for a growing population, which is now over five million people, you have to make sure that we have the teachers, the teacher aides, the cleaners, the principals, the counsellors—everything that goes with creating a very good school community.

Our principals, teachers, teacher aides and support staff are the front line when it comes to giving Queensland children a great start. That is why we are committed to supporting them to do their jobs. We all know that leaders in a school drive innovation and excellence. That is why we are continuing to invest. Teachers and principals in the country also deserve the best. That is why we have committed \$31.1 million over four years to create four centres for learning and wellbeing to support staff in rural and remote Queensland. The first two centres for learning and wellbeing will be established in Mount Isa and Roma, with satellite centres in Normanton and Kingaroy.

We are investing \$107 million over three years to develop and implement our Teaching Queensland's Future program to ensure that we meet the demand for quality teachers across our state. We have already allocated \$14.4 million over four years from 2018-19 to employ up to 45 additional instrumental music teachers. We are continuing the implementation of enhancements for school administrative and support staff. The \$102 million four-year initiative recognises the school business managers and school officers as well.

With respect to the early years, we know how important that is. We have made a decision to make prep the first year of compulsory education. We have introduced our Ready Reading volunteer program, which will see volunteers in our schools helping our children to get the best start with their reading. Also, we know how important STEM is—robotics and coding. It was wonderful to be at the new

schools. It does not matter if it is a new school or existing school. We are leading the nation when it comes to teaching coding and robotics, starting at prep. Having had the opportunity to see what is happening in other parts of the world, I can report that there is incredible interest in what Queensland is doing in this space. A lot of other countries are teaching coding and robotics at the senior levels but not at the junior levels.

What we will see as we track these young children into the future is them being able to cope with the changing nature of jobs, training and the economy. We are trying to equip them as best as we possibly can. The great thing is that the kids love it. They are going home and talking to their parents about it. Their eyes light up when they are showing you. They are teaching me about it as well which is wonderful. We have also seen through our partnership with SoftBank—which was one of the results of our trade mission to Japan—that we have some of the Pepper robots being utilised.

**CHAIR:** I saw them yesterday. They are amazing.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They are fantastic. The kids absolutely love it. It makes them more engaged. I have been told that SoftBank are in active discussions with the Japanese government to try to get their robots into Japanese schools. Once again, utilising some existing technology from another country in our schools is now being seen as world-class and discussions are underway to have them rolled out in Japan.

**Ms BOYD:** With reference to page 4 of the SDS, will the Premier outline the details for the School Breakfast Program and any improvements being made?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Making sure that we give all of our children a great start is one of my government's key priorities. That means making sure that they have the best start. The best start is ensuring that young people get a good breakfast. We know that in Queensland there are families who are doing it tough. I know this—it is happening in my own electorate and I have seen the School Breakfast Program. I am quite sure that many members will know—the member for Logan would know firsthand as well—that some children turn up to school and they have not had that first meal of the day which is so important for them to be able to engage and to listen for the rest of the day.

Today I am very pleased to announce that my government will spend \$1.04 million over four years to expand Foodbank's successful School Breakfast Program. I think this will be very well received across Queensland. In December, Foodbank was supporting 200 schools in South-East Queensland. This will allow breakfasts in a further 70 schools and allow some schools to expand the numbers of days that they can offer breakfast. Sadly, the need extends beyond the south-east. As I said, it is not just children in the south-east; it is children across Queensland.

Late last year a program in Townsville folded. Foodbank has stepped in. Schools in Burdekin, Gladstone and Bundaberg will also join the program and this fulfils an election promise. Children who start the day with breakfast will perform better at school. The program provides 559,734 breakfasts a year. Ninety per cent of schools providing breakfast report an improvement in physical and mental health. A typical breakfast will include toast, fruit, cereal and milk. It is run by volunteers. The government will also provide a further \$15,000 per year for four years to the YMCA for the operation of a refrigerated truck to assist with food deliveries.

We know that prep teacher aides play a vital role in helping children develop the basic skills they need for learning and interacting with others at school. I was pleased to see this in action at Yarrabilba school when I visited there the other day. As we know, this is very important. We need to make sure that this program is rolled out. I encourage all members of parliament to get involved with their local schools and if they do need the program to contact my office. I think it is such a necessity.

**Ms BOYD:** Will the Premier please outline the plans for a new high school as part of the Advancing Inner City Schools on the former Fortitude Valley State School site?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As we know, Queensland is a growing state. We need to make sure that we are planning for the future and that we are building the schools of the future. I am very pleased that the school that was earmarked for closure under the former LNP government—and I remember attending rallies there with the families who did not want that school to close and it was put up for sale—will be transformed into an inner-city high school. It will be built on that site. It will be the first state high school to be built in Brisbane's inner-city suburbs in more than 50 years. It will be the first vertical state school to be delivered in Queensland. It is part of my government's \$808 million Building Future Schools Fund, along with the new secondary school planned for Brisbane's inner-city south.

This will be a flagship, future focused school, supported by excellence in teaching through a partnership with QUT. Having recently had very good discussions with the new vice-chancellor of QUT—we were able to catch up with this most recently in Boston—I know that she is incredibly excited

at that partnership and what it can mean, linking the students with QUT. There will be great opportunities. The school will have creative and innovative learning spaces with cutting-edge design that meets contemporary educational needs for students in the inner city. I am pleased to say the new school is on track to welcome its foundation year 7 students in 2020. That is not long to go.

The foundation principal, Sharon Barker, has been chosen for this significant role and will start work on 3 September. Ms Barker has been in the teaching profession for nearly 30 years. She brings a wealth of education experience, having served as principal of Highfields State Secondary College in Toowoomba for the last four years. Ms Barker previously held principal, acting principal and deputy positions at Tara Shire State College and at Stanthorpe and Harristown state high schools. I congratulate her on her new role.

Expressions of interests have been called for the detailed design for the school to be completed and for construction to get underway before the end of this year. The successful tenderer to build the new school is expected to be announced in the coming months. We are getting on with this. We are not wasting our time. The Advancing Inner City Schools initiative will also establish a new high school in the inner south, working with the University of Queensland to take enrolment pressure off Brisbane State High School. It will also support the expansion of West End State School to meet enrolment demand. I thank the member for Pine Rivers for asking that question. I think we will see progress starting at the end of this year. It is incredibly exciting to see how that partnership with QUT will roll out.

**Ms BOYD:** With reference to page 1 or 2 of Budget Paper No. 3, what capital investment is the government making to ensure front-line health services are delivered for my electorate of Pine Rivers and for all Queenslanders?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. We are committed to ensuring that Queensland families have access to world-class health care where and when they need it. That is why this year's budget continues our record on building new and upgraded hospital and health facilities and delivering the front-line services needed to reverse the cuts that we saw under the former LNP government.

We know that thousands of staff were cut from the regions. We also know that, under the former government, specialist outpatient waitlists blew out. More than 104,000 patients were waiting longer than the clinically recommended time to be seen by a specialist. When the Newman government came under pressure for that growing list they spent \$77 million on consultants and advertising for a failed wait time campaign. Queenslanders deserve better than that. That is why we are getting on with the job and restoring those services and expanding hospitals. We are seeing an expansion in the Caboolture Hospital and we are also seeing an expansion plan for the Logan Hospital. Once you expand these hospitals with new beds, you need to make sure that you have the staff to cater for that.

The total capital investment program in 2018-19 for Queensland Health is \$985.5 million. The program will deliver more than 700 projects across the state and support approximately 1,178 direct full-time jobs this financial year. We now have five million people living in Queensland. In fact, the latest statistic I heard is that a new baby is born every six minutes in Queensland so we need to make sure we have enough resources.

There is expansion occurring at Logan with \$281.2 million; in Caboolture, the electorate of the member for Pine Rivers, with \$252 million; and at Ipswich Hospital with \$124.5 million for that growing population. Last week I was in Caboolture Hospital and saw the work that was completed in ward 3B. I was also very impressed with the work that the hospital is doing in relation to loved ones who have dementia. It was lovely to see how the hospital is supporting families and patients with dementia. I think we will see a growth in that over the years to come. It will be very challenging for governments right across the nation with rising health costs to make sure that we cater for the ageing population and everything that comes with that.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I refer to page 4 of the SDS and the role of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to support the Queensland Disaster Management Committee. How is recovery progressing from recent natural disasters and Tropical Cyclone Debbie?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As we know, Tropical Cyclone Debbie had a massive impact on Queensland and it was felt in homes almost right across Queensland. I think 48 of the state's 77 local government areas were impacted. I was recently in the Whitsundays, and it was good to talk to people and see them back in their homes and to see the restoration that is happening.

I went to the local school in Proserpine and saw that a lot of children are still going through a tough time. I have asked the department to provide extra counselling if that is needed. Some of the senior community members in Proserpine have said to me that one thing I could do for them was assist

with the Proserpine hall. They have not been able to go back into that hall for a year. I spoke to my director-general and as part of this year's budget we have announced half a million dollars to be matched with the council to get that hall rebuilt.

More than 163,600 individuals received assistance in the form of grants, personal support, outreach visits and phone calls. More than \$32 million has been paid under NDRRA assistance for individuals with 120,000 people assisted with payments. During the height of that disaster more than 235,000 customers lost power. To that end, I must thank all of our emergency services personnel and the Energy Queensland team including Ergon for getting everyone back up and running as quickly as they possibly could.

More than a thousand schools were closed statewide. Damage to public infrastructure was in the order of \$650 million. There was an impact to agriculture of \$450 million and losses to the tourism industry were around \$150 million. Whenever I travel across regional Queensland it is great to see that the tourism industry is showing very strong signs of recovery in those regions.

We have provided \$24.9 million to help our primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations clean up and recover. In addition, our \$14.9 million Community Recovery Fund was established to help restore social networks and build community resilience. To date the Queensland Reconstruction Authority has approved more than 560 submissions for NDRRA assistance and has paid more than \$300 million to councils and state agencies.

Almost \$1 million in assistance has been provided to sport and recreational clubs across Queensland to repair facilities and infrastructure. We are standing by our \$110 million commitment to the people of Queensland to rebuild a more resilient infrastructure to help repair damaged beaches, waterways and other natural assets and to help drive economic recovery.

**CHAIR:** Premier, with reference to the government's focus on creating jobs in a strong economy, how many projects and jobseekers have been supported and are projected to be supported by the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, especially in my local area of Logan?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We know how important the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative is. The success rate is incredibly high. I know in communities right across the state we are seeing great outcomes, and I know how important it is to make sure we give people an opportunity to get back into long-term secure jobs. You asked about your area. In the Logan local government area as at 30 June, 1,654 jobs have been created, 379 participants have gone on to further training and 54 have returned to school. That is also a very good outcome.

As part of the 2018-19 budget we are honouring our election commitment to boost Skilling Queenslanders for Work to \$80 million in 2018-19 while also extending the initiative for two years in 2020-21 with a further \$160 million. The \$420 million initiative will now run for six years and will help up to 54,000 disadvantaged Queenslanders into work. I am proud that my government has had a very firm focus on this program—one that we can see the benefits from and one that we value. When you add that program with our Back to Work program and our Works for Queensland program which helps councils right across the state, you can see that we have job-generating programs right across Queensland.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I seek leave to table the state intelligence crime stats. I have copies here.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted for the—

**Ms BOYD:** Mr Chair, I note that there are copies of these documents in colour as well as in black and white. Does the colour matter?

**CHAIR:** Do you wish to table the colour copy?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Yes. We are trying to save money by not photocopying in colour.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Before we go any further, I have noticed there is a disclaimer that says that the figures contained in these reports are not official service statistics. I think any question needs to be pre-empted with that. That is noted very clearly at the top of this report.

**CHAIR:** I think we note that about many statistics. Is leave granted to table the document? There being no objection, leave is granted.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question is to the Premier, and I refer to page 3 of the SDS and the government's goals to keep communities safe. I refer to that tabled document from the state intelligence data obtained by the opposition which shows assaults are up by 15.8 per cent, rape and attempted

rape are up by 43 per cent, robbery is up by 54 per cent and home invasions are up by nine per cent. This means on average that in south Brisbane we have 44 assaults a week, five rapes or attempted rapes per week—

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, I have mentioned before that questions shall not have long preambles. I have given you some latitude but this continues to go on and on. We have tabled the document for the benefit of the committee. If you have a question to put about the tabled document—which would probably be better directed to the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services—do not read from the document. Simply put the question.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will put the question. Premier, why is your government failing to keep Queenslanders safe?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is an imputation.

**Ms BOYD:** Mr Chair, I raise a point of order. There is an imputation in the question.

**CHAIR:** We can move on. I notice that the member for Maiwar is gesticulating that he has a question to put to the Premier.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Excuse me, Mr Chair—

**CHAIR:** There is an imputation in the question. If you could put the question correctly—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I have tabled a document that clearly shows figures of the increase in the crime rates in south Brisbane—

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, you are making an argument about the document not making a point of order.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** These figures are increasing and that is not an imputation. How is that an imputation that crime rates are increasing under the Palaszczuk government?

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, I ask you to rephrase the question. Do you wish to rephrase the question? If not, we can move on to the member for Maiwar.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am happy to give a broad answer, if that is okay, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** I do counsel members to put questions in the proper format. The Premier wishes to answer the question as is, but in future questions need to be put in a format that fits within the standing orders. Premier, I give you the call.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** From the outset can I reiterate the disclaimer that the figures contained in these reports are not official service statistics. Official Police Service statistics are released only through the information resource centre after available data is collected, classified and collated in accordance with nationally accepted rules.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Why don't you release them then?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I do not really want to comment on statistics that have not gone through the Police Commissioner. I would like the opportunity to have a discussion with him about that.

The other thing I would say is that this is a snapshot of a 24-hour period and may not be as accurate as an annual police statistics report that is released and that has been released. There have been no published reports of crime stats for the entire year of which the member for Nanango was a member of the government. From 2012-13 they were not published. For 2013-14 they were not published. These crime states when they are collated and published through official standards have been released from 2009 to 2017 except for the two years of the Newman government. Perhaps the member for Nanango would like to explain why they were not published for those years because we cannot compare—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** You are the one answering the questions.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am answering the question.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will wait for the answer, then.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You have two secret reports there. Are you going to release those?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** We are still waiting on your answer, Premier—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, my answer is clear.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** In relation to keeping the community safe.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am absolutely determined to keep the community safe. That is why we are increasing the number of police in this state, not sacking police officers like you did.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, I counsel you not to interject, but I also counsel you, Premier, not to ask questions of the member for Nanango. Premier, have you concluded your answer?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The only thing I would like to add is that I reject that assertion by the Leader of the Opposition. We value our men and women who serve the Police Service in this state. We have increased the number of police officers. Since coming to office we have put in an extra 400 full-time police officers across the state. We have committed an additional 535 front-line police and operational specialists employed, including 115 counterterrorism specialists. The 2018-19 budget commits \$3.5 billion to community safety, including more than \$55 million over four years for 85 counterterrorism officers, \$32 million over four years in last year's budget for an additional 30 counterterrorism officers and 20 police officers for priority areas.

We want to give the police the resources they need. We have given them new and replacement police vehicles to the value of \$30 million. I can remember, in stark contrast, when I was in your position as leader of the opposition, member for Nanango, going around Queensland hearing the stories of how the Newman government cut out a lot of the positions—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Like you have in south and north Brisbane.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—of middle management, of senior serving police officers.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Just like you have in south and north Brisbane.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They were at the height of their career. They could not believe the way they were being treated by the government that you served in when you cut—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** So when—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You cut their jobs.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, the time has almost expired. I ask you not to interrupt so that we can get to the break and proceed to the answers.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In terms of operational, I will allow the Police Commissioner to comment on operational matters, but in relation to the statistics they are collated and they are put out every year. As I said very clearly, there is a disclaimer on this document.

**CHAIR:** It is 11.47. According to the schedule, it is now time for a break. We will stop for a break and the hearing will resume at 12.02 for the examination of the estimates for the portfolio areas of Premier and Cabinet and Trade.

#### **Proceedings suspended from 11.47 am to 12.03 pm.**



**CHAIR:** Welcome back, Premier and officials, and welcome to the officials joining us for this session. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of the Premier and Cabinet and Trade. Are there any questions from the opposition?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Yes. I will continue with where we finished off. Last night on the news, Detective Superintendent Tony Fleming of the Queensland police confirmed the figures and the crime statistics that were put before you as true and correct and noted that crime is increasing. Is it now the fact that your government is soft on crime?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I have not seen that. I do not have that transcript.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** It was reported in the news last night.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** But I do not have that transcript, I am sorry.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** So you are unable to confirm. I will follow through on one question if you do not have that.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, do you have a question to put to the Premier?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** The Premier was unable to answer the question, with respect.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I need to verify that. As I said, Chair, if I may, there is a disclaimer on this. I would want to speak with the Police Commissioner about how they collate this data. I think this is like a snapshot of one day that is then used to formulate their overall annual crime statistics that then comes out publicly. I am reticent to comment on something that has just been tabled here without having had that verified through the Police Commissioner.

As I said, we are providing extra police officers. We are giving the police the resources they need to do their job, including the pay that they need to do their job, the resources that they need, the body worn cameras and the counterterrorism facility that we put into the budget as well. I am giving the police the resources they need to do their job. The operational execution of that job is done by the Police Commissioner, as the member would be well aware.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you, Premier. Premier, why after three years have you failed to establish the independent crime statistics and research unit that you promised during the 2015 election?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is an imputation, Chair, if I may.

**CHAIR:** I could suggest that the member for Nanango rephrase the question talking about the forward budget and what you are suggesting, if I have to give you suggestions about how to rephrase it without imputations.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thanks, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, I would also note that this is the sixth or seventh time I have had to ask you to rephrase to withdraw imputations from the questions. I think I have been very, very lenient on this. You are a far more experienced member of parliament than I am, so I have expectations that you do not continue to include imputations in the questions you put forward.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Chair, I am simply trying to ask a question.

**CHAIR:** I am asking you to rephrase within the standing orders, which is vital to the role we play in the parliament.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Okay, if we have established that an election commitment has been broken by the Premier by failing to establish the independent crime statistics and research unit. I am happy to move on, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, you cannot breach one standing order and then go on to rephrase the question and breach another standing order. In fact, it is the same standing order; it is standing order 115(b). You cannot break another part of it in the rephrasing. Member for Maiwar, do you have any questions that do not breach standing orders?

**Mr BERKMAN:** I certainly hope they do not breach standing orders. I will rewind a couple of hours and revisit my earlier question, given the importance of the issue, as the Premier noted. Mr Chair, I will foreshadow, first of all, that I was cautioned last time for asking effectively a double-barrelled question. I will seek to break the question up, if I might, so I am just foreshadowing a possible follow-up. Premier, we are all well aware that there are a number of major coal projects proposed in the Galilee Basin. Premier, why will you not commit to veto any NAIF loans or public funding for any and all proposed coal projects in the Galilee Basin and associated infrastructure?

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** I might anticipate what you are going to say. With respect, member for Maiwar, that seems identical and repetitious to the question you put earlier to the Premier. Am I missing something? It seems to be exactly the same question. I know you might want to put the same question again, but we are required to put a different question.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Mr Chair, is it the case if the question was not answered earlier? Excuse my procedural naivety here.

**CHAIR:** The member for Pine Rivers has a point of order.

**Ms BOYD:** Just in terms of relevance, I am not too sure where this actually relates to the budget or to the SDS.

**CHAIR:** I do not necessarily rule it out on that basis but it is repetitive of the question that was put earlier. Do you have any question that is not repeating the same question? You may not like what is being put. It does not entitle you to badger and continue to put the question again and again, with respect.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Chair, my intention was to reframe the question as a singular question, given your caution earlier that it was multiple questions couched as one and that it apparently caused some difficulty for the Premier in responding on point to either or both of those two questions.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, I answered the question. My answer is not going to change from what I said previously.

**CHAIR:** I thank the member for Maiwar. I gave you advice about framing future questions, not encouraging you to put the same question just split into parts. I do not know if the Premier wishes to make any commentary on that.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As I said in relation to the Adani project, it has to stack up financially by itself and environmentally.

**CHAIR:** I call the member for Nanango.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you, Mr Chair. Premier, my question to you is in relation to trade and travel. Premier, you have spent more than double your predecessor on international travel, racking up a bill of \$461,000 just in your first 2½ years in office—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Not me personally. You are talking about the whole—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Your office.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Okay.

**CHAIR:** Premier, if we could put the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Do you want to rephrase it? It is imputation.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am just waiting for the Premier to finish her criticisms here so I can ask a question.

**CHAIR:** The Premier was stating that the question was factually incorrect. Member for Nanango, can you put your question?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** The Premier and her staff have spent \$461,000 in the first 2½ years of the Palaszczuk government in office. Premier, surely you agree that spending almost \$500,000 on taxpayer funded—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Sorry. Can you just double-check those figures? I think you might be deliberately misleading the committee.

**CHAIR:** Member, I think this is something that the Premier could address about misleading the committee. We notice that the first phrasing of the question did not include the full facts, but we have corrected that section.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** The \$461,000. I am more than happy to take that on notice.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, if you could ensure that you are not misleading the committee in any way about the figures that you are putting forward to the committee and put your question, please.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question is: Premier, do you agree that this is an excessive amount of money to be spent on international travel in 2½ years?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I will talk about international travel, first of all, and trade, which is part of my job. I am Premier and Minister for Trade.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** If I could clarify, it was not then. You were not the Minister for Trade during these figures.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let me make it very clear. As Premier of this state, my No. 1 job is to get jobs for Queenslanders, and if that means going and advocating—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** And my question was—

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, this is the fourth time in the one answer that you have actually made an interjection blocking the Premier from speaking.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am just trying to ask a question.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, you do know the rules regarding interjecting, especially interjecting on the chair. I ask that you listen in silence to the Premier's answer on this question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I would really like to answer this question, because it is very important. What we have seen under my government is an increase in the level of exports. We have now hit \$73 billion. What this means is jobs for Queenslanders. This is, from recollection, a \$30 billion increase on the former Newman government.

I will also make the point that at times I am actually invited to travel to events on behalf of the Prime Minister of Australia. In 2015, I was invited to Singapore by Tony Abbott from 27 to 29 June to participate in a high-level investment round table focused on Northern Australia. Two other state and territory ministers accompanied us on that trip, and there were at least a dozen of the top investors in Singapore present for that discussion. That was at the invitation of the then prime minister, Tony Abbott.

I have then been asked by Andrew Robb, who was then minister for trade and investment, as Premier of Queensland, to participate in a program with the Prime Minister and other premiers and territory first ministers as part of Australia Week in China. He said, 'I hope that you'll be able to include participation in all three as part of your travel plans.' That has come from him.

I was invited by the government of the Hong Kong special administrative region to visit Hong Kong to gain a better understanding of its economy, opportunities and challenges. That was part of a trade delegation. I was visited by the ambassador Joe Hockey and then I was also invited by the Prime Minister to attend a high-level meeting in Washington. This is a great example, member for Nanango, of governments working together, and I commend the ambassador for putting this together. You might want to have a chat with him about it because he would definitely detail to you how important it is.

All of the Premiers went to this as well as the Prime Minister and we met with the Governors of the US who attended in Washington. It was a very significant event. At that event I was the only Premier who entered into a sister-state relationship with Nevada, with Governor Sandoval, who is the chair of the congress of governors. I can also report that the top 20 CEOs of Australia also attended that forum as well as some of the top 20 CEOs of the US. All of that was about generating jobs for Queenslanders.

You may criticise me, as is your right if you want to, for going over to attend these at the invitation of the Prime Minister, who is from your particular party. However, I will tell you what is not justifiable, and that is when your former deputy premier Jeff Seeney spent \$598,000 on charter flight travel between here and his electorate.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:**—to go home.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes, to go home; that is right.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Not business class.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** He spent \$598,590, which is, I might say, more than the government's travel and your former premier's travel combined.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:**—in 2½ years.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, let's keep going. Let's talk about the outcomes of these trade delegations; I am more than happy to do that. We secured the Johnson & Johnson Innovation Partnering Office in Queensland and Siemens healthcare innovation centre following my first trade mission to the US. We are the only state that has signed a high-level agreement with the US Navy to develop a biofuels industry in Queensland and to eventually supply the green fleet, which has helped secure the \$16 million northern oils biofuels plant at Gladstone. Following the 2017 trade mission to the United States at the invitation of Ambassador Hockey in February 2018 I secured a sister-state agreement with Nevada to partner in new water and resource technologies. This has supported RedEye to open its North American headquarters in Nevada. The \$170 million Rheinmetall Defence Australia's Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence, which I talked about earlier, was a direct result of Minister Lynham going to Germany to personally lobby for Queensland.

Through our overseas trade meetings and the work of Screen Queensland we helped the \$100 million *Aquaman* production, creating 750 jobs; *Thor*, supporting a thousand jobs and \$142 million into the Queensland economy—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—*Kong: Skull Island* supporting 60 local jobs and \$15 million in investment—

**CHAIR:** Premier, I apologise. There is a point of order.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** If the Premier is planning to just read her response, would she like to table it to save time?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, I am nearly finished.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, the question was: what value—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Because it was excessive. It was not, 'What was the value?'

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am clarifying my question since I am not allowed to—

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango! I am ruling on your point of order. Member for Nanango, the question was regarding what value it represented for Queensland.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** No. 'Is it excessive?' was my question.

**CHAIR:** Sorry, I am phrasing it in the alternative. The Premier is going through and putting forward the value that it represented for Queensland. That is directly relevant to the question.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Excessive.

**CHAIR:** If the value is too long—you can continue, Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you. Then we had the start-up hub in Fortitude Valley, which came as a direct result of travelling and spending time in Silicon Valley and we were able to attract SoftBank, which I talked about. Now the Japanese government is looking at utilising that technology in their schools after seeing its success in Queensland schools. The investment of \$72 million in a manufacturing facility at Yatala by Oji Fibre Solutions has delivered 100 ongoing jobs following my trade mission to Japan in 2016. On that same trade mission I also secured the investment from JFE Steel for the Byerwen metallurgical coal project led by QCoal—

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—with \$1.76 billion of investment and 200 construction jobs.

**CHAIR:** Premier, hold on. The member for Mermaid Beach has a point of order.

**Mr STEVENS:** This answer is going on like a ministerial statement. Please come to a direct response.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You asked a very serious question.

**CHAIR:** The argument seems to be that there is a very long list of value. I do not know, Premier, whether you could—they want us to wind it up; they have had enough of the value presented. I do not know which way you wish to proceed.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** There are two final comments I want to make. After meeting the Governor in Chengdu we also secured a trade office in Chengdu. We have actually seen a local Queensland company now exporting wine into western China worth more than \$250,000 in value. The Deputy Premier has also secured a Queensland innovation hub in Abu Dhabi to provide opportunities for Queensland businesses.

In conclusion I might also add that when I went to London for the start of the Queen's Baton Relay I was also accompanied in a bipartisan manner by the shadow minister for the Commonwealth Games, John-Paul Langbroek. When I was Leader of the Opposition I did not undertake any overseas travel. However, Lawrence Springborg went to Japan, China, India and Singapore.

**CHAIR:** Premier, this is a very long list if I may say.

**Mr STEVENS:** I have another question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am providing a very full answer so there can be no dispute about the increase in exports and jobs, which is of direct relevance to Queensland. If the opposition wants us to be inward looking and not outward looking and not focused on the challenges that Queensland is facing into the future—trade is fundamental to where we go into the future, and that means jobs for Queenslanders.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Premier. The member for Mermaid Beach has a question.

**Mr STEVENS:** I have a further question on travel and I hope the answer will be a lot shorter. Premier, why has your department failed to release the overseas travel expenses for yourself and your ministers on the Open Data website since June 2017?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We table all of our reports in the Queensland parliament. All of the reports are publicly tabled within the time frame.

**CHAIR:** Is the question about formatting?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes.

**Mr STEVENS:** The Open Data website.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They are tabled in the Queensland parliament.

**Mr STEVENS:** That is not—

**CHAIR:** I think the answer has been put—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The answer is they are publicly tabled in the Queensland parliament.

**Mr STEVENS:** Correct, and how many people are going to read the tabled document?

**CHAIR:** Member for Mermaid Beach—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Under standing orders any minister who travels overseas has to table a report in the Queensland parliament.

**Mr Stewart:** The figures up to December, Premier, have been disclosed on the Open Data website and we do it periodically.

**CHAIR:** Is the Premier referring to the director-general?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes.

**Mr Stewart:** I am advised that our figures up to December were disclosed on the Open Data website. My understanding around disclosure on Open Data is that it is periodic. When the next time for that information to be published comes around it will be published.

**CHAIR:** We now turn to a question from the member for Redlands.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Could the Premier please outline to the committee how increased tourism infrastructure is helping to boost Queensland's economy?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As we know, tourism and tourism infrastructure are incredibly important to the economy, especially across Queensland. I can also talk a little bit about what we are doing out west as well. In just months construction is set to commence on Queensland's first dedicated mega cruise ship terminal at the port of Brisbane. This terminal building will be a state-of-the-art development of around 9,300 square metres set over two levels and connected to a 200-metre-long wharf with two air bridges to enable passengers to move on and off the ships. The project is worth \$158 million to Queenslanders in construction and will create 245 jobs each year through the two-year construction phase. Modelling by the Port of Brisbane indicates that over the next two decades the terminal could inject \$1.3 billion into the Queensland economy and the growth will be ongoing. It will further boost our tourism sector and related industries, which will generate jobs into the future.

Not only will the cruise ship terminal bring new visitors by sea; they will be arriving by air in great style from September when the new Qantas Dreamliners will arrive in Brisbane, and this is great news. I know a lot of people have been waiting for this. We are looking forward to an announcement in early September, once the routes are finalised by Qantas. Of course, these are the long-range Dreamliners. It will be interesting to see where they will go from here—into which parts of North America.

My government has secured a deal whereby Queensland will be home to the east coast and Pacific operations of Qantas's newest aircraft, the Boeing 787-900 Dreamliner. This means that half of the Dreamliner fleet will be based in Brisbane, supporting 470 jobs here in Queensland, including aircraft line maintenance and support staff and new flight crew. Make no mistake, these are state-of-the-art ultra long-range aircraft and they will open up exciting new opportunities for flights.

There will be a total of eight Dreamliners in the fleet worth \$1 billion to Qantas. The new flights will commence with six of the new aircraft and while the other two are being produced the service will be complemented by up to an additional three Boeing 747 flights. This will provide for an additional 85,000 new inbound premium seats to Brisbane Airport per year. These 85,000 new visitors are estimated to generate an additional gross international tourism spend of \$27.2 million each year. We know that strengthening our links to key tourism markets will be part of that, which is why we are investing an extra \$134 million in this sector during this term of government towards attracting new direct flights to Queensland.

During our last term we secured additional flights, bringing 740,000 new inbound seats to Queensland and generating up to \$570 million for our economy each year. The tourism figures released last week show just that. Queensland has posted record high international visitor numbers and expenditure, with China again leading the way with 20 per cent growth in visitors to now 517,000 in the year ending March 2018. In terms of overall tourism growth, international overnight visitor expenditure in Queensland increased 6.4 per cent to a record \$5.5 billion and international visitation to Queensland increased 5.5 per cent to a record 2.7 million. As we know, tourism is great news. We have the Queen's Wharf under construction, The Darling has just been completed on the Gold Coast. I know the member for Mermaid Beach would know how important it is to have that being completed on the Gold Coast. Of course, we know that we have money allocated in this year's budget for tourism infrastructure in the outback, which will also complement the experiences when people travel out to the western parts of our state.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I refer to page 32 of the SDS, which refers to an increase in funding for the government's Production Attraction Strategy. Will the Premier outline the nature of this increase and the benefits it will bring to Queensland's screen industry?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We know how important it is to attract more screen industry development here to Queensland. That does not mean just attracting overseas production; it also means generating homegrown productions as well. It was wonderful to see recently a local producer and author involved in the Queensland production of *The Second*, which was released a couple of weeks ago. I would encourage people to watch that. It was a very good production made at Jimbour House, just outside of Dalby.

A recent review into the screen sector by Deloitte found that the screen industry supported more than 7,000 jobs in 2016-17 and contributed almost \$1 billion to the state's economy. This is another growth sector. We were talking about how tourism is going well. We have talked about the renewable sector. We are talking about developing a hydrogen sector. In terms of the screen industry, this is also a really good news story for Queensland. At the end of the day, this is about long-term, secure jobs. If we can get a continual supply of productions happening here in Queensland, people will not have to pack up and leave the state to go to Sydney or Melbourne; they can stay here and get the work and raise their families here.

I notice that one of the recent meetings we held with members of the screen industry—we have to remember these are the people they employ: they are the carpenters; they are the people who work behind the scenes; they are the people who provide the catering. They are not just the actors involved in the production; there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes. The \$20 million in funding for the production attraction strategy is definitely working: members may have seen the *Aquaman* trailer, which was released at the end of last week. We have also attracted ABC International Studios here with *Harrow*, which is about to commence the filming of its second series.

Today I would like to announce that Screen Queensland will support innovative Queensland start-up Like a Photon Creative to develop three animated feature films for international distribution from their new Brisbane based animation studio. I extend my congratulations today to Kristen Souvlis and Nadine Bates, the two dynamic women responsible for this company. With this support they expect to employ 50 Queensland workers on each animated film. This is the type of industry growth we are pursuing through our 10-year road map. Screen Queensland supported a total of 37 productions in 2016-17, 33 of which were domestic productions and four of which were international. This funding generated \$214 million in production expenditure in Queensland, supporting an estimated 2,340 jobs.

As we know, the sound stage was used for squash competition during the Commonwealth Games, which was great to see firsthand. At 4,000 square metres, sound stage 9 is now the largest sound stage in the Southern Hemisphere. It is a key legacy of the Commonwealth Games, and people are incredibly excited that it is located here in Queensland. As part of our trade mission recently we were able to meet with Netflix and senior executives from Stan and Technicolor. We are also in the final stages of signing a contract for extra space for the filming of productions like Netflix, Stan and ABC International. This will be a good complementary space to Village Roadshow at the Gold Coast. As the world is changing and people look at more online streaming services, we are front and centre. No other state is doing what Queensland is, and this is once again as a direct result of trade missions.

**CHAIR:** Will the Premier please advise what actions the government has taken to tackle cyberbullying?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much for that important question. Cyberbullying is a huge issue for families not just across Queensland but also across Australia. That is why I am very pleased that we were able to get the issue of cyberbullying on the COAG agenda. I also want to update members of the committee. The task force which I asked Madonna King to chair is nearing completion. There has been some wonderful work done and excellent engagement right across Queensland, but we live in a world that is very different from when many of us went to school. When we went to school, bullying stopped at the school gate—it very rarely followed you home—but through these devices bullying follows children home to the kitchen table, to the lounge room and into the bedroom. Unfortunately, in this day and age young people are measuring their worth in terms of how much they are liked or disliked, and the bullying that is happening has to stop.

I am very proud of my government's stance on cyberbullying. I welcome the fact that the opposition has participated, and I commend the member for Nanango for allowing that to happen. I honestly think that together as a parliament we can bring about fundamental change. The impact of cyberbullying can unfortunately lead to devastating consequences. We have seen, and we continue to see, young people take their lives as a direct result of cyberbullying. We need to do everything that we possibly can to stop it, but there needs to be a whole-of-community response. We have made great inroads in domestic and family violence and I think that, working in a bipartisan manner, we can do the same in relation to this issue. It is too important.

There are children out there who are hurting; they are suffering in silence. Hopefully, with the production of this report and consideration by the government and opposition we can bring about positive change. We will have to tackle this in ways we have not been able to tackle issues like this in the past. Everyone will need to work together. This issue needs very strong leadership, not just on behalf of the government but also on behalf of communities. To all young people out there I say: we are going to be with you on this journey. The best way we can help stamp this out is for you to have a conversation with a friend or a parent so that we can really bring these issues out into the open. It is going to take a lot of hard work for us to bring about change.

**Ms BOYD:** Page 38 of the Trade & Investment Queensland SDS notes the government's objective to drive export growth. Will the Premier outline details of Queensland's recent export performance and provide some examples of export successes?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, member for Pine Rivers. I want to point out our strong record on exports. You only have to go to the Premier's export awards, which are held every year, to see the amazing work that companies are doing in terms of generating extra jobs for Queenslanders. Our trade and investment offices, which are spread right across the world, help facilitate companies get a foot in the door, gain an understanding of local regulations and open doors for them which in the past may have been closed.

Queensland has perhaps the largest number of trade networks, but we have always been an outward-looking state. I will use Japan as an example, because when I have the opportunity to get to Japan I am usually able to meet with representatives from the highest levels of the Japanese government. That is because Queensland has had such a strong presence in Japan for many, many years. Likewise, in China we have a very strong relationship with Shanghai because Queensland established a trade office there decades ago. We have very experienced trade officers in South Korea, Japan, Singapore, the US, the Middle East, India and London. Because Queensland is an outward-looking state, our exports are continuing to increase and, as I said earlier, there has been a \$30 billion increase on the former government. We are now in excess of \$73 billion in exports, which is indeed a record.

During the last term my government brought down the Advancing Trade and Investment: Queensland Trade and Investment Strategy, which sets out very clear priorities in terms of where we will operate over the next term. We will continue to work with the sectors. In terms of growth we have seen recently, I want to share with the committee that, for the year ending May 2018, growth has included growth to China of 30 per cent; Taiwan, 19 per cent; Indonesia, 19 per cent; Japan, 17 per cent; India, 15 per cent; and Vietnam, 14 per cent. In addition, there have been increases in the value of coal, LNG and mineral exports. The value of Queensland beef exports also rose. We have very clearly seen results by working with companies across Queensland, initially through our trade and investment office here in Brisbane and then linking them with trade offices in areas where they want to participate.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question is to the CEO of Trade & Investment Queensland.

**CHAIR:** I asked the Clerk about this matter. If an officer or the director-general feels that the Premier may elucidate and further add to an answer, they can ask the Premier to add to that answer.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you very much for attending today, Ms Greville. I refer to question on notice No. 19. TIQ spent almost \$290,000 of taxpayers' money on hospitality expenses in the last financial year, and my question on notice asked for a breakdown of expenses by the chair, CEO, agent-general and other TIQ employees. No response has been provided.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Point of order, Chair. I think that question may be deliberately misleading, because there is actually a breakdown of the hospitality expenses of the CEO, the agent-general and all other TIQ employees. That is broken down in the last sentence.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you very much for the clarification, Premier. My question simply is: did the chair incur any hospitality expenses in that period?

**Ms Greville:** No.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Premier, given the fact that there has been a 43.1 per cent decrease in chickpea exports for the year ending April 2018, why have you not visited India to lobby for the removal of the 60 per cent tariff on Australian chickpeas which is obviously hurting our chickpea farmers?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We are disappointed that chickpea exports have declined, but that is because India has introduced a massive tariff. You should be well aware of that. I do not set those tariffs; they are set by the Indian government. Of course we have offered the Australian government assistance in relation to lobbying for the reduction of that tariff.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** This question is to the CEO of Trade & Investment Queensland. What Indian ministerial missions have occurred in the last 12 months or been undertaken by TIQ to India?

**Ms Greville:** The Minister for Health went to India in August 2017 to represent the Premier at Australia in India Business Week. Since that time until now, to my knowledge there have been no other ministerial missions. There are a lot of bilateral exchanges at the non-ministerial level, particularly in support of Queensland's interests in mining equipment and technology services exports to India. There have been Indian delegations that have come to Queensland and Queensland business delegations that have gone to India. To my knowledge, the last ministerial mission to India was by Minister Dick in his role as minister for health representing the Premier.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Ms Greville, how much are TIQ's hospitality expenses for the coming year?

**Ms Greville:** TIQ's budget is as expressed in our SDS and the budget papers. We have a very limited discretionary budget, out of which hospitality would come. Our first priority is to pay our staffing costs, leases and other expenses. We also have some strategy money that has been granted to TIQ for the trade and investment strategy which does not have a specific hospitality component. However, in the context of implementing strategy initiatives there may be a minor hospitality component, but we do not determine that up-front, other than through the business planning process that all of our offices—our Brisbane office, our eight Queensland offices and our 15 international offices—undergo and are currently undergoing.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question is to the Premier. After reassessing Minister Bailey's private emails in which he received a CV from ETU boss Peter Simpson for Mr Mark Algie just days before the cabinet appointed Mr Algie to the board—

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, I would ask that this be relevant to the expenditure that we are investigating, so I would like you to bring the question to its relevance.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Sure; thank you, Mr Chair. The CCC found that processes to identify and nominate candidates for board appointments of government owned corporations lacked transparency and good governance. Premier, will you now fully implement the recommendations of the CCC to ensure appointments made by your government are open and transparent?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. I will just grab a copy of the press release so I can quote accurately from the most recent press release.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** If it assists, I have the CCC's statement.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** First of all, cabinet processes were followed and it said very clearly that it did not itself raise a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct. There has been an assessment of the material. The CCC has written to the Under Treasurer at Queensland Treasury who manages these appointments recommending that the policies and procedures be revised to improve transparency of GOC appointments into the future and we are awaiting any recommendations from the Under Treasurer. The Under Treasurer will convey that to the director-general and we will put those into place. Let me be very clear: there was no evidence of a criminal offence or a disciplinary breach that would warrant dismissal as identified.

**CHAIR:** Are there any other questions from non-government members? I call the member for Ninderry.

**Mr PURDIE:** Thank you, Mr Chair. My question is to the Premier. You have publicly said the cabinet process was followed in relation to the appointment of Mr Mark Algie to the Energy Queensland board. Premier, were all the background checks completed prior to the cabinet approving the appointment of Mr Mark Algie to the board of Energy Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I have answered that question. The CCC has made a recommendation. My government will look at that recommendation.

**CHAIR:** Member for Maiwar, do you have a question?

**Mr BERKMAN:** Yes; thank you, Chair. My question is for the Premier as well. The government has allocated itself an additional \$10 million for ministerial offices over the next four years—I understand this is for extra staff—but I believe you have refused a request to provide additional staff to at least one member of the crossbench. My question, Premier, is this: in light of this additional spending on government officers, how do you justify refusing additional resources for crossbench members?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Crossbenchers are welcome to write to me. I am happy to take that under consideration. However, it is not customary for individual crossbenchers to be given additional staff. Normal backbenchers in government and the opposition have their staff that they have to deal with to

perform their duties. I invite crossbenchers to write to me to put a case, but I am not going to say here whether or not that will receive favourable consideration. In relation to the regional offices, I made it very clear that as a government for all Queenslanders we want to have a good presence across Queensland and we will be looking at announcing the rollout of those regional offices in the very near future to continue our process of engagement.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I might ask a follow-up question.

**CHAIR:** Member for Maiwar.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I do understand from one of the responses we had earlier today, Premier, that there is in fact a fairly substantial allocation of additional resources to one of the minor parties represented in the parliament. Additionally, looking back on the remuneration handbooks in previous terms of government, the former Independent member for Nicklin was allocated additional research staff and electorate officers as well I understand. Can you outline what the factors are that play into a decision as to whether or not additional staff resources will be given to crossbenchers?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Like I said to you, I am more than happy to review that if you want to write to me and state reasons. It depends on the parliament. I think some additional resources were provided in the past due to the minority situation where crossbenchers needed additional information and research, and that was agreed to. As I said, you can put your letter forward, but individual crossbenchers do have the same resources as backbenchers.

**CHAIR:** Are there any other questions? I call the member for Bonney.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Premier, the CCC's recommendations include applying the same process equally for all candidates. Surely this is an admission the process around the appointment of Mr Algie was extraordinary and not the normal process, as you have repeatedly stated.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, that is an imputation.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Premier, will you reaffirm you have no concerns with the appointment process of Mr Algie?

**Ms RICHARDS:** I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. There is imputation in that question.

**CHAIR:** Referring to standing order 115, the question is required to contain no inference or imputation, so I ask that you rephrase the question to not contain that. In general I would ask that people scan ahead in terms of their questions and consider it in light of standing order 115 so that we can get the same questions out in a smoother fashion.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Premier, will you reaffirm you have no concerns with the appointment process of Mr Algie?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The CCC has investigated it and we are going to act on the recommendation.

**CHAIR:** We are also with this question now straying into—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is the third time I have answered that question.

**CHAIR:** I apologise, Premier; I was making that point. We are straying into repetition of exactly the same question on the same matter and the only difference seems to be to add a different argument, inference or imputation which is not within the standing orders, so I ask members to ask a new question and not a repetitive question. Are there any more questions?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** There sure are. We are simply trying to get answers. My question is to the Premier. Premier, given Minister Bailey breached the *Cabinet Handbook* and the ministerial ICT policy, why will you not order the release of all private emails in Minister Bailey's mangocube6 account?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Because we have updated the *Cabinet Handbook* and the documents are now public records and they are being accessed through RTI like any other public documents.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** So, Premier, why will you not release these documents?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I have answered the question.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, I just went to great lengths to say that we cannot simply rephrase the question with added argument, inference or imputation, so you are directly straying against something I have just said. I ask you to either move on or to put a question that actually asks a new question rather than one that is repetitive.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** And from the SDS would be great.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Premier, why has Minister Bailey released emails from his keepqldnuclearfree private email account but will not release all the emails from the mangocube6 account?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I have answered that question.

**Ms BOYD:** I raise a point of order.

**CHAIR:** Member for Pine Rivers, what is your—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You asked that question in parliament a few weeks ago.

**Ms BOYD:** I am struggling to see how this actually relates to the SDS and the business before the committee. I ask that we move on.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, not only is this now repetitive; it is also straining to look at the question before the committee about whether we pass the budget in terms of this expenditure. I ask that you ask a question that is relevant to the question as to whether we should pass this expenditure.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I am simply trying to get to the answer—

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, I do not wish to receive commentary about the basic facts of the standing orders. Acquaint yourself with standing order 115 if you wish to continue.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I will go back to an answer that I received in relation to trade from the CEO of Trade & Investment Queensland and I will put another question to you. I refer again to question on notice No. 19 which showed TIQ spent almost \$290,000 of taxpayers' money on hospitality expenses. I note that in your answer you referred to food, but how much of that \$290,000 was on alcohol?

**Ms Greville:** I cannot give you that detail. As I am sure you understand, we have 23 locations around the world and in the course of our normal events, including managing some ministerial travel, we stage receptions, we have lunches, we have seminars and we provide whatever is the appropriate kind of hospitality at each of those. We do have the figures, which we have provided to you, but I do not have a breakdown of what proportion is spent on what.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Thank you. Through the Premier, I ask to have those figures as a question taken on notice.

**CHAIR:** The minister may take the question on notice. Premier, do you wish to take that question on notice?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Sure. That is about the breakdown? My understanding is that these are trade offices across 23 locations.

**CHAIR:** Just for clarification, only the minister or Premier can take a question on notice.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** And that is why I asked.

**CHAIR:** And that is why I am clarifying. Officers cannot take a question on notice and that is why I am addressing it to the Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is not a problem, but I am just saying that it might take a bit longer. We will have to talk to the Clerk about that because we have to get it from all the different trade offices.

**CHAIR:** We might not set the time line on that one at the end, but it is a question that the Premier has endeavoured to get back to us on after collating from the 23 trade offices.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Chair, do you mind if I come back to an earlier question that the Leader of the Opposition asked just to clarify?

**CHAIR:** Certainly, Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You were talking about the increase in the tariff to imports of chickpeas and lentils. I can also confirm that on 18 January 2018 and 23 March 2018 I wrote two letters to the Prime Minister about this issue as well, and I table those.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Premier. The documents being tabled are letters from the Premier to the Prime Minister. Is leave granted? Leave is granted. Does the member for Nanango have any further questions?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I have, yes. I will ask a question to the Premier and refer to the SDS at page 6 in relation to government advertising. Premier, I refer to your statement during Beef Week this year that there was a lot of misinformation around on the vegetation management laws and you were going to commission an advertising campaign to educate our farmers. Premier, how much funding has been allocated in the 2018-19 budget for an advertising campaign to tell farmers that they are wrong?

**CHAIR:** I did notice a mild imputation there. I once again say that if you could scan ahead through the questions and see that it is in accordance with standing order 115(b) in that the question should not contain any argument, inference or imputation.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will reword it.

**CHAIR:** No. It seems to be a tactic to once again delay things by putting forward—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** No tactics; just trying to ask a question, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango, I know this is a strategy to put forward something that is argument, inference or imputation and then to put it again with further argument, inference or imputation.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** It might be your strategy; we just want to ask questions.

**CHAIR:** It makes it a difficult process of getting through the estimates.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** There was some misinformation that was going around sectors of the farming community across Queensland to which I then said that I would like some information distributed to regional print. Unfortunately, it is in very small print that even my eyes cannot decipher. It is basically all of the regional papers. We will come back to you before the end of the session on that total.

**CHAIR:** That might be something that we can get a clearer—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I will take it on notice and if I can get it by the end of the session, I am happy to.

**CHAIR:** If we do not have that, then we might take it on notice at the end of the session.

**Ms BOYD:** Page 3 of the SDS references the department's role in supporting trade and investment. Will the Premier outline the trade and investment benefits of hosting the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member very much. It was very important that the Commonwealth Games were not just a great sporting event for Queensland but also that we did everything that we possibly could to capitalise on the people who were coming here for the Commonwealth Games and conduct a trade program that would be seen in a very positive light and link delegates coming here with opportunities to invest in Queensland or to support their trade expansion.

More than 2,500 people took part in Trade 2018, which comprised 32 events across the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns. Delegates from some of the fastest growing economies in the world were represented at the games, all eager to seek out new opportunities and see what Queensland has to offer. We attracted 38 international delegations from 26 countries including England, India, Canada, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Singapore, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. We even had representatives from the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, which represents more than 2.5 million companies across India. Economic modelling shows that the Commonwealth Games will generate additional exports and foreign direct investment of around \$488 million over the next four years.

My government is committed to making sure that taxpayers' investment in the Commonwealth Games reaps benefits for ordinary Queenslanders. Our investment in the games has delivered infrastructure that will help us compete as a major event powerhouse for generations. Just as importantly, the Commonwealth Games strengthened our ties with our neighbours and showed business partners exactly what we were capable of.

Early feedback from a survey of participants indicates that more than 80 per cent of attendees identified business opportunities through participation in the Trade 2018 program and nearly 80 per cent said that they had improved capability to expand their business. Even the Japanese minister for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games is keen to strengthen the ties that were developed during the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. One idea that I put to him when I caught up with him recently was how successful our trade program was and that perhaps they would like to consider doing something similar as part of the Olympics. I was also able to meet with the foreign affairs minister in Japan to talk to him about Queensland's expertise in managing and delivering major events.

We are continuing to maximise our games investment to create an enduring and transformative legacy for Queensland. In terms of our commitment to trade, one night we had a meeting with an investor at 11 o'clock. He was only here for a short period. We met from 11 o'clock until midnight. It does not matter what time of the day—breakfast or late into the evening: if it is about generating jobs for Queensland, we will do everything we possibly can.

**Ms RICHARDS:** With reference to the department's coordinating role in protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef, could the Premier please explain how the government's water quality investments are benefiting both the reef and landholders?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. I think everyone on the committee would appreciate how important our Great Barrier Reef is. In fact, I had the opportunity at the end of last week to attend the Great Barrier Reef Ministerial Forum. The federal minister, Josh Frydenberg, was there. Minister Leeanne Enoch, the Minister for the Great Barrier Reef, was there. I also attended that committee as Premier, because I believe that it is absolutely vital that we do everything that we can to address issues around climate change and that we address issues around water quality.

I also sought a commitment from that meeting that the next meeting would not be held in Brisbane or another capital city; we would hold the next meeting before the end of the year in a city adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef—at this stage I think it will be Townsville, Cairns or Mackay—and that we go out and look at the good work that is happening by many of our farmers and producers when it comes to stopping nutrient run-off and looking at what we are doing to ensure that the water quality is improving.

I note that the member for Nanango asked a question earlier about our vegetation management laws. The World Heritage Committee—UNESCO—noted that those laws had not passed. That was before the government introduced these laws just recently. The World Heritage Committee was critical in its 2017 report that that had not happened. I am very pleased that the Commonwealth is working well with the Queensland government in relation to water quality.

The Great Barrier Reef comprises more than 3,000 individual reefs and stretches some 2,600 kilometres. Tourism is vital for Queensland. Many people from around the world come here to see the Great Barrier Reef. I feel an enormous sense of pride in having the Great Barrier Reef on our doorstep. We also have a huge job to do whatever we can to protect the reef. There are some good signs in terms of the sea life. Turtle numbers and dugong numbers are increasing. I think further reports will be tabled in relation to that. At this meeting we were also able to deliver our updates on water quality. Those were discussed at length. Like I said, we will also be having that second meeting at the end of this year. I thank everyone who participated in that forum.

**CHAIR:** As the grandson of a sheep farmer, this question is important to me. Will the Premier outline the progress on wild dog cluster fencing and the benefits it is bringing to regional Queensland?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I love talking about wild dog fencing.

**CHAIR:** I love hearing about it.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is very important for my government, as it is for a very important industry out in the west. People can talk to you about their ideas. In government, you have the opportunity to bring about some action. What we are doing very clearly with wild dog fencing is bringing back the sheep industry in Queensland. Wool prices are currently going very well. They are increasing and, hopefully, we will see some good results come spring as well.

In 2015 my government committed a total of \$35.74 million for wild dog fencing—a mixture of grant and loan funding for farmers and producers. This has delivered fencing on more than 400 properties, stretching more than 7,000 kilometres—the rough equivalent of two round trips from Brisbane to Birdsville. It has protected more than 4.3 million hectares of land, helping more than 300 rural properties. It is predicted that the funding that we have provided will result in an additional 400,000 sheep, which is expected to generate \$5.7 million in direct shearing for rural Queensland. It is also predicted that an extra 45 full-time jobs will be created in the region, worth \$2.5 million each year. This investment has reinvigorated one of rural Queensland's greatest industries, the sheep and wool sector. Lambing rates have increased from less than 20 per cent to more than 90 per cent.

**CHAIR:** Hear, hear!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is an incredible statistic and one that everybody across government should be pleased about. While significant gains have been made, wild dogs remain a problem in Western Queensland. That is why we are continuing to provide funding to help the state's producers with cluster fencing.

Mr Chair, as you can see, we have brought about a program through talking to people—sitting around their tables and standing next to their fences and out in the paddocks—and we are seeing the work underway. I want to thank Mark O'Brien and Vaughan Johnson for the work they did as our wild dog commissioners. They worked together very cooperatively. Once again, that is another sign of different sides of politics coming together.

**Mr STEVENS:** A pair of wild dogs!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You can say that. I am not commenting.

**CHAIR:** Is that an inference against former members?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Honestly, when you are bringing back another industry that is important to Queensland, we should all be very proud.

**CHAIR:** I was on the agriculture committee when we went out there. It is a good process.

**Ms BOYD:** Will the Premier advise what action the government is taking to tackle domestic and family violence?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I know how much the member for Pine Rivers and everyone else on the committee feels about this very important issue. As I said, this is another good example of different sides of politics working together cooperatively—the *Not now, not ever* report that was handed down. I can state that 90 of the recommendations have been completed and the remaining 31 have commenced.

We have a record investment of \$328.9 million over six years. This year's budget commits \$8.1 million over four years to expand the specialist domestic violence courts in Townsville, including the circuit courts in Palm Island and Mount Isa. From all accounts, these specialist courts are doing very well. I think the evaluation in the near future will be very important to find out the further expansion that could happen. This builds on the permanent specialist DV court at Southport.

We are establishing seven new domestic and family violence shelters, the first in Queensland in more than 20 years. We have commenced integrated service response trials in Logan/Beenleigh, Mount Isa and Cherbourg. We are establishing eight high-risk teams to keep victims safe and hold perpetrators to account. We have appointed 24 additional specialist domestic and family violence police officers, bringing the total to 54 across the state. These police officers do very important work.

We know that even in the Magistrates Court where there are not specialist courts at the moment a large volume of their work is now related to domestic and family violence matters. I think the awareness has given women the courage to come forward and do something about it. We will see an increase in the number of issues coming before the courts, but this is because the awareness campaign is working. We recently renewed contracts for more than 50 domestic violence shelters and support services, with a \$133 million investment over five years.

When the *Not now, not ever* report was handed to me three years ago, we made a commitment to lead a major program of reform and to end domestic and family violence. The report highlighted that culture and attitudes inform and influence the decisions of bystanders to either intervene or ignore incidents of domestic and family violence. We are leading an engagement and communication program to create a society that takes a zero tolerance approach to domestic and family violence. Bystanders play an important role in helping victims and in leading the way for a Queensland free from domestic and family violence.

During Domestic and Family Violence Prevent Month, in May, I was pleased to launch a cultural change campaign seeking to inform, influence and inspire bystanders to help victims of domestic and family violence. I want to thank all of the newsreaders who teamed up with us for that campaign. It was great to have the support of not just television but all of the print media and the radio media across Queensland. It was everyone working together. All media mediums are helping to get this message out.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Would the Premier outline what work and activity has been undertaken as part of the final stages of the commemorations of the centenary of Anzac?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member very much for the question. I also want to thank my assistant minister, Jennifer Howard, for the work that she is doing in relation to veterans and the commemorations for the centenary of Anzac. We are committed to ensuring that Queenslanders of all ages have the opportunity to commemorate and learn about the important part the First World War played in the history of Queensland and Australia.

I want to state from the outset that on Saturday I had the opportunity to go to Maryborough, where a jointly commissioned memorial walk was opened. It was jointly funded by local, state and federal governments. The Prime Minister was there. The local mayor was there. I know that Bruce Saunders, our local member, has been working very hard on getting that up. I thought it was also very important to have there Brendan Nelson, the head of the Australian War Memorial. His words were especially moving. The War Memorial has now recognised that Duncan Chapman, from Maryborough, was the first person who set foot on Gallipoli.

To have him there to validate that—they have gone through all of the historical records—is incredibly important for Queensland, but it is also incredibly important for the Maryborough community and we acknowledge so many young people lost their lives. As part of the commemorations for Centenary of Anzac we have committed nearly \$50 million to a range of events and projects that started in 2014, ran through the Centenary of Anzac landings at Gallipoli in 2015, then the Western Front campaign in 2017 and 2018 and will conclude in 2019.

The cornerstone of these commemorations has been the restoration of Anzac Square in Brisbane. We have contributed \$16.4 million towards that project, with \$5 million of that invested in the 2017-18 financial year. Then, of course, 11 November this year is the scheduled date for the opening of the new Anzac Legacy Gallery to which the Queensland government is contributing \$7.6 million. That gallery, of course, is providing a permanent home for *Mephisto*, the German tank captured 100 years ago this week by Queensland soldiers. The other night I happened to see a flashback Channel 7 ran on that. The Queensland premier at the time, TJ Ryan, insisted that it should be brought back to Queensland. Today it is the last surviving example of the A7V tank in the world.

We have also invested \$7.4 million in the Q ANZAC 100: Memories for a New Generation program, delivered in partnership with the State Library of Queensland. It will help communities across Queensland identify, catalogue, conserve and showcase their local collection and stories. I think it is really important that we gather that as much as possible. We have committed \$2.25 million to commemorations for the Armistice Centenary in November this year. Statewide commemorations include a public art project, a project delivered with the Queensland Music Festival, digital projections and commemorative activities around Remembrance Day. We will be sending out information to all members of parliament and hopefully all the communities will get involved in this very significant event.

**CHAIR:** I climbed on *Mephisto* as a kid so I know it very well.

**Mr Stewart:** So did I.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes. It used to be at the Old Museum.

**CHAIR:** I call on the member for Ninderry.

**Mr PURDIE:** This question is to the Premier in relation to her appointment of Major General Stuart Smith as Townsville's community champion. How many written reports have you received from Major General Stuart Smith since his appointment on 25 January 2017 as your government's community champion for Townsville?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I have had, from memory, three personal meetings with him. In fact, the last meeting was just last week. Can I say from the outset, Major General Stuart Smith has provided me and the government with invaluable service, but also the way in which he has sought to engage the community and address—

**Mr PURDIE:** I was asking about the written reports. How many written reports have you received since his appointment in January?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I think, from memory, they come up through the department to my office, but I choose to meet with him personally.

**Mr PURDIE:** So none?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I would have to check that. I am saying I meet with him personally and he presents me with his report when I meet with him.

**Mr PURDIE:** So you have received no written report?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is not true.

**CHAIR:** Member for Ninderry.

**Mr PURDIE:** So how many written reports have you received?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I would have to go and check.

**CHAIR:** Member for Ninderry, the Premier has answered the question. I ask you to allow her to proceed to answer the question. If you have any further questions—

**Mr PURDIE:** Can the Premier take that question on notice?

**CHAIR:** Member for Ninderry, if you have any questions that you wish to put that are not repetitive you can put them.

**Mr PURDIE:** It is the same question. I just want an answer. Can I take it on notice?

**CHAIR:** Member for Ninderry, I am making a ruling about the way you should proceed if you could listen. If you have any follow-up questions after that. Member for Ninderry, you had a point to make?

**Mr O'CONNOR:** My question is to the Premier.

**CHAIR:** I call the member for Bonney.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** To the Premier: is this community champion based in Townsville and, if not, are the costs of his commute covered by Queensland taxpayers?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** He travels to Townsville. He spends time in Townsville. As I was trying to say in my answer before, he has great skills with his former duties as a major general in terms of the way in which he has sought to engage with that Townsville community. He wants the solutions to be community driven from the bottom up, not from the top down. I honestly believe that the way in which he has approached this issue in such a professional manner means that there will be long-term, community driven solutions—of course which will need implementation by local and state and maybe federal. The key point here is he has deliberately gone out, spoken with the service providers, spoken with the community membership, and they are coming up with a list of proposals which they will then present to the community leaders. This is not the leaders telling the community what to do, this is the community coming together and working together.

From memory I have definitely met with him twice. We will check whether there was a third time or not. Every time he has met with me he has given me a detailed report where he goes through at length and discusses with me the proposals that he has undertaken and the engagement that he has delivered. He is having another community forum in August. He has already had two large consultation events. The first was on 3 June with community members.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** He does travel from interstate and that travel is covered?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** He travels from Brisbane to Townsville, but he has spent time being a leader in that Townsville community. He is well known in the Townsville community. As I was saying, he has done two community consultations—one with the community and one with the service providers. The next forum will be in August with community leaders. As I said to you, it is about the community input generating solutions. He has provided me with some interim recommendations so far, but we are going to consider that in the broader context of the report that has been recently handed to government by former police commissioner Bob Atkinson. As I said to you, I have been so impressed with the way in which he has engaged with the community. He is well regarded by that community. He served in that community. I hope you are not criticising his appointment because I think he has—

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Just trying to—

**CHAIR:** Let the Premier complete her answer. I do not want to see interjections. Premier, you have the call.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you. I look forward to receiving his final report.

**CHAIR:** Member for Mermaid Beach?

**Mr STEVENS:** Thank you, Mr Chair. My question is to the Premier. I would ask the Premier why does Townsville need a community champion, which I assume was a captain's call by the Premier, as they call them, when you have three local members, including a cabinet minister? The taxpayer funded expense of the community champion could be well covered by the activities of those members?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. As I was trying to explain to your colleague, the member for Bonney, what I would like to say very clearly is that, yes, we have very strong leadership in Townsville. However, if you want community driven outcomes we decided that the best way forward is for someone who is independent of government to drive the community solutions, to hear from the community firsthand and he has put in place community consultations which, member for Mermaid Beach, you and I would not have conceived of before. This is a different way of doing things. He is very well regarded in that community. He has served in that community. I am very confident he will give a very clear report on those issues, which, of course, I will make public. Can I clarify I have had four meetings with the major general.

**CHAIR:** Member for Nanango?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question is to the Premier. Since the community champion has been appointed there have been a series of criminal acts undermining public confidence, including 58 assaults on police. Premier, don't the people of Townsville deserve a real champion, not a FIFO community champion, and isn't this further—

**Ms RICHARDS:** Point of order.

**CHAIR:** I am ruling that out of order with the inferences it contains.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** He is doing excellent work, Leader of the Opposition.

**CHAIR:** To equalise the time, the time has expired.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Hang on, Mr Chair. My understanding is that the opposition should get equal time of questions.

**CHAIR:** I agree, but you have had more than equal time.

**Ms BOYD:** You have had more than your share and you still cannot ask questions properly.

**Mr STEVENS:** In relation to the last block of questions there was a matter raised by the member for Ninderry that the Premier was going to answer on notice.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I just said I have had four meetings.

**Mr STEVENS:** The question was about how many written reports there were. You were going to provide an answer on notice.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, member for Mermaid Beach. I was making a ruling and I stopped the member for Ninderry from putting forward his point and then I asked the member for Ninderry to put forward a point and at that point the member for Bonney took over the questioning. At this stage we are going to the member for Redlands, but we do have the opportunity, if we do not have too many points of order, for the Premier to return to those answers and a few others. Member for Redlands?

**Ms RICHARDS:** With reference to page 3 of the SDS and the government's commitment to create jobs in a strong economy, will the Premier provide advice on how the government will invest in TAFE infrastructure in my local region of Redlands?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you very much. I thank the member very much for the question. Of course, investing in TAFE is very important, as we look at what are the skills that people need for the changing nature of the Queensland economy. Now having a dedicated Minister for Training and Skills Development I think we will see a big focus on what is happening in the local TAFE regions and what is going to be the training that complements that particular region. We are committed to ensuring that Queenslanders in the Redlands region and across the state have access in a strong economy.

We need to have training facilities that are up-to-date, attractive and flexible enough to deliver the emerging training needs of the future and that is why our Advancing Our Training Infrastructure plan is investing \$85 million in the redevelopment and refurbishment and expansion of six identified high-need TAFE facilities. Among these facilities, the member will be pleased to know, we are committed to \$10 million for the upgrading of the TAFE infrastructure in Redlands, an area experiencing considerable growth in the training sector. Many of the students and teachers who attend Alexandra Hills TAFE are locals and I am proud that your region is part of the first step in a long-term plan for the further revitalisation of training sites across Queensland.

We know that TAFE is the premium provider of training, in stark contrast to what happened under the LNP. When we were elected the TAFE system was in crisis. More than 2,100 staff had been sacked, I am advised, and \$63 million was cut from the budget across the state. The member will be further pleased to know that to ensure these vital infrastructure projects also provide training to the next generation of Queensland workers, all projects undertaken through the Advancing Our Training Infrastructure plan will comply with the Queensland government building and construction training policy. This means that 15 per cent of all the hours on revitalisation of TAFE in the Redlands region will be undertaken by apprentices and trainees. We are committed to creating jobs in a strong economy and further revitalisation of training infrastructure in the Redlands region and across the state is key to achieving this.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Great news for Redlanders, thank you.

**CHAIR:** In the remaining minute we have left, we brought up the advertisements in relation to the wild dog fence. You said you would endeavour to get some of the text.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Yes. In relation to the advertisements that were placed in the regional newspapers, the money that is allocated for that, and some of that has actually started, is around \$87,000. In relation to the major general's reports, I understand they are monthly reports provided to DPC and I have chosen to meet with the major general directly.

**CHAIR:** Further to that, the only remaining one was in relation to hospitality because it contains significant detail.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We are happy to take that on notice if the committee can bear with us in terms of the getting that information from the particular trade offices.

**CHAIR:** The time allocated for the consideration of the proposed expenditure for areas of responsibility administered by the Premier has now expired. We note the one question taken on notice by the Premier during this session. We have discussed that there are no further questions to be taken on notice. Answers to questions on notice are usually required by 10 am Friday, 27 July, but we had discussion about the considerable liaising required with the various trade offices. We note that the question on notice has been taken and we will not set a date but hope that the Premier can assist us with our consideration of the expenditure.

Thank you, Premier, officials and departmental officers for your attendance. The committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at two o'clock with the examination of the estimates of the portfolio areas of the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Thank you all.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Chair and members of the committee, if I could just thank you for your questions today. Could I also thank my director-general, Dave Stewart, my deputy director-general, Peter Nibbs, all of my staff, all of the DPC officials and all of the Public Service officers who have assisted today. Estimates are a vital part of examination of the budget. They are a vital part of the way in which the parliament gets the opportunity to ask ministers and the Premier questions. There is a lot of work that goes in and I do want to thank all of those officers who have been involved in many late hours, late nights, weekends, in preparing. I humbly thank them.

**CHAIR:** We will now adjourn until 2 pm.

**Proceedings suspended from 1.32 pm to 2.00 pm.**

**ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE—TREASURY  
AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARTNERSHIPS****In Attendance**

Hon. JA Trad, Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Mr M Bellaver, Chief of Staff

**Queensland Treasury**

Mr J Murphy, Under Treasurer

Ms A Rayner, Deputy Under Treasurer, Economics and Fiscal Coordination

**Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships**

Ms T Williams, Acting Director-General

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 **CHAIR:** Welcome, everyone. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the appropriation bills 2018 for the portfolio areas of the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. The committee will examine the Deputy Premier's portfolio areas until 6 pm and during that time proceedings will be suspended for a break between 4 pm and 4.15 pm. The visiting members are the member for Everton and the member for Maiwar.

I remind those present today that the hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preamble, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that the relevant issues can be fully explored and to ensure that there is adequate opportunity to address the questions from government and non-government members.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the Deputy Premier, the Under Treasurer, officials, departmental officers and, of course, members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials and advisers to identify themselves when first coming to the microphone to answer a question referred to them by the Deputy Premier or the Under Treasurer. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of Treasury and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Deputy Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

**Ms TRAD:** Thank you very much, Chair. Firstly, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this opening statement. I start by acknowledging that we meet on the land of Aboriginal people and I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to speak in more detail about the Queensland state budget, the Palaszczuk government's fourth and my first budget.

It is simple: this budget delivers for Queensland. It delivers the infrastructure, the industry support and attraction, and the front-line services that will help to grow and diversify our economy and meet the life needs of Queenslanders. It delivers continued sound economic management with continued strong growth, lower debt and unemployment levels than we inherited three years ago from the Newman LNP government and a rebounding in private sector investment in our economy. It delivers on each and every one of our election commitments—more than 500 in total—which respond to our economic and social needs as a state, now and into the future.

We are one of the fastest growing and the most decentralised states in the Commonwealth. In May this year we welcomed our five millionth Queenslanders. Queensland is growing and Queensland is changing. This budget responds to the challenges and harnesses the opportunities that both growth and change represent. Our \$45.8 billion infrastructure program over the next four years represents the biggest infrastructure spend since the 2011 flood recovery. We are investing in infrastructure because we know it drives our economy and makes Queensland a better place for people to live, work and raise their families.

The Palaszczuk Labor government's infrastructure investment is forecast to support 38,000 jobs in the 2018-19 year alone. We are getting on with the job of building the state's No. 1 project, Cross River Rail, without the support of the Turnbull government, because we know it will deliver better transport services, bust congestion in the south-east and unlock increased economic productivity and growth right across the state's economy.

This budget also supports the state's regions, with more than 65 per cent of total infrastructure funding in 2018-19 allocated outside the greater Brisbane region. There are significant job-generating projects right across our state—the Cairns Convention Centre, the North Queensland stadium, Rookwood Weir, the M1—as well as programs targeted specifically to supporting regional economies such as Works for Queensland and the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme; record budgets for Health and Education; \$5.5 billion in concessions to help with the cost of living; and significant investment in growing industries such as tourism, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy and research.

Our economy continues to successfully shift from the big economic gains of a never-before-seen resources boom that brought with it massive investment, big infrastructure, and jobs and wages growth. Since we came to office in 2015, more than 160,000 jobs have been created, with jobs growth in Queensland the second highest in the nation. In this budget we continue to direct our every effort to our No. 1 priority, jobs for Queenslanders. However, we must also continue to help communities navigate the challenges of change. This budget helps to meet those challenges head-on. It does what we said we would do.

One of the most critical investments in this budget is our additional \$239 million committed to Indigenous housing in remote communities. Providing funding for housing in remote communities is always important, but it is critical right now because it comes at a time when, disgracefully, the Turnbull government has walked away from its responsibilities and a 50-year standing tradition of providing funding for housing in remote Indigenous communities. As the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, I have been talking to communities about the devastating impact those cuts will have on health outcomes, overcrowding and the local economies in remote communities. In my role as Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, I am committed to closing the gap. In fact, all policymakers and all Australians should be committed to closing the gap between our first nations people and the wider population. This cannot happen without a roof over your head. It cannot happen without the prospect of a job.

This is just one example of the way that the Turnbull coalition government has let down and continues to let down Queensland. They are not giving us our fair share. Whether it is in education, health funding, remote Indigenous housing or the GST, it is clear that the coalition just does not care about Queensland. It is the Palaszczuk government that is stepping up to the plate. It is Labor that is delivering the infrastructure and front-line services that Queenslanders need. Chair and members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to present. I welcome questions regarding the 2018-19 Queensland state budget.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Deputy Premier. I note that before the break there was some question about the time periods spent on questions for non-government members and questions for government members. I wish to report that we did a quick calculation. I was aiming at a 50-50 split, but over 55 per cent of the time was spent on questions put forward by the non-government members. We now turn to questions. I call the member for Mermaid Beach and deputy chair.

**Mr STEVENS:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I defer to the shadow Treasurer.

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, it is the lifelong dream of many Queenslanders is to be a grey nomad. Some borrow and some even sell their homes to buy a campervan. Under the new motor vehicle duty on premium light passenger vehicles, is it true that a retiree buying a simple campervan such as this—

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton—

**Mr MANDER:** I seek leave to table this, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, the standing orders of the House still apply. I am disappointed that in your first question you seek to utilise a prop. I note that. Do you seriously wish to incorporate—

**Mr MANDER:** It is a very important prop, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** I note that you concede it is a prop. Let us move on and not continue in this manner. Member for Everton, your question has been put. Treasurer, do you have a response?

**Mr MANDER:** I have not finished the question, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** My apologies. I thought you had completed the question.

**Mr MANDER:** No, I have not. Treasurer, can you confirm that this vehicle will be slugged with extra thousands of dollars of tax because of your new tax?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. I can confirm that we took this additional revenue measure to the people of Queensland at the last election in November. I can confirm that all luxury vehicles over the price of \$100,000 will attract an additional levy. That was a commitment we made to the people of Queensland.

I understand that this affects some 0.05 per cent of vehicles that are purchased in Queensland and registered. We think this is a very modest additional revenue measure that, as I said, we took to the people of Queensland. I compare that to the additional revenue measures that were not put to the people of Queensland before the 2012 election but that were introduced in the first budget of the Newman LNP government, when we saw additional taxes or charges on Queenslanders that amounted to more than \$2 billion in additional revenue.

In comparison, where our additional revenue measures affect only one per cent of the Queensland population rather than every single Queensland household that takes out household insurance, we think our additional revenue measures are modest. They do not impact vast numbers of everyday Queenslanders. We think they are prudent and in line with expectations from the community around additional service provision.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, I note that you have further laminated props, which you have already conceded are props. I warn you against brandishing them around. If you wish to table a document, do not brandish it around before tabling it.

**Mr MANDER:** I take your point, Mr Chair. I seek leave to table a document.

**CHAIR:** I will look at it, thank you. Is there only one copy?

**Mr MANDER:** No, I have copies for everybody.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted? Leave is granted. My understanding is that you have tabled this before, in parliament?

**Mr MANDER:** Not to my recollection, no.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. Member for Everton, do you wish to proceed with your question?

**Mr MANDER:** I make reference to that tabled document, Mr Chair. This is a picture of a motorhome that is over 4.5 tonnes. It is so luxurious that a sports car can fit in the bottom of it. Treasurer, could you confirm that this luxury motorhome will not be captured by your new tax as it is over 4.5 tonnes?

**Ms TRAD:** I can confirm, as I said previously, that our additional revenue measures were taken to the people of Queensland at the last election. We made a commitment that we would implement those additional revenue measures in this budget, which is what we doing. However, I note that the additional revenue measures that were introduced by the former LNP government—more than \$2.6 billion of additional revenue measures—actually impacted on mums and dads in Queensland—

**Mr MANDER:** Point of order.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, what is your point of order?

**Mr MANDER:** It is a question of relevance. I asked a direct question: does the new premium light passenger vehicle duty apply to this luxurious campervan?

**CHAIR:** Thank you, member for Everton. The question has been put to the Treasurer. The Treasurer is answering the question.

**Ms TRAD:** I can confirm that, even though this vehicle is exempt because it is over 4.5 tonnes, this vehicle will attract much more significant registration generally because of its size. The owner will pay additional registration because of the type of vehicle it is and it is over 4.5 tonnes.

**Mr MANDER:** I direct my next question to the Under Treasurer. Under Treasurer, what modelling was undertaken to ascertain the impact of the grey nomad tax, as it is commonly called? Did it reveal that campervans less than 4.5 tonnes would be captured by the new tax?

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Member for Pine Rivers, what is your point of order?

**Ms BOYD:** In terms of the language that the member for Everton has used, I am confused by his question. For the benefit of Hansard and the Under Treasurer, the member for Everton should be referring to the tax by its actual name.

**CHAIR:** I think that is a reasonable point. Can you continue the question, but for the future has the Under Treasurer understood the question to be able to answer it?

**Mr Murphy:** Yes. Modelling was undertaken on the proposed tax for the government. That was looking at vehicle registrations and forecasting potential registrations into the future. From our modelling we found that there were around 1,500 total transactions for those types of vehicles in 2017-18. We did extensive modelling on this. The government was fully aware of the potential impact of the tax.

**Mr MANDER:** Did you consult with the peak body Caravanning Queensland about the impact of this new tax?

**Mr Murphy:** We do not usually consult with bodies in relation to tax measures. That is a matter for the government. Usually when you are imposing tax measures you do not consult with various bodies. You might have background information, but you do not directly consult with the bodies that the tax will be imposed upon.

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, did you or any of your staff consult with peak body Caravanning Queensland on the potential impact of this new tax on their members?

**Ms TRAD:** In relation to consultation that was conducted by myself or by members of my staff, I can confirm that there was no personal engagement. I understand that Treasury had engagement on 29 June. I will remind the honourable member that this was an additional revenue measure that we took to the people of Queensland—all Queenslanders—at the November election.

**CHAIR:** Are there any further questions?

**Mr MANDER:** Yes. Knowing now that this group has been impacted by this new tax—you might even describe it as an unintended consequence—can you make a commitment that you will exclude those campervans that are below 4.5 tonnes that many retirees save up for to fulfil one of their lifelong dreams? Can you say to this committee that you are now aware of these consequences and will exclude campervans under 4.5 tonnes from this tax?

**Ms TRAD:** I am a bit unsure as to why the member feels like a case has been made for their exemption. This is a vehicle type that has a purchase price of over \$100,000. The vehicle that the honourable member tabled a copy of is a vehicle that does attract additional registration duties because it is a larger vehicle. We took a commitment to the people of Queensland that where vehicles below 4.5 tonnes and over a purchase price of \$100,000 were bought they would attract an additional, modest levy in Queensland. That was a commitment we made to the people of Queensland in terms of an additional revenue measure.

As I have said, this is something that impacts 0.05 per cent of registrable vehicles in our state. It does not apply to heavy vehicles that are used for commercial, industrial or work purposes. These are vehicles that are bought out of choice and are worth more than \$100,000. We believe they should attract an additional, modest levy in order to provide revenue for the state to keep providing the roads, the hospitals, the schools, the maintenance—all of the things that the state needs to be provided as the responsible level of government for service provision.

**Mr MANDER:** You have no qualms about slugging retirees who save up for years to purchase one of these campervans?

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, the previous questions have strayed close to argument and this one certainly does. It is also repetitious. I ask you to move to a new question rather than simply repeating the same question. Member for Everton, I do not know whether you heard me say this this morning, but we need to move to new questions rather than simply put a question again.

**Mr MANDER:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I will move to the waste levy. My question is to the Under Treasurer. What modelling was undertaken to ascertain the impact the waste levy would have on Queensland families?

**Mr Murphy:** The way the waste levy is structured means it will not have any impact on households. The funding has been provided to local councils. There was no real need to model how it will impact the households.

**Mr MANDER:** The advice that you gave the government was that there would be no impact on families?

**CHAIR:** I think you have repeated the same question. Do you wish to move to a new question? That seems to be exactly the same question that has been put and answered.

**Mr MANDER:** Australian Industry Group Queensland head, Shane Rodgers, described the waste levy as a new tax on business in the state dressed up as an environmental initiative. With at least 30 per cent of the waste levy going straight into state coffers, is it not clear that Mr Rodgers is correct and this levy is just a massive tax grab?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. I think it is important to put in context the very clear necessity for the Queensland government to introduce the waste levy. We are the only jurisdiction in mainland Australia that does not have a waste levy.

As a result of the reckless and unthinking actions by the previous Newman LNP government when they removed the waste levy what we saw was the precipitation of commercial decisions by waste industry corporations from down south—from New South Wales and as far away as Victoria—that it was cheaper to transport their waste, particularly toxic waste, to Queensland and dump it for free than to actually dump it in their state and pay the waste levy. That is the perverted outcome of the decision taken by the Newman LNP government to get rid of the waste levy. I know that there are residents right throughout the South-East Queensland corner who are incredibly concerned about the escalation in dumping of waste in Queensland, particularly the residents of Ipswich. It was clear that something needed to be done.

The Palaszczuk Labor government instigated an inquiry into the massive increase in interstate rubbish dumping in Queensland and the results of that inquiry were quite clear. I recommend that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition takes the time to read that report because the No. 1 recommendation in that report was that Queensland introduce a waste levy to disincentivise interstate dumpers from making the commercial decision to bring their waste to Queensland and dump it for free. I think it is incredibly important that we protect our state from these sorts of, I think, perverted commercial decisions.

The waste levy, once it is up and running, will provide revenue to actually increase the capacity of the recycling and waste management industry in Queensland. It is about industry development and it is about jobs. It is about funding environmental programs in this state and it is also about compensating councils to the value of 105 per cent of the costs of their domestic waste management so that they do not pass on the waste levy to Queensland households within the waste levy zones. We think that this is an entirely sensible, practical measure that is long overdue, quite frankly.

More than 70 per cent of the revenue that will be raised through the waste levy will go to compensating councils, to environmental programs and to assisting the waste industry get up and running in Queensland. It is over \$100 million that we announced in this year's budget towards industry development.

I make the point that it is more critical now that we have the waste levy and that we get the waste industry—the recycling and management industry—up and running in Queensland as fast as possible because China has made the decision to stop importing recyclable waste from a number of neighbouring countries including Australia. This is not just a problem for Queensland; it is actually a problem for our nation. It needs to be tackled with national leadership. I think the measures taken by the Palaszczuk government in Queensland are sensible and practical but also incredibly important in terms of industry development and job creation.

**Mr MANDER:** I accept that; however, why have you slugged Queenslanders an extra \$400 million over the forward estimates? This goes beyond what you have just mentioned and will go straight into consolidated revenue? How do you justify that?

**CHAIR:** Has that question already been asked? Treasurer, do you want to answer it? Do you have something to add to that? I think that question was very similar to the previous question.

**Mr MANDER:** It is not a similar question. The Treasurer answered how the money would be spent on waste initiatives. She mentioned 70 per cent. Why have Queenslanders been slugged an extra 30 per cent—\$400 million?

**CHAIR:** Although the phrasing was different, the gist of it I thought was the same as your previous question.

**Mr MANDER:** It was not answered if it was.

**CHAIR:** The question was put and answered.

**Mr MANDER:** Point of order, Mr Chair: I did not ask that. This is a different question. Why have Queensland taxpayers been slugged an extra \$400 million beyond that?

**CHAIR:** This is not an opportunity to repeat the question.

**Ms TRAD:** I am very happy to answer the question, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** I just wanted to note that the point is not to ask a question, get a response—perhaps a response that you are not that happy with—and then rephrase the question with exactly the same meaning. If the Treasurer has some response, I am happy for her to proceed.

**Ms TRAD:** I will respond. As I said before, if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would read the expert report into the practice of interstate dumping he would see that the waste levy that we have proposed is consistent with the recommendation in the report. The levy set at that price is believed to be the right pressure point in terms of disincentivising interstate dumping. In terms of the actual levy itself, the levy has two purposes. Yes, it is to raise revenue, but, secondly, it is to disincentivise interstate dumping. To reduce the levy means that it is still an attractive commercial decision for interstate dumpers to come to Queensland to dump their rubbish for a lower cost than would be the cost in their home jurisdiction.

Secondly, in terms of the Consolidated Fund, I point out for the benefit for the shadow Treasury spokesperson that the Consolidated Fund is the fund that provides allocations to ensure our schools run, our teachers are paid, our hospitals run, our nurses are paid, our doctors are paid and our roads are built. The Consolidated Fund is not a slush fund. It is actually the place where we fund all of the critical services, infrastructure and programs that go to supporting our state and fine Queenslanders. I draw the opposition Treasury spokesperson's attention to that particular point.

**CHAIR:** I refer to page 25 of BP 2. What are the implications of Queensland's strong population growth on the need for infrastructure investment?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank you, Mr Chair, for the question. It is a very important question. I do note the comments from the outgoing CEO of Infrastructure Australia on the front page of the *Australian* today regarding the increasing population growth within Australia and that the need to match infrastructure delivery for that population growth is going to be key in terms of preserving our lifestyle and the quality of our life going forward to ensure that we are not caught in congestion that chokes our cities going forward. It is a critical question about how we deal with the growth in our population. As I said in my opening statement, we are one of the fastest growing populations in Australia and we are the most decentralised state. The combination of those two factors presents us with some pretty challenging issues to confront.

With our population growing over recent decades to more than five million, the Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering the right infrastructure projects in the right place at the right time to support our growing state. Population growth has been a key driver of economic growth and job creation in Queensland over recent decades, and Queensland is the most popular state in Australia for interstate migrants. The direct result of interstate migration has had a significant impact on the Queensland economy. With population forecasted to grow by 1¼ per cent each year over the forward estimates period, the Palaszczuk government is investing in productivity-enhancing infrastructure that will meet the needs of Queensland's growing population. This is evident in our significant \$45.8 billion Capital Works Program that we are delivering over the next four years out to 2021-22. This includes much needed additional investment in roads, rail, water, energy, hospitals, schools and digital infrastructure right across the state including substantial investment in regional Queensland.

In 2018-19 the government is investing \$11.6 billion in capital works. The Capital Works Program in 2018-19 includes a \$4.9 billion investment in roads and transport infrastructure, including funding for transformative programs such as Cross River Rail, the M1 Pacific Motorway upgrades, the Bruce Highway upgrades and the Mackay Ring Road. Delivering cost-effective, safe, secure and reliable energy and water supply across the state is another priority of the Palaszczuk government, with investments of \$2.2 billion and \$277 million in the energy and water portfolios respectively in 2018-19.

An almost \$1 billion investment in 2018-19 in our health system will see improvements in health infrastructure, hospitals, ambulance stations and vehicles, health technology, research and scientific services, as well as mental health services. This investment will ensure Queenslanders have access to a first-class healthcare system today and into the future.

An investment of \$674.3 million in 2018-19 in our education system will support improved educational outcomes in the context of our strong growing population and ongoing changes in educational needs. New state high schools will be built in the inner south and inner north of Brisbane, Coomera, Yarrabilba—

**CHAIR:** Hear, hear!

**Ms TRAD:**—Ripley, Calliope and Mango Hill. A new primary school is to be built at Ripley and a new special school is to be built at Caboolture.

The Palaszczuk government is also committed to investing in social infrastructure that benefits and protects the quality of life that Queensland continues to enjoy. In 2018-19, \$339.1 million is allocated towards the construction and the upgrade of social housing stock; \$55 million to refurbish, upgrade or replace police facilities; and \$107 million to provide additional cells at the Capricornia Correctional Centre. It is essential that a growing state plans for the future and provides the infrastructure needed to accommodate population growth. The Palaszczuk government's infrastructure program will generate jobs, drive economic growth, enhance the productive capacity of the state's businesses and industries, and improve the quality of life enjoyed by every Queensland family and community.

**CHAIR:** I refer to the Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3. Can the Deputy Premier please advise how the government's \$45.8 billion infrastructure spend will benefit Queensland's regional economies?

**Ms TRAD:** Thank you, Mr Chair, for the question. I want to repeat the comments made in my opening statement. I understand that the Premier has also made these comments. It is worth repeating because it is very important to understand that 65 per cent of our infrastructure spend will be spent outside the greater Brisbane area. This is critical in a decentralised state such as Queensland. It means that we will be supporting directly 25,000 jobs in the regions and outside the greater Brisbane region which is critical. It is also critical infrastructure that will ensure that our roads are maintained, that new roads are built and that we have the energy infrastructure, water infrastructure, schools, hospitals and social infrastructure projects right across Queensland for our growing population. It will help deliver better schools for our kids, better hospitals, better roads to get home quicker and more reliable, better energy infrastructure and water for households and businesses.

Our capital works investment in several key rural areas outside Brisbane means that in per capita terms the 2018-19 Capital Works Program represents an investment in essential infrastructure of \$2,500 per person outside the greater Brisbane area compared to around \$2,100 per capita in the greater Brisbane area. That is almost \$7.5 billion out of the \$11.6 billion infrastructure spend for 2018-19.

Key highlights in the 2018-19 capital program outside the greater Brisbane area include the \$534 million Toowoomba Second Range Crossing; more than \$200 million for the Bruce Highway to take it from four lanes to six lanes from Caloundra Road to the Sunshine Motorway; and our \$120 million allocation to the North Queensland Stadium. There is also \$75 million allocated towards the ongoing development at the ports of Townsville and Lucinda; \$66 million to commence construction of the Rookwood Weir; \$85 million as part of the Enhancing Regional Hospitals program, including \$40.1 million for the redevelopment of the Roma Hospital—again, it takes a Labor government to redevelop the Roma Hospital; and \$53 million as part of the rural and regional infrastructure package, including \$1.2 million for the redevelopment of the Blackall Hospital and \$20 million for the redevelopment of the Kingaroy Hospital.

The Palaszczuk Labor government recognises that investment in public infrastructure is a key driver of jobs growth, transformative change and private sector investment while enhancing communities right across our state.

**Ms BOYD:** I refer to page 3 of the Treasury SDS. Can the Deputy Premier please outline the progress of funding for the government's key infrastructure election commitments?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Pine Rivers for the question. Again, as has been remarked, it is critical that our infrastructure budget goes to delivering the right projects in the right places at the right time. There are a number of key infrastructure election commitments that we believe are about the priority infrastructure commitments that our communities need.

As I have remarked, our infrastructure program is the largest since the 2011 flood recovery effort. Our \$11.6 billion will support 38,000 jobs directly. We will be allocating \$570.8 million over six years as part of the \$679 million Building Better Hospitals package to enhance public hospital capacity and services in South-East Queensland, particularly along the growth corridors. What this means is expansions at the Logan Hospital, the Caboolture Hospital and the Ipswich Hospital.

Our \$308 million over six years for the Building Future Schools Fund brings total funding to more than \$800 million across seven years to deliver world-class learning environments for students and to address enrolment growth in state schools. When I went to Ferny Grove State School before the budget

to announce this new money, you could not take the smiles off the students' faces. They understand that better learning environments lead to more conducive learning and they are very, very excited about the government's investment in public school infrastructure.

We have allocated up to \$85 million over three years to expand and refurbish key high-need TAFE facilities at Pimlico in Townsville, Cairns, Mount Gravatt, Toowoomba and within regions of the Gold Coast and Redlands. I think that is very exciting in terms of our training agenda going forward.

We have \$88.6 million from 2017-18 to significantly expand park-and-ride capacity at Salisbury, Lawnton, Darra, Lindum, Geebung, Virginia and Springfield train stations and \$25.5 million for Greenbank and Eight Mile Plains bus stations. We have allocated \$53 million over five years for the Northern Transitway to deliver continuous dedicated bus lanes during peak hours from Chermside to Kedron while retaining all existing lanes and \$22 million for the Eastern Transitway, with upgrades to five major intersections located at Cavendish Road, Bennetts Road, Boundary Road, Gallipoli Road and Creek Road which will include bus priority measures on Old Cleveland Road. We have allocated \$20 million for the widening of the Mount Lindesay Highway to four lanes.

**CHAIR:** Hear, hear!

**Ms TRAD:** These works will also raise the road for flood proofing—a very important project.

**CHAIR:** Near Jimboomba.

**Ms TRAD:** Yes. Across Queensland we are delivering the public infrastructure we promised because it is the right infrastructure that our communities need at this particular time.

**Ms BOYD:** I refer to page 25 of Budget Paper No. 2. Can the Deputy Premier please detail Queensland's employment growth for 2017-18 and how it compares nationally?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Pine Rivers for the question. The most recent employment data did come out last week, so it is great to be able to talk about Queensland's very good efforts in the area of job creation. In the recent state budget Queensland's employment was forecast to grow by 2¾ per cent over the year to the June quarter 2018. This was in line with the Australian government forecast for national employment growth. ABS figures released last week confirmed this continued strength in Queensland's job market. The outcome for 2017-18 saw employment growth of three per cent, exceeding the forecast published in the state budget. Most importantly, this marked the fastest annual jobs growth in Queensland in more than a decade and clearly demonstrates the ongoing success of the Palaszczuk government's strong focus on creating jobs for Queenslanders.

Further, employment outcomes in Queensland were stronger than those nationally, which rose 2.6 per cent over the year to the June quarter 2018. It also compared favourably with jobs growth in most other jurisdictions. Last week's release of the latest employment data by the ABS also showed that an additional 62,700 trend jobs were created in Queensland in the past year alone, including 39,900 full-time positions. This brings the total jobs created since the election of the Palaszczuk Labor government to 162,300. That is equivalent to almost 4,000 new jobs each and every month.

The recent strong employment growth in Queensland has seen the state's trend participation rate increase to 65.8 per cent in June 2018 to be around its highest in more than three years. This highlights the extent to which, encouraged by improved job prospects, thousands of jobseekers have re-entered Queensland's labour market. In recent years employment growth has primarily been in the health and construction sectors. These increases reflect increasing demand for a range of health services across all age cohorts and the surge in residential construction activity, particularly apartments. Meanwhile, education and agriculture were also key contributors to employment growth in 2017-18.

According to the ABS Labour Force Survey, private sector employment in Queensland rose by a strong 4.7 per cent in 2017-18. In comparison, public sector employment across all three levels of government rose at a more modest 0.8 per cent. Encouragingly, ABS data suggests recent employment gains are more broad-based across a range of industries than previous jobs growth of a year or two prior. In particular, this includes promising signs for some labour intensive service sectors which were previously impacted by the soft household income growth experienced across the country.

Importantly, benefits of the government's economic plan and the resulting stronger labour market outcomes are now being shared across the regions, with solid employment growth in regional Queensland over the last year following several years of more subdued labour market conditions in some key regions. In fact, the area of Queensland that has the lowest unemployment level is Mackay, at some 3.8 per cent, which goes to show that there is a real increase in economic activity in some of our regional locations. As a result, we have seen a reduction in unemployment rates in many regional areas including Cairns, Mackay, Townsville and the outback, with the gap between regional and South-East Queensland unemployment rates having narrowed.

Our policies are working, and businesses and consumers are have enhanced confidence in the Queensland economy, but we are also aware that our work is not done yet. The Palaszczuk government will continue to implement our economic plan including our ongoing employment policy agenda to drive jobs growth and create opportunities for all Queenslanders to share in the benefits of a stronger growing economy.

**CHAIR:** Are there any non-government questions? I call the member for Everton.

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, I would like to go back to the waste levy. The Premier stated on 21 March that Queensland families would not pay this levy, and that is something that has just been confirmed by the Under Treasurer. Will you guarantee that Queenslanders will pay not one additional dollar due to the waste levy when they visit a local rubbish tip?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. What I can absolutely 100 per cent guarantee is that the Palaszczuk Labor government will up-front provide money to each and every single local authority within the waste levy zones—105 per cent of the cost of their domestic waste so that they do not pass on the waste levy. That is the Premier's guarantee to the people of Queensland and that is what we will deliver.

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, a similar question: can you guarantee that Queenslanders will not pay one additional dollar due to the waste levy when building a new home?

**Ms BOYD:** I have a point of order, Mr Chair, in terms of this line of questioning. I take you to standing order 236 regarding repetition and note that a number of the questions from the member for Everton are circulating around the same point.

**CHAIR:** I note that the first question was about going to the tip and the second one is about houses. There is a difference between the questions even though there is some repetition. I will give the Treasurer an opportunity to answer it.

**Mr MANDER:** Mr Chair, that is a frivolous point of order and it is wasting time today.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, leave that to me and my judgement about the point of order. There were similarities between the last three questions. There is obviously repetition in its tone. I do not think it was meant frivolously, but I have ruled that the Treasurer can answer the question.

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Everton for the question. Being one of those Queenslanders who has recently done some modifications around my home, I do understand that construction waste currently attracts a charge. You hire a skip, you pay for the skip and you pay for the management of the stuff that you put in the skip. That is the way it works. The waste levy is also about changing behaviour. I can say from talking to those in the construction industry that there are some really exciting, innovative ways that they are looking at both recycling construction waste and building better to reduce waste in construction and home renovations. I think this is a very exciting change in behaviour that we should encourage and something that the waste levy will encourage. What it does is grow industry capacity to deal with the waste—to take the waste, to recycle it and to manage it in a better way.

When we demolished the Goprint site, more than 90 per cent of the products that were demolished were recycled. That is best practice, and that is what we are trying to encourage through the waste levy. The alternative is what the LNP presided over and fostered after it won government in 2012 which is a free-for-all which led to people interstate bringing their construction waste—and in some circumstances toxic construction waste—to Queensland. I am not sure whether the member saw some of the media commentary around the Barangaroo redevelopment and some of the toxic waste coming up from Barangaroo to Queensland to be dumped for free. We need to change behaviour. Justice Lyons gave us a very compelling report—and I encourage the honourable member to read that report—about how we manage interstate dumping which got out of control because of the policy decisions made by his government when he was in power.

**Mr BERKMAN:** My question is for the Treasurer and refers to table C.2 in Budget Paper No. 2 which sets out the budget's assumptions underlying the coal royalty figures. As I understand it, it is a projection that covers both thermal and coking coal. My question for the Treasurer is: does that projection include an assumption that the Adani mine or any other mines in the Galilee Basin will go ahead?

**Ms TRAD:** No. We do not assume on projects that have not proceeded.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Treasurer, can you advise the committee in broad terms what assumptions underlie those projections such as where the coal comes from and how it is split, for example, between metallurgical and thermal coal?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the honourable member for the question. If he is referring to table C.2, which I understand is what he is referring to—

**Mr BERKMAN:** That is right.

**Ms TRAD:**—then he will see that the differences in the coal are outlined and disaggregated. There is hard coking coal, there is semisoft and there is thermal. We do not forecast for projects that are not underway. These are forecasts of tonnage based on what is currently in production and what we know to be production that is due for expansion. It is not based on anything other than what we know to be true at the particular point in time.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Can I ask a point of clarification, Mr Chair?

**CHAIR:** No, we might proceed to other members' questions.

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, if I could move to the third of five new taxes. Is it correct that absentee Queensland landowners will be charged a higher rate of land tax than foreign companies?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. I think the absentee additional land tax is quite clear. Again, it was an additional measure that we took to the people of Queensland. The combination of all of our additional revenue measures impact one per cent of the Queensland population. If a Queenslanders decides to live abroad for more than six months—and many do—and they have landholdings that are over \$10 million then they will attract an additional 0.5 per cent in terms of land tax.

**Mr MANDER:** I do not think that figure is correct, Treasurer.

**CHAIR:** There is no question there, member for Everton. I counsel you against making—

**Mr MANDER:** I am about to ask a follow-up question. The Treasurer has just made a mistake and I want to give her a chance to correct it.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, if you have another question to put, I would put the question.

**Ms TRAD:** I will clarify because the member for Everton I think has asked about absentee additional charges which were introduced in last year's budget. The additional revenue measure which was in the preamble to the member's question was about the taxes or the additional charges introduced in this budget. That was the additional land tax of 0.5 per cent on landholdings above \$10 million. I seek clarification: is the member asking about the absentee tax which was introduced in last budget or this year's additional surcharge on \$10 million worth of property or more?

**CHAIR:** For clarification, the question that you put seemed to reference last year's and this year's budget—

**Mr MANDER:** I am asking a pretty straightforward question, Mr Chair. Do Queensland absentee landowners pay more land tax than a foreign company?

**CHAIR:** You have already answered that question so he is just restating it.

**Ms TRAD:** If the honourable member is referring to the additional measure that was introduced in last year's budget, that is an additional measure that has been around for more than a year now. If the Under Treasurer has anything else to add to that, I would invite him to do so but otherwise I am happy to go to the next question.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, do you have a further question to ask?

**Mr MANDER:** So is that 'yes'?

**Ms TRAD:** Mr Chair, I am not sure what examples the member for Everton is drawing upon. If he has specific examples that he would like to table, I am happy to have a look at them but I think he is confusing the absentee surcharge which came in in last budget and the additional foreign duty levy which came in in this year's budget. If he can clarify which one he is talking about and if he can present some examples, I am very happy to have a look at them.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, if you had a concrete example which the Treasurer and Under Treasurer could address, that might clarify which initiative you are seeking—

**Mr MANDER:** I am referring to the Queensland government website under absentee tax. It talks about rates for companies, trustees and absentees. Then there is a preamble talking about the taxable value of land for companies, trustees and absentees. If you were considered an absentee halfway through at 30 June 2017 an additional surcharge will apply, so my question is referring to that. Does that mean that absentee Queensland landowners pay more land tax than a foreign company?

**Ms TRAD:** For the benefit of the member for Everton, an absentee under the land tax act is a person who does not ordinarily reside in Australia including a person who is absent from Australia at 30 June or has been absent from Australia for more than six months, as I said in the original response. The concept of an absentee has been a part of Queensland's land tax legislation for many years and its existence can be traced back as early as 1935. The government's 1.5 per cent land tax surcharge applies to absentees who are liable for land tax if the value of their taxable landholdings is \$350,000 or higher. The surcharge applies to land tax assessments from 2017-18 and is expected to generate \$20 million in 2017-18. For example, if the taxable value of the absentee's landholdings subject to land tax is \$750,000, the surcharge will apply to the amount calculated as \$750,000 less \$349,999.

The surcharge applies to absentees and is in addition to the current land tax rates for absentees, companies and trustees. There is a reasonable basis for introducing this modest surcharge to apply to absentees. The surcharge ensures that absentee owners of land are making a fair contribution towards taxes that are used to deliver and maintain high standards of service and infrastructure in Queensland.

Absentee owners benefit, such as through the capital appreciation of their landholdings, from the high standard of services and infrastructure delivered and maintained by a broad range of taxes in Queensland borne by resident taxpayers. Resident Queensland persons who are liable for land tax are not affected by the surcharge and continue to benefit from the higher tax-free threshold and lower land tax rates applying to individuals.

**Mr MANDER:** Thank you for that confirmation—

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton—

**Mr MANDER:** I had not asked the question yet, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** No, but you were beginning to make commentary.

**Mr MANDER:** I was being polite and thanking the Treasurer for her response.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, you were about to make commentary on the Treasurer's answer.

**Mr MANDER:** I was acknowledging the confirmation that extra duty is paid.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, you do not have the call. I would ask you not to make any commentary on the answers of the Treasurer. The questions will be put and the Treasurer shall answer. If you have another question, you have the call.

**Mr MANDER:** Will a member of the Defence Force who is deployed overseas for more than six months be captured under the absentee land tax?

**Ms TRAD:** I will have to understand whether or not there are exemptions for ADF personnel so I will take that on notice.

**Mr MANDER:** I have a question to the Under Treasurer. Under Treasurer, was there any analysis conducted of the impact of the land tax increases on the tenants of commercial properties, particularly with regard to the leasing cost or the impact it might have on their leasing cost?

**Mr Murphy:** All taxes before they are put to the government—we put a range of possible taxes. We would do some modelling in terms of commercial property. On this tax it was for foreign acquiso—\$10 million—so, yes, there would have been proposals put and forecasts of potential revenue gains from taxation of that proposal.

**Mr MANDER:** And the impact that that would have?

**Mr Murphy:** Well, it would show the impact on the cost of business for those companies.

**CHAIR:** You cannot put the question recasting the definition of modelling the same in different words. Could we have new questions rather than repetitive ones?

**Mr MANDER:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I will move on to the next tax that was introduced in this year's budget. Treasurer, the racing industry is really struggling at the moment in a whole range of different ways. Can you advise what percentage of the \$367 million that will come from the point-of-consumption tax on net wagering will go towards supporting the racing industry?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I will remind the member that at the time of the budget I did announce that there would be a delay in the commencement of the point-of-consumption tax. That was so that consultation can occur with the gaming industry, and that consultation is underway. I do note that Queensland is only one of quite a number of jurisdictions in Australia that is introducing a point-of-consumption wagering tax. That is to ensure primarily that those who bet on Queensland products from outside Queensland actually pay their fair share in terms of gaming taxes. Whatever is hypothecated back to the gaming industry will be something that we undertake in consultation with them.

I do note, however, that the Palaszczuk Labor government has already made significant investments in the gambling and racing industry. There is \$70 million allocated to country racing. We have invested significantly in integrity measures and fixing up greyhound racing. There have been a number of interventions already and a number of allocations already by the Palaszczuk government to the actual racing industry.

Proceeding with the point-of-consumption tax will be done in collaboration with the gaming industry. We understand how important this industry is, particularly to regional communities. For some regional communities, the racing heat is the biggest thing that happens in town each and every year. That is why the Palaszczuk government committed that \$70 million to country racing, to make sure that it has a bright future in Queensland.

**CHAIR:** Are there any further questions from those on my left?

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, can you commit to matching the New South Wales government's commitment to return 40 per cent of their point-of-consumption wagering tax back to the industry?

**Ms TRAD:** Through you, Mr Chair, I do thank the member for the question, but when determining policies for Queensland I will not be looking to New South Wales; I will be looking to Queensland and Queenslanders. I will be talking to the racing and gaming sector here in Queensland before going across the border to New South Wales to just copy what the coalition government in New South Wales is doing.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Treasurer. I now call upon the member for Redlands to ask some questions.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I refer to page 11 of the Treasury SDS. Can the Deputy Premier please outline the benefits for small business in extending the 50 per cent payroll tax rebate for wages paid to apprentices and trainees to 30 June 2019?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Redlands for the question. The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to addressing youth unemployment and building Queensland's skills base, particularly in regional Queensland. Support for Queensland jobs is this government's No. 1 priority. We know small business is vital to the success of our economy, and many Queensland jobs rely on them. I myself grew up in a small business family.

Queensland's payroll tax rate is already the lowest in the country. Consistent with our continued focus on job creation, we invested \$26 million in this year's budget to extend the 50 per cent payroll tax rebate for a further 12 months, to June 2019. The rebate will not only continue to provide tax relief for businesses; it is expected to support the employment of up to 26,000 apprentices and trainees throughout the year. The government is committed to maintaining Queensland's highly skilled workforce now and into the future. Through providing payroll tax relief, small businesses can give a start to young Queenslanders who are looking to get ahead in the job market. The payroll tax apprentice and trainee rebate supports the ongoing development of Queensland's skills, particularly for the state's youth. It assists employers grow their businesses while also helping to build the number of qualified and skilled Queenslanders.

From 1 July 2015, the government introduced a rebate of 25 per cent of the tax that would be payable on the wages of apprentices and trainees. From 1 July 2016, the rebate was increased to 50 per cent. Since its introduction, a total of 4,781 businesses have claimed the rebate, with a total rebate value of more than \$51 million as at 11 June this year. Over 60 per cent of the total rebate value has been provided to businesses outside of Brisbane—that is, 60 per cent of the rebatable value has been provided to businesses outside of Brisbane. That is a great story for those regional economies and regional workers.

Queensland boasts a highly competitive tax regime with an overall payroll tax rate of 4.75 per cent and the highest exemption threshold of any mainland state at \$1.1 million. While wages paid to eligible apprentices and trainees are generally already exempt from payroll tax, employers can still claim a very generous rebate based on the total exempt wages bill of apprentices and trainees they employ.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I refer to page 109 of Budget Paper No. 4. Can the Deputy Premier please advise how the expansion of the Jobs and Regional Growth Fund will help to create employment and economic growth in regional Queensland?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. This is actually quite an exciting program because it does go to addressing our No. 1 priority, and that is jobs for Queenslanders. The Jobs and Regional Growth Fund is designed to back Queensland businesses and projects that will generate

economic development and employment outside of the South-East Queensland corner. The \$150 million fund encourages sectors, including agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and construction, to develop plans and projects that will grow their operations.

Boosted by \$20 million in this year's budget, the fund supports regional growth and job creation by leveraging additional investment in the region and assisting businesses to grow and expand. The government is committed to ensuring the benefits from Queensland's continued economic growth are felt right across the state, which is why the fund specifically focuses on regional areas and areas with unemployment rates higher than the state average. The fund provides one-off financial assistance ranging from \$100,000 to over \$10 million in either direct grants or relief of state charges, including payroll tax and stamp duty. Financial assistance under the Jobs and Regional Growth Fund is linked to the achievement of clearly defined outcomes and specific milestones—for example, the number of additional jobs to be created.

Assistance we have announced so far includes a commitment of \$2.4 million to Hawker Pacific in Cairns to expand its hangar facilities. Hawker Pacific's \$4.5 million expansion will help the business receive more heavy maintenance work from around Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific nations. By keeping the work in Australia, the company expects to engage an additional 39 workers as well as create 50 jobs during construction.

I actually visited the Hawker Pacific operations in Cairns at the end of May to see how the investment was going. This business is just going gangbusters. The look on the faces of those new apprentices in the Cairns region who had been employed was priceless. It was fantastic to see that these young blokes were actually excited about their future economic prospects, and that is because we are backing businesses in regional Queensland that have fantastic opportunities to grow and expand and to bring on more Queensland workers into their operations. We are very excited about this.

Last year, we also backed the \$100 million expansion of the Swickers bacon factory at Kingaroy and its sister facility Sunpork Commercial Piggeries near Chinchilla. It is again a wonderful example of a Queensland company capitalising on changing markets and growth opportunities. There are quite a number of similar stories right throughout the state. I am very pleased to have made an additional contribution to the Jobs and Regional Growth Fund because we know that it backs Queensland businesses and it backs Queensland jobs.

**CHAIR:** Can the Deputy Premier please outline the benefits of the Cross River Rail project to the whole of South-East Queensland?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. We do know that, in terms of the growth in our population and in terms of the fact that South-East Queensland is the largest conurbation in the nation, dealing with congestion and dealing with additional transport movements right throughout the south-east is going to be a key infrastructure concern for this government and future governments for many decades to come.

I am very pleased to inform the committee of the benefits of Cross River Rail, because it will actually bust congestion. It will mean transport times right across the South-East Queensland rail network will be faster and more convenient. It will contribute to the economic life of our state, our economy, for the next 30 years. There has been an estimation around that of some \$40 billion return back to our economy. It will improve our quality of life, it will help our economy to keep growing, it will generate thousands of jobs and it will activate urban development across the whole of South-East Queensland.

Our population is increasing, and that puts pressure on our transport network. The region's population is expected to grow to almost five million by 2036, with over 80 per cent of that growth occurring outside the Brisbane City local government area but 45 per cent of all jobs growth being inside the Brisbane local government area. This means we have some pretty big challenges when it comes to transporting workers into work and back home. Our rail network is constrained at the inner core of the Brisbane CBD area because all trains pass through the centre of the system at one location. This causes a bottleneck that limits our ability to run more trains or improve public transport by enabling a more frequent service level. Cross River Rail will unlock this bottleneck, allowing more trains to run more often. It will enable a turn-up-and-go public transport system across the entire South-East Queensland region, encouraging more road users to use trains instead and helping to ease congestion pressure on our key arterial roads.

On the Gold Coast, the population is expected to grow by 350,000 Queenslanders over the next 25 years. The Beenleigh-Gold Coast sector has experienced a 5.9 per cent growth rate per annum since 2015, with four out of six morning peak services with fully seated loads. Cross River Rail will mean better connectivity and more opportunities for local jobs, businesses and tourism growth on the Gold Coast. Planning is underway for the three new stations this government promised for the Gold Coast line, but the full benefits of the new stations can only be fully realised with Cross River Rail. The Sunshine Coast population is set to rise to almost 453,000 Queenslanders by 2036. Cross River Rail will enable much higher service frequency to support strong projected growth in population and rail patronage.

Cross River Rail will also be one of Queensland's most important job-generating projects, supporting employment and economic growth now during construction and for decades after it opens. During the construction phase, Cross River Rail will generate an average of 1,500 jobs per year and almost 3,000 during the most intensive years of construction. Cross River Rail will open new career pathways for a generation of young Queenslanders by supporting 450 opportunities for apprentices and trainees.

Cross River Rail's four new and two upgraded stations will revitalise these inner-city precincts, helping to transform Brisbane and the entire region. On 6 May I announced \$5 million for the Delivery Authority and Building Queensland to jointly develop the Brisbane Live business case, honouring our election commitment in relation to this proposal. Preparing a business case is an important step in analysing the project's potential to deliver significant economic benefits and opportunities. At Boggo Road, there is an unprecedented opportunity to develop a new health, science and education superprecinct serviced by integrated bus, train and Brisbane Metro services. Creating better connectivity to other transport services, including the busway, the new Woolloongabba high-capacity train station will help transform event-day experiences at the Gabba, providing a perfect opportunity for a greatly enhanced station-to-stadium connection.

These are just some of the benefits Cross River Rail will help to generate as our region's population grows. That is why we are getting on with the job of building Cross River Rail, despite the absolute absence of the Turnbull coalition government's commitment to this project. I do note that they have committed to a number of projects in other jurisdictions.

As recently as last week the Turnbull government was out in the media—both the Prime Minister himself and the cities minister, Paul Fletcher, talking about the need for heavy rail to do the heavy lifting when it comes to the running of cities. They chose Melbourne to make that announcement and to talk about the importance of heavy rail, not the South-East Queensland corner where they have been completely absent from the heavy rail discussion that we know is critical and important for the South-East Queensland corner and for our economy more broadly.

**CHAIR:** Can you let us know what progress has been made on the Cross River Rail project? Also what are the next milestones for the project that we should be aware of?

**Ms TRAD:** I think it is quite exciting when we take stock of how far we have come and how fast. It was, in fact, only in last year's budget that we announced we would be fully funding this project and going it alone because of the absence of the federal Turnbull government's commitment to the project. I will talk to the project's progress first and then provide an overview of the upcoming milestones.

We are making growth progress in the delivery of Cross River Rail. During the past 12 months the delivery authority commenced a program of early works, which started in August last year—in 2017. That was only a matter of months after the commitment to fully fund. This included demolition works and geotechnical investigations. Along with subsurface surveying, over 60 bore holes have been drilled at locations along the rail corridor from Dutton Park to Bowen Hills.

Demolition of the Goprint building at Woolloongabba was completed in February 2018, and I did remark on the recycling and the reuse of some of that demolished material in my earlier answer. The procurement process for the two major packages of work—the rail integration systems, or the RIS, alliance and the tunnel stations and development, TSD, public-private partnership—began in August last year. In February I announced a high-quality short-list of companies to prepare bids for these significant contracts, and I am very excited about the calibre of the short-list. Five consortia are bidding for these two packages of work by developing detailed bids. This means there are literally hundreds of engineers, architects, quantity surveyors, financial analysts and stakeholder engagement professionals working through the project details on the bid teams.

In May this year I announced the \$5 million commitment to develop the business case for Brisbane Live, the 18,000-seat arena complex brought to government by AEG Ogden through a market-led proposal. The business case is due to go to government in October this year. Last month I announced the Brisbane Transit Centre would be demolished to make way for the new Cross River Rail underground Roma Street station and associated Brisbane Live proposal. The delivery authority has also started early planning for the three new Gold Coast stations we announced as an election commitment in November last year.

With \$733 million committed in this year's state budget there are many more significant project milestones ahead. Earlier this month, on 6 July, we announced the awarding of a \$4.52 million contract to demolish the Land Centre building and the old South Brisbane Dental Hospital to DECC Pty Ltd. Large-scale demolition experts DECC have a team of 30 here in Queensland. Previously, DECC removed the old law court buildings in Brisbane's CBD, the Herston quarter, Petrie paper mill and the Grand Central Toowoomba shopping centre.

Once site preparations are complete at the Woolloongabba site, the heavy demolition works will begin in September this year with major construction activities to begin later next year. When construction starts, this location will house the tunnel-boring machines used to dig the twin tunnels under the river and through the CBD. Works to relocate the Brisbane coach terminal currently located within the Brisbane Transit Centre to platform 10 of the existing Roma Street station will start in September.

One of the most significant milestones for the project is the awarding of the major works contracts. The rail integration and systems alliance will reach the preferred contractors stage in late 2018—that is later this year—and the tunnel stations and development of public-private partnership by mid-2019. These two packages being tendered by a strong field of national and multinational companies will clear the path for major construction works to start in late 2019.

Cross River Rail's four new and two upgraded stations operational by 2024 will generate unique opportunities for urban renewal, economic development and the revitalisation of inner-city precincts creating jobs and growth well into the future. For example, at Roma Street improved transport capacity and connectivity will help transform one of the CBD's most underutilised areas into a thriving new precinct. The new underground station at Albert Street will be Brisbane's first inner-city train station for over 120 years, improving connectivity to the southern part of the CBD.

The station will become the main pedestrian feeder point for QUT's Garden Point campus, the parliamentary precinct including 1 William Street, the new Queen's Wharf development, the upgraded Eagle Street business district and the city's Botanic Gardens. The full capital funding for the three new Gold Coast stations will be made available to ensure they are completed and operational in 2023 in time for the first services on Cross River Rail to the Gold Coast. Following a five-year construction phase, Cross River Rail will be operational by 2024. I look forward to updating Queenslanders on Cross River Rail's progress moving forward.

**CHAIR:** I look forward to one day taking the train to parliament. Do any other members have any other questions?

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, I have another question about the point of consumption tax, the wagering tax. You have set the tax-free threshold at \$300,000 compared to New South Wales and Victoria, which is at a million dollars. Could you advise how many on course bookmakers will be picked up in this new tax?

**Ms TRAD:** My advice is that most of them, but I will see if the actual figure is available. The threshold has been set at a limit which we believe excludes most on course bookies.

**Mr MANDER:** You said 'most of them' initially. Most of them would be included or excluded?

**Ms TRAD:** Excluded.

**Mr MANDER:** I have a question to the Under Treasurer. Could you advise us about any modelling that was done on any of the new taxes with regard to their impact on jobs?

**Mr Murphy:** Impact on jobs? You have five new taxes. I think it is made clear that the waste levy will generate jobs. Foreign duty—I cannot see where that would affect jobs in terms of the increased levy on properties held over \$10 million. In terms of the land tax—I cannot see how that will have an impact. Looking at the motor vehicle registration, I cannot see how that is going to have any particular impact on motor vehicle sales. In terms of the point of consumption tax, betting tax, again, because of

the way that has been designed I do not see how that is going to affect jobs in relation to the racing industry because we have made sure there has been extensive consultation with the racing industry to ensure that they can continue to be viable in terms of the support they get from government.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, do you have any further questions?

**Mr MANDER:** Yes I do. Under Treasurer, is that your opinion, or was there formal modelling done?

**Mr Murphy:** No, not my opinion. It would be when we researched and looked at the impact of these taxes; that is what modelling is about. It is whether we need to do any particular projections or forecasts. That would be from looking at the industry and how it impacts on the tax as to whether we thought we needed to do any further work. That would be Treasury's view: it would not have any significant or any impact on job creation in those areas.

**Ms TRAD:** Just to add to the Under Treasurer, for example, I will make the point that one year's revenue raised from the premium motor vehicle duty is similar to that which we are allocating to the Jobs and Regional Growth Fund that I talked about extensively to the committee. By raising these revenues through these modest additional measures we can do the things that we know will stimulate local economies and grow jobs like Hawker Pacific in Cairns taking on 35 additional employees, a lot of them apprentices and trainees. These additional revenue measures will support industry attraction and development, which is so key to diversifying our economy and growing jobs.

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, I draw your attention to page 48 of Budget Paper No. 2 and in particular the fiscal principles. Fiscal principle 1 states—

Target ongoing reductions in Queensland's relative debt burden, as measured by the General Government debt to revenue ratio.

Treasurer, despite this principle, the debt-to-revenue ratio is projected to climb every year in the forwards from 54 per cent to 68 per cent. Will you confirm that you have abandoned your government's fiscal principle and given up any hope of retrieving Queensland's AAA credit rating that was lost under the Labor Bligh government?

**Ms TRAD:** I do thank the member for Everton for his question. I will say that in terms of the debt-to-revenue ratio it is in a much better state under Labor than what we inherited from the former Newman LNP government when the debt-to-revenue ratio was—correct me if I am wrong, Jim—close to 91 per cent.

**Mr Murphy:** Yes.

**Ms TRAD:** It is now our fiscal principle to ensure that debt to revenue remains at a much lower level, and we have managed to reduce it quite significantly in 2017-18 to 58 per cent. As you can see by the forward estimates forecasts, we are expecting it to increase to 66 per cent by 2021; but it is nowhere near the 91 per cent debt-to-revenue ratio that we inherited from the Newman LNP government.

**Mr MANDER:** But it is increasing; it is not reducing.

**Ms TRAD:** I will remind the committee that, in fact, on all of the metrics, debt under Labor is much better than what we inherited from the Newman LNP government. Whether that is debt to revenue, whether it is debt in actual terms, whether it is the cost of actually servicing our debt, it is much better than what we inherited from the former Newman LNP government. We saw the cost of borrowings that we inherited from the Newman LNP government at 4.7 per cent. We have reduced that to less than three per cent. In terms of actual debt, we have reduced that significantly. We know that our borrowings over the forward estimates are about meeting the infrastructure needs of our growing population.

I will remark for the benefit of the committee that some of our borrowings may have been unnecessary if the Turnbull government actually came to the party and funded important projects like the M1 upgrade or Cross River Rail when they should have. We know, for example, that the M1 upgrades that the Turnbull coalition government made a big song and dance about funding will not actually materialise. Some 80 per cent of the funding that they committed will not materialise for another five years, for another five budgets—not for another two elections. It is off on the never-never. I think Queenslanders deserve better than that. Our borrowings are stable. Our borrowings are sustainable and they are about building the infrastructure our growing population needs.

I do want to mention for the benefit of the committee that I have not heard any alternative from the LNP at a state level. In fact, in the lead-up to the budget when asked on radio what their plan to reduce debt was, I do know that it was the honourable member for Everton who said, 'It is 2½ years away from the next election. We don't know what the debt levels will be and we don't know what the financial situation would be at that time.'

**Mr MANDER:** True, true, true. True on all fronts.

**Ms TRAD:** It would be crazy for us to come out with a detailed plan on how we are going to reduce the debt at this stage without knowing all those figures.

**Mr MANDER:** True on all fronts. Thank you, Treasurer.

**Ms TRAD:** Mr Chair, I do not think that is a responsible position for a party that holds itself out to be the alternative government. For them to sit there and comment about debt but, when questioned themselves, say that it would be crazy for them to have any sort of idea about how to manage debt is a very hypocritical and ludicrous position.

We have a debt reduction strategy. We have enacted that debt reduction strategy. Debt is \$13 billion lower than what was projected at this point in time by the former Newman LNP government. As I said, our debt-to-revenue ratio is much better than that which we inherited from the former Newman LNP government. When compared to the Australian government, whose debt levels are hovering around the 30 per cent mark in terms of debt-to-revenue ratio, ours at 10 per cent is very sustainable. It is very modest, and in fact it is all being used to deliver the infrastructure that our economy needs to grow and be productive.

**CHAIR:** Before I call the member for Everton for his next question, I counsel you against multiple repetitive interjections or even interjections at all. We will put the question and allow the Deputy Premier to answer the question.

**Mr MANDER:** Brevity would be appreciated, Mr Chair. Treasurer, I refer to fiscal principle No. 2, which states—

... target a net operating surplus that ensures any new capital investment—  
in the general government sector—

is funded primarily through recurrent revenues rather than borrowing.

Treasurer, you made the comment that you have borrowed to build. With general government debt increasing by \$11 billion over the forward estimates, will you confirm that you have abandoned this government's fiscal principle as well?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. It is the case that that fiscal principle is a very important fiscal principle and it is one that we will continue to adhere to. If you want to judge future performance then you need to look at past performance. Since we have come to government Labor has delivered budgets with an accrued surplus of more than \$5 billion, most of which has been invested in productivity-enhancing infrastructure that grows our economy and delivers the services and connectivity that our communities need.

The fact is that we have put in some very conservative, very prudent forecasts going forward. As I said previously, our debt is debt that we have decided. Our borrowings have been brought forward in order to build the infrastructure that our communities need. If the member for Everton is suggesting that we should postpone projects like the M1 upgrade in order to have a debt level that is more to his liking, then I would encourage him to go out and canvass the Gold Coast community regarding such suggestions. I would also note that at the last election the LNP came out with \$5 billion plus worth of costs, and the LNP failed to detail how they would pay for much of that, apart from axing programs. I note that they are still silent on their general public sector workforce policy going forward.

As I said, on every measure our borrowings are much better than they were under the LNP. Debt as a proportion of GSP is lower now, and in 2021 it will be lower than what it was in 2014-15, in the last budget of the Newman LNP government. As a proportion of revenue it is lower now, and in 2021 it will be lower than that projected in 2014-15 under the last Newman LNP government. In dollar terms it is lower now, and in 2021 it will be lower than what it was in 2014-15, in the last budget that was delivered by the former Newman LNP government. The cost of servicing these borrowings is lower now, and it will remain lower in 2021 than it was in the budget that we inherited, the 2014-15 budget, which was the last budget of the former Newman LNP government.

The Queensland government's net worth is \$200 billion and it will rise every year because of prudent investment in productivity-enhancing infrastructure. I think it is important to look at this in a little bit more detail. In 2017-18 the level of debt in the general government sector was the lowest it has been since 2011-12. Debt will increase over the forward estimates because of the sustained investment in economic infrastructure—

**Mr MANDER:** Point of order, Mr Chair. I think this reply is now up to about four minutes long. Would you please ask the Treasurer to be more succinct and relevant with regard to her reply? This is a deliberate strategy to take up our time for questions.

**CHAIR:** The standing orders do have regard to relevance, but I cannot see any repetition. It seems like the Treasurer is advancing new information.

**Mr MANDER:** No. It is boring and irrelevant, Mr Chair, and it is stopping our ability to ask more questions.

**CHAIR:** I do find that to be a subjective judgement. I find the answer to be relevant to the question and the Treasurer—

**Mr MANDER:** One thing the Treasurer is very good is at filibustering.

**CHAIR:** If you do not have a point of order, I ask that you seek the call. That is not a point of order. The Treasurer's reply is relevant to the question that was put. There might be too much detail, and we note that. Treasurer, you have the call.

**Mr MANDER:** Thank you for the acknowledgment.

**Ms TRAD:** Thank you, Mr Chair. As I said, debt will increase over the forward estimates because we are making a very deliberate decision to invest in a sustained way in economic infrastructure that our communities need. General government sector borrowings in the last year of the forward estimates will be lower than what the projection was in 2014-15, under the last budget of the Newman LNP government.

Our borrowing costs as a percentage of revenue are now largely in line with those of other states. General government sector borrowings are projected to be \$17.054 billion lower in 2017-18 than the original 2014-15 budget projections under the previous government. General government sector borrowings of \$32.311 billion are projected at 30 June 2019—\$4 billion lower than that in the 2017-18 budget estimates. By 30 June 2012, general government sector debt is projected to be \$42.290 billion. Across the forward estimates, general government sector interest expenses are projected to remain below three per cent of general government sector revenues, demonstrating the sustainability of the state's financial position. In terms of non-financial public—

**Mr MANDER:** Point of order, Mr Chair. Are you seriously going to let this continue? This response is now running to five or six minutes.

**CHAIR:** Each part seems to contain new information about the borrowings of the state and the budget, which is in response to the exact question you asked.

**Mr MANDER:** I am satisfied with the first part of the response. Can we move on to the next question, please?

**CHAIR:** If you are satisfied with the answer that is fine, but the Treasurer can answer as—

**Mr MANDER:** You would allow the Treasurer to speak for 15 minutes if she wanted to?

**CHAIR:** If the answer was relevant to the question and not repetitive. In this case, the Treasurer's responses are all building on new facts. I have been listening carefully. The Treasurer and Deputy Premier is dealing with your question in great detail about all of the relevant indices which you asked about—

**Mr MANDER:** Point of order, Mr Chair. The people of Queensland want questions asked and answered. They do not want people just going on and on with irrelevant information. It is making a mockery of the whole process.

**CHAIR:** If the member dissents from the ruling of the chair there is a mechanism to deal with that. If the minister's response is relevant to the question that was put and is not repetitive, then the Treasurer and Deputy Premier can continue to give her answer with all of the facts regarding the question that was put. It is not a minor question for Queenslanders and the Deputy Premier is taking it very seriously. I would ask the Deputy Premier to continue.

**Ms TRAD:** In conclusion, I will remark on the fact that the member for Everton seems to complain when I do not talk about debt and then he complains when I do talk about debt. I wish there was a consistent position.

The facts speak for themselves. I suggest that the member for Everton dusts off the 2014-15 budget, the last LNP Newman budget, and compare the debt projections under that budget to what we have delivered in this budget. On every single measure debt is lower, it is sustainable, and it is all going to build the critical infrastructure that our communities need. If the member for Everton suggests for one second that the people of Gold Coast do not need borrowings in order to enhance the M1, then he should be brave and go down there and tell them that he thinks a lower level of debt is far more important than fixing the M1.

**CHAIR:** The member for Maiwar has a question.

**Mr BERKMAN:** My question is for the Treasurer. In May last year you announced something which everyone other than Queensland Labor appears to refer to as a royalty holiday for Adani. What are the details of the royalty framework under which that operates, and is there an estimate of the total amount of royalties that would be deferred?

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order, Chair. How does this relate to the SDS?

**CHAIR:** It is asking a revenue question.

**Ms BOYD:** Around a project that isn't on?

**CHAIR:** A summary of revenue question is what I read. Did I mishear that?

**Ms TRAD:** None of that is calculated in this year's budget, but I am happy to answer the question.

**CHAIR:** The project does not start for four years or so—beyond four years. Treasurer?

**Ms TRAD:** In terms of the framework that the member for Maiwar refers to, it was outlined in great detail in the press release that was produced at the time in late May. I am very happy to get a copy of that press release and table it for the benefit of the member for Maiwar. I dispute the member's description of the arrangement: it is not a holiday. This is an approach to first movers in three basins that we announced at the end of May last year. This is for first movers in each of those basins. If there is a deferral, that deferral has to be secured against an asset. Not only does that deferral need to be secured, but any deferment in royalties must be paid back to the Queensland taxpayer with interest. They are key elements to the royalty framework but, as I said, that was announced last year. It is in the public domain. I am very happy to get a copy of that media release for the benefit of the member for Maiwar.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I refer to page 34 of the Treasury SDS. Can the Deputy Premier please outline the potential impacts of claim farming on compulsory third-party insurance and what steps the government is taking to combat this?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Redlands for the question. I would remark at the outset that claim farming is a very concerning issue for Queensland and other jurisdictions. It is very important that we pay attention to claim farming and its potential impacts on the state's compulsory third-party scheme. It is something we cannot afford to let affect our community and our compulsory third-party premiums. It is something that we take very seriously and we are determined to act.

I can advise the committee today that I have asked the CTP scheme regulator, the Motor Accident Insurance Commission, through insurance commissioner Neil Singleton, to urgently advise on options to stop this insidious practice. I would expect these will include progressing amendments to the Motor Accident Insurance Act with the aim of having something before parliament in the next six to 12 months. Obviously, we will widely consult with key stakeholders such as the legal industry including the Queensland Law Society, the Australian Lawyers Alliance, licensed insurers operating in the state, law enforcement agencies, the Legal Services Commission and government agencies such as the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

It is very important to get the changes right. We need to ensure that genuinely injured claimants are not impacted by the actions of a few bad apples and that Queensland's CTP scheme remains affordable and supportive of injured Queenslanders. Claim farmers often use high-pressure tactics and can be contacting very vulnerable people, including children and the elderly. In fact, only late last year our house was contacted by a claims farmer and my very young son picked up the phone and the caller immediately launched into very aggressive questioning before ascertaining whether or not the person on the other end of the phone was capable or should be interrogated and I found that very intimidating quite frankly. We hear of too many people receiving unsolicited calls or social media contacts from claim farmers often posing as officers from government agencies or insurers and being encouraged to make insurance claims with the lure of very easy compensation.

This issue is not unique to Queensland. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission have received complaints from people in every jurisdiction in Australia, while the problem has also been raised at the national heads of motor accident insurance scheme forum. Recent media coverage has highlighted how claim farmers are finding more ways to obtain the personal and private details of Queensland residents to pressure them into making a personal injury compensation claim. People are rightly concerned that their personal information is being provided to claim farmers or accessed by claim farmers. Over the past 18 months there has been an increase in the number of claims made against the Queensland CTP scheme and it is becoming evident that claim farming is a factor in this. I am

pleased to advise the committee that to date the CTP premiums have remained stable thanks to initiatives taken through the review of the CTP scheme commissioned by the Palaszczuk government in 2016. However, claim farming activity could have an adverse effect on the scheme if it is left unchecked. While the law changes could take some time to finalise, I can advise that a number of actions have already been undertaken and other communications and initiatives will be implemented while legislative reforms are being progressed.

Recently the insurance commissioner wrote to over 300 law firms highlighting concerns about claim farming and has also participated in national media broadcasts aimed at raising awareness. Further to that, there have been messages published in industry newspapers and presentations held at various forums. Coming up shortly vehicle registration renewal notices will also carry a message regarding claim farming, noting the actions motorists can take to prevent being caught up in a scam. While there is no single quick-fix solution, rest assured the Queensland government is absolutely committed to preserving the strength and the stability of the Queensland compulsory third-party scheme for premium-paying motorists, for genuinely injured claimants and for the various stakeholders who play such an important, integral role to the scheme and, importantly, to protect people's privacy and stop claim farmers' harassment.

**Ms BOYD:** I refer to page 3 of the SDS. Can the Deputy Premier please advise how the Queensland government has advocated for a fair share of the GST and whether the Commonwealth government's proposal to change the GST share would disadvantage Queensland?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Pine Rivers for the question. It is no secret to anyone sitting on the committee that I have consistently advocated that our state receives its fair share of GST revenue. It is very much the position of the Palaszczuk Labor government to stand up to Canberra and to make sure that we are getting our fair share from the Turnbull government because, quite frankly, Queensland deserves it. We are a vast, we are a decentralised, we are a fast growing state and this needs to be recognised in the GST carve-up.

The method of allocation is very important. It is about all Australian governments contributing to services for all Australians. Some states and territories such as Queensland have distinct service delivery challenges and for the good of the federation these should be properly recognised in the distribution of the GST. I have represented these views at different forums, including at the Productivity Commission's public hearing in February this year. We made a submission and I gave evidence before the Productivity Commission. I note that the LNP did not participate in this exercise despite many other state oppositions doing so. It is continually disappointing that the LNP has failed to take the opportunity to stand up for Queensland, particularly on this issue. We know that the Turnbull government is proposing to change the method of distributing the GST based on how well New South Wales and Victoria do. I think that speaks for itself to be New South Wales and Victoria-centric—that is, they will equalise to whichever is the strongest of these two states. They are telling states that no-one will be worse off under the proposed model.

This all sounds good and it gets a good headline for a couple of days but, as we know, the devil is always in the detail. We know that at the same time the Turnbull government is supposedly promising more money through the GST they are walking away from very important national partnership arrangements like the one for housing in remote Indigenous communities. I want a categorical guarantee from the Turnbull government that any supposed extra funds for Queensland or top-up to the GST pool generally are not at the expense of existing national partnerships funding and not at the expense of existing funding that is allocated for a whole range of services and a whole range of programs that we get Commonwealth funding from now—in other words, that the Commonwealth is not robbing Peter to pay Paul. We will not let the Turnbull government give with one hand and take with the other. The Australian government's reported generosity does not reflect all of the proposed changes to GST distribution and it only works because they are injecting significant additional funds into the GST pool.

The Australian government has been very coy on where this money will come from and how future Australian governments will be bound to continue to contribute to the GST pool. There are billions of dollars at stake quite frankly. About one-quarter of Queensland's revenue is from GST payments. The Australian government's proposal could affect hundreds of millions of dollars once all changes are accounted for. Even losing \$100 million is equivalent to losing about 300 teachers and 300 nurses and 200 police officers and 95 firefighters.

I cannot guarantee to any changes until the detailed interrogation has been done. The Queensland government will work cooperatively with the other states and territories and the Australian government to understand the impact of the proposed new model. I look forward to agreeing to a fair

outcome for Queensland when I speak to the other treasurers at a special meeting of the Council on Federal Financial Relations planned for September. Again, I state for the record our position that the current model for distributing GST equalising to the strongest ensures that Queensland continues to receive its fair share of GST that reflects our unique service delivery challenges. This model has at its heart the true principle of horizontal fiscal equalisation that all Australians—no matter where they live—should have the same opportunity to receive a high standard of service and all states should be provided with the revenue and the opportunity to make this happen.

**Ms BOYD:** I refer to page 61 of Budget Paper No. 2. Can the Deputy Premier please detail the expected payments from the Commonwealth going forward and why this makes the provision of services and infrastructure more difficult?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Pine Rivers for the question. Commonwealth payments to Queensland are expected to decrease by almost \$700 million in 2018-19 compared to payments made in 2017-18, and this is not acceptable. Almost half of Queensland's revenue comes from the Australian government. This means that the Queensland government's capacity to meet its service delivery and infrastructure responsibilities is very much dependant on payments from the Commonwealth. When the Commonwealth cuts payments this has a direct impact on our ability to deliver services to Queenslanders. The decline in Commonwealth payments is mainly due to a cut in GST revenue in 2018-19. Queensland's reduced GST is driven by factors unique to Queensland such as strong mining royalties, natural disaster expenditure and population growth. Queensland's share of GST has been negatively impacted by the Australian government unfairly interfering in the process for GST distribution.

The Australian government's direction to the Commonwealth Grants Commission to exclude selected payments from the calculations for GST distribution is adversely impacting the GST Queensland receives. If a range of other states' payments had not been excluded, estimates are that Queensland would have received almost a billion dollars extra between 2015-16 and 2020-21. In addition, cuts in national partnership payments in 2018-19, particularly the National Partnership on Remote Housing, has led to a decline in Commonwealth payments in 2018-19. The National Partnership on Remote Housing expired on 30 June 2018 and no renewed funding was provided in the 2018-19 Commonwealth budget despite repeated requests for the Australian government to confirm the future of the agreement and to continue funding for these vital services.

This is the cruellest cut of all—ripping up a 50-year agreement. Funding under this agreement is used to provide critical housing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This reduces overcrowding and improves living standards. Queensland has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving housing options for Indigenous Queenslanders through a number of targeted programs and initiatives such as the \$75 million remote home ownership program, part of the Queensland Housing Strategy. In total \$239 million has been committed across the state in 2018-19 to improve housing for Indigenous Queenslanders. This includes \$43 million in remaining Commonwealth funding. Reductions in Commonwealth payments have a negative impact on the Queensland government's ability to deliver vital services and infrastructure to Queenslanders, including remote and regional communities. That is why the Queensland government continues to advocate for Queensland to get its fair share of Commonwealth payments to ensure that our communities continue to receive the critical services and infrastructure that they need.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I refer to page 3 of the Treasury SDS. Can the Deputy Premier please outline how the Australian government's failure to renew the national partnership around remote Indigenous housing has impacted Queensland?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Redlands for the question. I think it is very important to reflect that not long ago—earlier this year—the Prime Minister released the 10-year progress update on Closing the Gap and there are some pretty sobering statistics in that and we are failing more than we are achieving quite frankly. Fundamental to any prospect of us closing the gap has got to be in ensuring that there is a roof over the heads of Indigenous Queensland people particularly, and that is first nations people living in remote locations right throughout Queensland. We know that building housing is not only critical to addressing overcrowding; it is also one of the biggest economic contributors in many of these regional communities. It means economic stimulus, it means apprenticeships, it means trainees, it means jobs. Quite frankly, by the Commonwealth walking away from this 50-year tradition what they are walking away from is the improvements in life outcomes and making improvements in closing the gap for Indigenous Queenslanders and I quite frankly think that that is disgraceful.

We know that not only is it important in terms of closing the gap for Indigenous Queenslanders; it also has a perverse outcome because it means that without this economic stimulus—without the jobs, without the prospect of training and apprentices within these communities—the social disadvantage will lead to more of a drawdown on the Commonwealth purse through welfare payments. This is the perverted outcome to a very modest contribution to what is a very important program, and that is addressing the overcrowding in houses in remote Indigenous communities.

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing and its later iteration, the National Partnership on Remote Housing, provided funding to Queensland of \$1.126 billion over 10 years, so that is \$1.1 billion over 10 years. In the recent federal budget there was zero dollars allocated for this program and I have personally raised this at CFFR and I have had a number of phone conversations with the federal Treasurer specifically in relation to this issue. It is deeply distressing that it is a program that the federal government has simply walked away from. For our part, Queensland has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving housing options for Indigenous Queenslanders through a number of targeted programs and initiatives such as the \$75 million remote home ownership program that is part of the Queensland Housing Strategy and in total \$239 million has been committed in this year's budget across the state in 2018-19 to improve housing for Indigenous Queenslanders.

If the Australian government does not step up to its responsibilities, Queensland will have to redirect already committed funds to this very important infrastructure requirement. I note the very excellent advocacy from the Minister for Housing, Mr Mick de Brenni, on this particular issue and I also acknowledge the incredible advocacy and support from the member for Cook, Cynthia Lui, on this subject. I have met with Cynthia and Mick. I have met with a number of mayors in remote locations. I am not overstating this: they are deeply distressed about the absence of this federal government funding. They are deeply distressed about the impact that this will have on their communities. It is not simply about addressing overcrowding and closing the gap; it is about jobs, skills and their local economy. Quite frankly, for the Turnbull government to walk away from this and for the Queensland opposition to be silent on this I think is just simply disgraceful.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Deputy Premier. It is now four o'clock. The committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at 4.15 pm with the examination of estimates for the portfolio areas of Treasury and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

**Proceedings suspended from 4.00 pm to 4.15 pm.**

 **CHAIR:** Welcome back, Deputy Premier and officials. I welcome officials who are joining us for this session. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of Treasury and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. I call the member for Mermaid Beach.

**Mr STEVENS:** Treasurer, given that coal royalties were responsible for adding \$3.8 billion to the budget bottom line in 2017-18, what specific measures are you taking as Treasurer to support this industry?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. We have been very clear in our support for the resources sector in Queensland. It is a valuable contributor to the Queensland economy. Having said that, I want to remark on the fact that the Queensland economy is one of the most diverse in Australia. No one industry makes up more than 10 per cent of the economy. I think that is a very good thing when you think about the need for us to ensure long and evenly spread prosperity through a diversified economy.

The royalties picture painted in the 2018-19 budget highlights the importance of a diverse and vibrant resource sector. These figures also show the importance of new industries like LNG, which came to life under the former Labor government and continues to be backed by this Palaszczuk Labor government. In fact, if we had not had the boom in construction that accompanied the establishment of the LNG industry in Queensland, I think we would have felt the effects of the GFC far more acutely in Queensland. Supporting this industry development was critical not only for diversifying our economy but also to buffer our state against what were very significant impacts from the GFC.

The recent Fraser Institute Annual Survey of Mining Companies showed that Queensland has an extremely competitive resource economy. We are the only state to see an improvement in the mining investment attractiveness score in the past three years. Our world rank of 12 has improved from 22 in 2014. If we look internationally, Queensland's mining investment attractiveness is rated higher than all surveyed countries of Oceania, Africa and Asia. In the 2018-19 budget, total royalties for 2017-18 are estimated at \$4.3 billion. This includes \$3.8 billion in coal royalties; \$188 million in petroleum royalties,

including LNG; and \$371 million in royalties from other minerals. Compared to the 2017-18 MYFER, the 2018-19 budget outlook for royalty revenue was revised upwards by \$3.7 billion across the period 2017-18 to 2020-21, largely reflecting revisions to the outlook for coal and oil prices going forward.

Strengthening global economic conditions are supporting continued coal price strength during 2018. Royalty forecasts incorporate a gradual decline in coking coal prices to 2020-21. Coal royalties use a tiered system based on the coal price: up to \$100 per tonne, seven per cent of value; over \$100 per tonne and up to \$150 per tonne, seven per cent on the first \$100 of value and 12.5 per cent on the balance; for more than \$150 per tonne, seven per cent on the first \$100 of value, 12.5 per cent on the next \$50 and 15 per cent on the balance. The current three-tier coal royalty rate system started on 1 October 2012.

The current royalty rate for petroleum and gas is 10 per cent at the wellhead value disposed of or produced. Royalties are charged on base and precious metals at a variable rate—between 23.5 per cent and five per cent of value, depending on metal prices.

**Mr STEVENS:** Point of order.

**CHAIR:** Certainly. What is your point of order?

**Mr STEVENS:** I have waited very patiently to hear an answer to my question. I heard all the statistics, all the figures—all the numbers—but I heard no answer under standing order 118 in terms of relevance in relation to the measures that the Treasurer has taken to further the industry.

**CHAIR:** Member for Mermaid Beach, I thank you very much for the long explanation of standing order 118. I understand that the question has been put and the answer was relevant to the question. I thank the Treasurer for her answer. Do any other members have a question to put to the Deputy Premier?

**Mr MANDER:** My question is to the Under Treasurer. Could you provide any estimates that have been made by Treasury on the impact on coal royalties that would occur if Aurizon were to maintain its current fixed-term maintenance program?

**Mr Murphy:** Just for clarification, if they maintained their maintenance program, or reduced their maintenance program?

**Mr MANDER:** They have a new maintenance program because of the ruling by QCA.

**Mr Murphy:** Yes.

**Mr MANDER:** They are claiming—

**Mr Murphy:** At the moment—just for clarification—there is a draft ruling, a draft undertaking out there.

**Mr MANDER:** That is correct.

**Mr Murphy:** The reaction has been for Aurizon to reduce its maintenance program. Treasury's view is that, from talking to coal exporters and the ports, possibly it is nowhere near the impact that some people are saying it is. However, we have taken account of that in the forward estimates on coal tonnage exports and factored that into the budget on our forecast on coal tonnage exports. I think it is mentioned in Budget Paper No. 2 that we have taken account of that and reduced coal tonnage exports by five to 10 million tonnes over 2018-19, 2019-20.

**Mr MANDER:** Can you put a monetary value on that with regard to royalties impact?

**Mr Murphy:** Its impacts? I will see if I can get a figure in terms of tonnage. The change in tonnage by one tonne is about \$60 million.

**Mr MANDER:** I am happy to put that on notice.

**Mr Murphy:** I can give you a quick number.

**Ms TRAD:** I will—

**CHAIR:** The minister needs to take it on notice. The minister might be able to add to this. She seems to be indicating—

**Mr MANDER:** No, my question was to the Under Treasurer.

**CHAIR:** Certainly, but it was explained in the session this morning that, if the Under Treasurer thinks that any official, including the Deputy Premier, can add to the answer, then the Deputy Premier can add to the answer.

**Mr MANDER:** The Under Treasurer seems to be managing okay.

**Mr Murphy:** I also refer to our royalty forecasts, which are in C2. Tonnages are forecast to increase. With the swings and roundabouts of all things, notwithstanding any change in maintenance practices by Aurizon, we still will have increased tonnages and increased revenue from royalties.

**CHAIR:** If you wanted to add to, that Deputy Premier?

**Mr MANDER:** I can ask the Deputy Premier a question, if you like.

**CHAIR:** I have just asked her a question.

**Mr MANDER:** Not the same question.

**CHAIR:** Is there anything that you can add to that?

**Ms TRAD:** In terms of the projected impact, it is not only in relation to the Aurizon maintenance regime, or the change to it; there is also the long-term effects of Cyclone Iris, which hit earlier this year, and affected some of our coal networks. Between those two key factors, the projection is a decrease of some five million tonnes in this year's budget but, as the Under Treasurer has remarked, in terms our forecasts, tonnages are up and this has been absorbed in the increase generally.

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, what steps have you taken to help resolve this issue between Aurizon and the Queensland Competition Authority?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. The Queensland Competition Authority is governed by its own piece of legislation. There are significant limitations on executive interference in the independent competitive undertakings and determinations of the QCA. This was the case when Aurizon was Queensland Rail National and it is the case now under private ownership. Notwithstanding that, I have kept in constant contact with the Queensland Competition Authority. I have had several meetings with the Queensland resources sector and I have met with Aurizon on a number of occasions. I believe that it is in the interests of all parties, but it is particularly in the interests of Queenslanders, that all parties engage in this process in good faith.

The Queensland Competition Authority is on track to have the final report provided at the end of this year. Can I say that it is managing this program very well, but I think, reflecting on some of the comments made by the Under Treasurer, it is in the interests of the commercial negotiations of a number of parties to go out and publicly exaggerate what they think the impact of some of the changes will be on their operations and on their profit margins.

I think it is imperative that all parties engage in this process in good faith. Can I say, it is very similar to the argy-bargy that we saw around access arrangements to Brisbane Airport's second runway at the time that it was announced and at the time that it was proceeding. This is no different in terms of the commercial argy-bargy that plays out before access and undertakings are finalised. I think it would do well for all parties, and it is in the interests of all Queenslanders, that all parties engage in good faith in the process.

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, Aurizon has advised the Australian Stock Exchange that it believes that this could affect up to 20 million tonnes of coal. Are you saying that they misled the Australian Stock Exchange?

**Ms TRAD:** I am aware of Aurizon's assertions. I am unaware that Aurizon has supplied any modelling or any figures to substantiate its assertion. As I said, Treasury has consulted with relevant stakeholders and we have factored in this year's budget an impact of five million tonnes. That also includes the impact of Cyclone Iris on our coal network and it has been absorbed within a larger increase in coal volume exports that is projected in this year and over the forward estimates.

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, I move to electricity. You would be aware that the ACCC recently released its retail electricity pricing inquiry final report. It made it clear that lack of competition was one of the key reasons the average Queensland household is paying \$415 more per year for their electricity bill. In light of this report, do you support the ACCC's recommendation, which also happens to be the LNP's recommendation, to introduce competition in household electricity costs by splitting the two generators into three?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. There are recommendations from the ACCC that we absolutely clearly do not support, like devaluing our assets, writing down our assets, which I think is something that is not in the interests of Queenslanders generally. But can I say to the issue of electricity prices, we have seen that the price for electricity has actually declined in Queensland. That was the recent determination. Since the Palaszczuk government came to office electricity prices for typical households have increased an average of just 1.1 per cent per year. When you compare that to

the total increase of 43 per cent for the average household when the LNP was in power it is pretty stark. Most recently the Queensland Competition Authority's final determination for regional prices will result in a 1.3 per cent decrease, or \$20, for the typical household in 2018-2019. A typical regional small business will also see a reduction of 3.4 per cent or \$86 in 2018-19.

We have also introduced a \$2 billion Affordable Energy Plan which includes various initiatives aimed at making energy more affordable for households and businesses. It includes providing a two-year cap on electricity prices to average inflation. It is also about ensuring that every household gets a \$50 annual asset ownership dividend and it will also provide bill relief for households over 2017-18, 2018-19 through concessions for those who are eligible.

The asset ownership dividend initiative has been made possible due to Queensland's continued ownership of our electricity assets which has enabled the government to reinvest GOC dividends in a concerted effort to improve affordability. We have also invested \$1.16 billion under the Powering Queensland Plan to ensure affordable, secure and sustainable energy supply for Queensland homes, businesses and industry. Measures under the Powering Queensland Plan include our \$771 million commitment to cover the cost of the Solar Bonus Scheme to ensure that they do not flow on to electricity bills for three years from July 2017. Other measures to put downward pressure on wholesale prices include returning Swanbank E to service, directing Stanwell to alter its building strategies and establishing CleanCo, a third generator. Queensland has already seen the benefits of these initiatives with forward wholesale prices in Queensland remaining the lowest in the national energy market. Base future prices in Queensland reduced by up to 20 per cent following the announcement of the PQP—the Powering Queensland Plan—and the AEP, reflecting a strong market response to Queensland's leadership. Queensland had the lowest wholesale market spot price over last summer despite record peak demand being exceeded.

**Mr MANDER:** Treasurer, are you against introducing competition as per the recommendation of the ACCC because of the negative effect that it would have on the government's high dividends that it currently receives?

**CHAIR:** With respect, this is trading seriously close to rephrasing the question with a different structure.

**Mr MANDER:** I cannot see how that is the case. The first question was did they support it and the second question is why don't they support it.

**CHAIR:** I think it is effectively the same question. I do not know if the Deputy Premier has anything to add to that answer, but it seems to me that phrasing it in the positive, phrasing it in the negative or adding one word to the question does not actually bring it to a new question, but if the Deputy Premier has anything to add.

**Ms TRAD:** Along with not just the ACCC but other organisations we strongly support the objective of putting downward pressure on electricity prices. We have a track record in that respect and I would hold that up to the record of the LNP in Queensland any day of the week. But let us be really clear: we will not be supporting some of the recommendations from the ACCC, like selling government owned assets. That has been an issue that has been put to the Queensland people and they have made their determination or their perspective on that abundantly clear. We will retain these assets in public hands, which gives the government leverage to implement measures to keep prices low and deliver the best outcome for Queenslanders and we have done that through the Powering Queensland Plan and other elements.

Measures under the Powering Queensland Plan, as I said, include returning Swanbank E to service—more supply contributes to reducing the cost—and directing our businesses to utilise measures to keep prices low. The recommendation around writing down the value of our network assets is not something that I would necessarily support or jump to. It is a questionable quick fix and there is a bigger problem at play here that we need to focus on. That is stemming from a lack of energy policy direction and certainty from previous LNP governments and the Australian government, quite frankly. We will continue to engage in good faith around any responsible, reasonable commitment and conversation around reducing energy prices—that is very much a priority of the Palaszczuk government—but we will not be jumping to recommendations made by the ACCC, certainly not in respect to selling assets.

**CHAIR:** Deputy Premier, referring to page 62 of Budget Paper No. 2, can you please outline the forecasts for royalties going forward and the basis of these forecasts and any commentary around these forecasts?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the chair for the question. As I have said previously, the forecasts in terms of royalties are that they are projected to increase and that the return to the Queensland budget will also increase. Total royalties are estimated at \$4.4 billion in this year's budget. This includes \$3.5 billion in coal royalties, \$447 million in petroleum royalties, including LNG, and \$479 million from other minerals. Strengthening global economic conditions are supporting continued coal price strength during 2018. Continued strength in the hard coking coal price has meant a significant uplift to price assumptions in 2018-19 and across the forward estimates since the Midyear Fiscal and Economic Review. A more gradual return to a medium term coal price is projected in the 2018-19 budget compared to the 2017-18 MYFER. The 2018-19 budget outlook for royalty revenue was revised upwards by \$3.7 million across the period 2017-18 to 2020-21 largely reflecting revisions to the outlook for coal and oil prices.

Royalties revenue exceeded the previous 2008-09 peak for the first time in 2016-17, an increase by a further 12 per cent in 2017-18 as coal prices remained strong and petroleum royalties increased. More modest growth of 2.8 per cent is expected in 2018-19. Coal prices have been volatile but forecasts in the 2018-19 budget have been prudent. Coal price estimates are broadly consistent with forecasts by Consensus Economics, which surveys more than 40 leading industry forecasters and takes an average of these experts. CBA notes in its budget commentary that Treasury's forecast is also broadly in line with CBA's own forecasts. The Royal Bank of Canada in its commentary said the forecasts are in line with the market consensus.

Over the four years to 2021-22 a gradual decline in royalties of three per cent per year is expected as the coal price progressively returns to medium term levels. While the coking coal price is expected to decline by around 10 per cent per year on average, total royalties are expected to be supported by growth in other factors. These include increased coal export volumes and stronger petroleum revenue, including from LNG. Total royalties of \$4.1 billion are forecast for 2019-20, \$3.7 billion for 2020-21 and \$3.8 billion for 2021-22. Significant growth in Queensland's LNG exports over the last few years is supporting growth in petroleum royalty forecasts. Total petroleum related royalties are forecast to rise more than fourfold from \$98 million in 2016-17 to \$450 million in 2021-22. Royalties from revenue from metals mined in Queensland, such as copper, lead and zinc and other minerals, including bauxite, are forecast to improve. A stronger outlook for base and precious metals means revenue from other royalties is expected to grow by around 30 per cent in 2018-19. This increase follows small declines in the previous two years with more modest growth of around two per cent on average expected from 2018-19 to 2021-22.

The budget also outlines the risks to our royalties going forward, both upside and downside. These uncertainties reinforce the government's policies of investment for the future and diversification of the Queensland economy to continue the Palaszczuk government's delivery of a diverse, strong, job supporting economy. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Referring to page 58 of Budget Paper No. 2, can the Deputy Premier please outline Queensland's tax competitiveness with other jurisdictions within Australia, especially comparing us with New South Wales?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank you, Chair, for the question. Can I say this is one of our fiscal principles which is outlined in budget paper 2 as well. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that we provide an economic environment that supports businesses and jobs growth right throughout Queensland and does not place undue strain on households through policy and taxation settings. That is why the Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to tax competitiveness with Queensland's average taxation per capita of \$2,808 expected to be some \$787 lower than the average of other states and territories. I did, in delivering the budget, reflect that it was a tax rate that was some \$800-plus lower than some other jurisdictions, but this has changed since the delivery of the New South Wales budget so I do want to just remark on the change in that figure.

Queenslanders under the Palaszczuk government also can expect to pay on average \$1,060 less for every man, woman and child in 2018-19 than they would have if they lived in New South Wales. Let us look closely at how Queensland compares to New South Wales according to the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Queensland is the low tax state when measured against our revenue potential. In absolute terms, the Grants Commission is clear in its latest report: Queensland is beating New South Wales across the board in tax competitiveness. Queenslanders pay less payroll, land, insurance and motor taxes than New South Wales, as well as less stamp duty. In 2013-14 Queenslanders paid 22 per cent less in tax than people from New South Wales and under the Palaszczuk Labor government in 2016-17 Queenslanders paid 33 per cent less tax than those in New South Wales per capita. The New

South Wales government made much in its budget about cutting payroll tax for small businesses. Their cuts phased in over four years will still result in a lower payroll tax threshold and a higher rate than what currently exists in Queensland.

Maintaining Queensland's competitive taxation system provides an advantage to businesses right across the state and is fundamental to the government's No. 1 priority of jobs creation now and providing the right platform for job creation and industry attraction right into the future. In fact, the Palaszczuk government is proud that it will continue to maintain the government's fiscal principle on taxation. The 2018-19 budget estimates that general government sector own source revenue will remain at or below 8.5 per cent of nominal gross state product—GSP. On average across the forward estimates it is expected to be 8.2 per cent in 2018-19 with an average of eight per cent across the four years to 2021-22.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I refer to page 3 of the SDS. How is the Business Development Fund supporting increased business investment and innovation in Queensland?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Redlands for the question. This is, quite clearly, another example of the Palaszczuk Labor government investing in the further diversification of our economy. Advance Queensland is a very important part of that diversification strategy. The highly successful Business Development Fund is a fantastic example of our partnership with the private sector to grow jobs and opportunities for Queenslanders now and into the future. It is part of our comprehensive Advance Queensland strategy to help create knowledge based jobs of the future and drive productivity improvements. We know that this is where much of the global growth is going to come from and Queensland very much needs to position itself to take full advantage of those global growth projections.

That is why in this year's budget we have boosted the Business Development Fund by \$40 million, taking the total fund to \$80 million. The additional funding will help unlock potential for many more innovative businesses by providing early stage and flow-on venture capital to help Queensland's best and brightest turn their ideas and innovations into a commercial reality.

The fund invests between \$125,000 and \$2.5 million, matched by a private co-investor into these businesses. Importantly, the fund supports the growth of angel and venture capital investment available in Queensland, thereby continuing to strengthening Queensland's entrepreneurial and start-up ecosystems. Thirty investments worth more than \$31 million have been made since the Business Development Fund was launched. These investments are good for Queensland and give up-and-coming businesses the chance to grow and expand. They are making a real difference to Queensland and Queenslanders.

When you factor in the benefits from flow-on operations, it is clear that the fund is making a positive contribution to our growing economy. Some of our many successful fund investments include Tritium Holdings, a manufacturer of fast chargers for electric vehicles; Sustainable Organic Solutions, which has developed a microbial based organic fertiliser; FiveGoodFriends, which aims to provide personalised home care for elderly Queenslanders to help them continue to live longer in their homes and communities; and Lawcadia, a legal procurement business that aims to help companies and governments in global markets rethink the way they procure and manage legal services and use data in their legal matters through its web based application. The fund has also made flow-on investments in three of our portfolio companies. I look forward to announcing those and others soon.

It is our responsibility to help new and emerging businesses and industries support the jobs of tomorrow while facilitating the development of sustainable capital finance in Queensland. With this government's continued support, the Business Development Fund will allow Queensland to be a pacesetter for business investment and innovation. It is probably one of the reasons Queensland has been noted as one of the innovation hotspots in the world.

**Ms BOYD:** I refer to page 3 of the SDS. Can the Deputy Premier please advise the committee about the work to be undertaken this year to develop a city deal for South-East Queensland?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Pine Rivers for the question. I think this is a very interesting and exciting area of policy reform. City deals are a new approach to planning and investing in Australian cities. They bring together all three levels of government to better align planning, investment and governance with the aim of driving liveability, sustainability and prosperity. Queensland is leading the way when it comes to city deals. In mid-2016 we established the Cities Transformation Taskforce to prepare and negotiate city deals. As a result, we delivered Australia's first city deal for Townsville in December 2016. Along with other government investments and initiatives, the city deal has seen a measurable uplift in business and community confidence in Townsville.

Now we want a city deal for South-East Queensland. The region is expected to grow by two million people over the next 25 years, so it is important we get the planning right. The Palaszczuk government is already preparing for this growth through the State Infrastructure Plan, the South East Queensland Regional Plan and significant infrastructure investments such as Cross River Rail. Since 2015 we have also been working with the council of mayors and industry experts to prepare a robust framework upon which to develop an SEQ city deal. We released some of this work in May, when I tabled the *South-east Queensland Economic Foundations Paper* and the South-East Queensland benchmarking study in the parliament. I have been working closely with the Council of Mayors SEQ and its chair, Brisbane Lord Mayor Graham Quirk, to progress the SEQ city deal.

I can advise the committee that in April Lord Mayor Graham Quirk and I met with the Commonwealth Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Cities, Paul Fletcher, to outline what we think an SEQ city deal can achieve. We see an SEQ city deal as an opportunity to leverage some of the significant infrastructure projects in the region, such as Cross River Rail and Brisbane Metro, to deliver region-wide benefits. We are now working towards a formal agreement to commence negotiating a city deal this year and are hopeful we can secure something from the Commonwealth.

Once an agreement is reached, an intensive process of research, analysis, consultation and negotiation will be undertaken to determine the projects and policies to be included in the deal. A city deal is a substantial and important piece of work that will help shape South-East Queensland over the next 15 to 25 years, ensuring that the community benefits from greater access to jobs, education, training, housing and more liveable and sustainable urban environments.

**Ms RICHARDS:** The SEQ city deal sounds exciting. Deputy Premier, could you please update the committee on the implementation of the Townsville City Deal, Australia's first city deal?

**Ms TRAD:** Townsville was, in fact, Australia's first city deal and it is something that the city should be very proud of. I commend the work of Mayor Jenny Hill in advocating for a city deal and in negotiating pretty hard around the elements of the city deal. I also acknowledge the former federal minister, Angus Taylor, for his work on the city deal.

Queensland is at the forefront of city deals in Australia with the December 2016 signing of Townsville as Australia's first-ever city deal. For the people of Townsville, the city deal is real and it is delivering projects and new investments to improve lives through jobs, economic growth, local infrastructure, a revitalised urban centre and a more vibrant and liveable city. Key commitments under the Townsville City Deal include developing the North Queensland Stadium, establishing the Townsville Development Corporation to deliver urban renewal, establishing a water task force to improve water security, establishing the Townsville Industry Development Board to lead investment attraction and accelerating the Townsville State Development Area. A local partnership forum has been established to ensure Townsville's local stakeholders are engaged throughout the implementation process and it is coordinated by the Townsville City Council.

In the first 12 months we have seen site works commence for the \$250 million North Queensland Stadium, which remains on track for the start of the 2020 National Rugby League season. More importantly, that project is delivering local jobs and development opportunities for Townsville workers and local businesses. Each time I go to Townsville it is always very exciting to see it coming out of the ground.

The intergovernmental Townsville water security task force, chaired by local businessman Brad Webb, has also been established and is delivering results. We are backing those results with real funding. The Queensland government has committed \$225 million to act on the task force's findings. As a result, Townsville's water security is being supported through the construction of the \$215 million Haughton to Ross River pipeline and the \$10 million Community Water Transition Package.

The Palaszczuk government has also committed a further \$75 million towards the port of Townsville channel capacity upgrade and we have called on the Australian government to match our commitment. This critical project is the first stage in the port's \$1.64 billion expansion plan. More importantly, these and other achievements are included in the inaugural annual progress report for the Townsville City Deal, which was released on 3 April this year. It can be downloaded from the Australian government's Smart Cities Plan website.

Once again, it is truly exciting for the City of Townsville to have Australia's first city deal. It is incumbent on the Commonwealth to continue to contribute, not just at election time but also in between elections. I look forward to continuing to work with the Commonwealth and the local council around progressing all of the elements contained in the city deal.

**CHAIR:** We will move to any other questions. I remind members that officers from DATSIP are here if there are any questions for them. Member for Everton?

**Mr MANDER:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I seek leave to table a document.

**CHAIR:** Do you have copies?

**Mr MANDER:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Where is this from?

**Mr MANDER:** This is from the budget papers of two years ago.

**CHAIR:** I guess we do not have any problem tabling a budget paper from two years ago.

**Ms TRAD:** Can I confirm it is the 2015-16 budget?

**Mr MANDER:** It is the 2016-17 budget.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

**Mr MANDER:** My question is to the Under Treasurer. Under Treasurer, the document that I have just tabled has estimated electricity generation revenue for 2016-17 at \$482 million. The budget paper for this year has the actual figure at \$1.241 billion. On the face of it, that seems to be a \$759 million increase from the original estimate. Could you explain how those figures are so different?

**Mr Murphy:** Where is your budget paper?

**Mr MANDER:** The current figure is at pages 118 and 119. I am comparing the table from 2016-17 with the same table for 2018-19.

**Mr Murphy:** Page 115 shows earnings before interest, which is the relevant number here. You are saying that in the 2016-17 budget it was \$482 million—

**Mr MANDER:** I am happy to use the same table. The figures are the same. Two years ago the figure was \$482 million of budgeted revenue for electricity generation. Two years later, that figure is now an actual figure of \$1.241 billion. That seems to be an incredible difference between what was originally budgeted and what has come in; it is actually \$759 million more.

**Mr Murphy:** That is the increased generation, but obviously, more likely or not, it is interstate sales of electricity—

**Mr MANDER:** How would the original estimate have been so far out? We are talking about two-thirds extra income.

**Mr Murphy:** At the time, it just depends on increased generation. It is a supply-and-demand type issue. Obviously at that time when we projected forward we did not see any change in circumstances and, obviously, since then there has been. It is not just the one number. We projected that that would continue.

**Mr MANDER:** You do not concede that that is an extraordinary disparity?

**Mr Murphy:** No. They are not disparities. They are actually what we forecast at the time. At the time, on the information that we had in 2016-17, on the facts that there were, that is our forecast. On the facts that are there now, that is our forecast. It is not a disparity. It is virtually the same people doing the estimates now as there were back in 2016-17. I am trying to think what would be the significant change in circumstances.

**Mr MANDER:** Being 200 per cent out, it—

**Mr Murphy:** The reasons for higher returns: generator sector return dividends are estimated to be 200 per cent higher than forecast. The higher than expected returns from the government owned electricity generators in the last year were achieved through a combination of generation of more low-cost energy, disciplined cost management and diversified revenue streams such as coal sales. Therefore, there is a reason for it. That is why you have had higher returns in the generators.

I suppose, as well as that, the demand has increased. You had Hazelwood closing down in Victoria, which has led to an increased demand for electricity generation in Queensland, to be transmitted to New South Wales and potentially other states. I think it is all going back to the fact that some people are seeing Queensland as the energy centre of Australia, because we have these assets whereby we can generate not only coal-fired generation but also solar and other renewables.

As I say, it is not a discrepancy. They would have been the best estimate at the time and then you have had subsequent events such as Hazelwood closing down and other events. You had the collapse of the South Australian energy system. That has led to greater demands and opportunities, actually, for Queensland to generate more electricity.

**Ms TRAD:** I will remark as well, through you, Mr Chair, that in the 2014-15 budget what was budgeted in terms of returns was just over \$1 billion back to the state budget through electricity GOC dividend returns. What actually happened was \$1.364 billion. In the forecasting and the actual there is some movement. That occurred when the Newman LNP government was in power and it has occurred now. As the Under Treasurer has said, there has been an increase in the National Energy Market for the supply of Queensland power. What we have done during peaks, in the summer period in particular, because of Labor's previous investment and support for increased solar panels on household roofs and also the commissioning of Swanbank E, means—

**Mr MANDER:** Point of order, Mr Chair: I am not really interested in what the Treasurer has to say about this. I have asked a question of the Under Treasurer. He has given me a response. I would rather move on to the next question.

**Ms BOYD:** There is no point of order.

**CHAIR:** With respect—

**Mr MANDER:** This is a deliberate strategy to filibuster.

**Ms RICHARDS:** It is answering the question.

**Mr MANDER:** That is what it is. I have other questions that we have limited time for. The question has been answered.

**CHAIR:** With respect, member for Everton, I think the Deputy Premier and Treasurer was winding up and was purely adding to the answer.

**Ms TRAD:** I think all the media reports during summer demonstrated that the demand from New South Wales for Queensland power was quite significant. We could afford to give them supply—

**Mr MANDER:** The Under Treasurer said that.

**Ms TRAD:**—because of Swanbank E and because of decisions we have made in the past to offset the peak demand by solar panels on roofs.

**Mr MANDER:** Thanks for repeating the answer.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, do you have any further questions?

**Mr MANDER:** I do. Under Treasurer I want to move to the SPER ICT system. Last year you stated in relation to the SPER ICT system that the contract is safe and sound in terms of the cost. It would seem that the project has ballooned out again—to \$62.2 million. What has gone wrong?

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order, Mr Chair: the question contains an imputation.

**Mr MANDER:** Can I ask why those figures have blown out?

**Mr STEVENS:** The chair is going to deal with the point of order.

**CHAIR:** I will allow the question.

**Mr Murphy:** The SPER project is a complex project. However, the variation on costs is within the approved budget. Yes, there has been a variation in cost for the project, but that is still within the budget approved by the cabinet. The other issue with it is that there has been delayed commencement. We fully expect the SPER ICT program to commence towards the end of this year. The ICT build has already been done and it is in user testing. In terms of the SPER ICT program, we expect it to probably commence in December.

**Mr MANDER:** Under Treasurer, the SPER debt has gone from \$1.19 billion last year to \$1.21 billion. Are you able to advise the committee of the amounts of the top five unpaid debts that the department is currently pursuing?

**Mr Murphy:** We will probably get a briefing on that. There was a question on notice on debt that you asked us Mr Mander. I think recovered was about \$290 million and debt forgiven was about \$3 million. In terms of operation, the scheme is operating much better. When I came here we had a debt of over \$1 billion. A particular issue for me was to try to resolve this debt. The ICT program and the SPER transformation will actually give us the capacity to get to these debts and try to resolve the matter.

The other point I make about SPER is that if the government cannot recover fines we are really undermining the justice system. It is terribly important that we have an efficient way of collecting fines. That is what we are trying to do with the SPER system. I know there are some people who owe not hundreds of dollars but millions of dollars. Through vehicle immobilisation and other issues like that we have actually recovered some of that money.

**Mr MANDER:** Just to clarify, is that individuals who owe millions of dollars?

**Mr Murphy:** Yes, individuals.

**Mr MANDER:** Through toll fines or—

**Mr Murphy:** Toll fines and commercial premises. People have gone to unbelievable lengths to avoid paying debts—changing car registration, numberplates on trucks and things like that. We do that with the police. It is an active program. At the other end of the spectrum the work development orders that we have introduced are for people who actually do not have the finances to pay. They come forward and do social work—work supervised by the justice department—to pay for their fines.

I think we need to understand that a third of the people who have fines owed to SPER are on Centrelink payments. It is a very difficult system at the moment. You may have a SPER fine and you may not even be aware of it. It could be for tolling. Alternatively it could be for a parking ticket that someone threw away when they were walking along the street. You might not even know you have a SPER debt. The new system is designed to try to pull together all the individual debts people owe and for SPER to be able to contact those people and try to work out a case management approach.

**Mr MANDER:** With regard to the extremely high figures that are owed, what sort of strategies or what sort of penalties can be applied to encourage them to pay or to penalise them for not paying?

**Mr Murphy:** By not paying your debt you increasingly get higher penalties. That is why some of the debts blow out. Every time the SPER administration has to deal with a debt there is a fee. That is why we need to get to the debts quickly. Those extreme cases are where there is deliberate avoidance, probably by commercial businesses. It is not individuals who are incurring these tolls, but commercial trucking businesses. They are the ones we have been trying to address.

**Mr MANDER:** Do you seize vehicles?

**Mr Murphy:** We seize vehicles. Usually when the police arrive with the SPER people to seize the vehicle debts are paid—we get a cheque. That is one end of the spectrum.

The only other point I would like to make is that in its last budget the federal government announced that it would work with the states to garnishee Centrelink payments for fines that people owed to the states. That was announced. I do not want to be defensive about this, but we have had no consultation on this. That cuts across what Queensland is trying to do to recover these debts. That throws up another issue for us in trying to resolve this SPER transformation and the ICT problem. I mention that because that could delay us further if they move to do something different.

**CHAIR:** I now recognise that we have been joined by another visiting member the member for Moggill, who had previously sought the permission of the committee to attend. I believe you have a question.

**Dr ROWAN:** I refer to the 2017 Working for Queensland survey and the results for the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships as well as the SDS at pages two to 14 and the Deputy Premier's ministerial charter letter. I seek leave to table extract copies of the survey and the minister's charter letter.

**CHAIR:** Leave is granted for the tablings.

**Dr ROWAN:** With negative results across-the-board in comparison to 2016 for various factors as well as workplace climate, are these results not a vote of no confidence in ministerial and senior departmental leadership and management?

**CHAIR:** There is an inference in that question. I do not know whether there is a better way to phrase that question without drawing an inference.

**Dr ROWAN:** Can you explain the damning results in relation to organisational leadership which are in those results that have been tabled?

**Ms TRAD:** I will make some general remarks before inviting my acting director-general of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to make some specific comments. I know that the member for Moggill was not in the parliament at the time that the Newman LNP government was in power, but one may want to have a look at some of the employee opinion surveys around that time. I quote the former premier this morning when he said on ABC Radio, 'On the one hand I was there putting a broom through the Public Service.' He goes on to say other things. As he said in parliament when he was premier and on radio this morning—

**Dr ROWAN:** Point of order, Mr Chair: under standing order 118 and relevance we are referring to 2017 the Working for Queensland survey and the damning results in relation to leadership which are clearly articulated in those. I ask you to bring the Deputy Premier back to the 2017 Working for Queensland survey results for her department?

**CHAIR:** I think it is common practice that most surveys rely upon previous surveys of the same ilk so I think it is relevant.

**Ms TRAD:** I think the general sentiment of employee satisfaction in government in their workplaces has actually improved since the former LNP premier Campbell Newman as he said put the broom through the Public Service and swept away 14,000 jobs—

**CHAIR:** With respect, Deputy Premier, there is some repetition there.

**Ms TRAD:** I invite my director-general to talk to the specifics of the employee opinion survey.

**Ms Williams:** I would first like to acknowledge the traditional owners on whose country we are gathering here today. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of elders who are in the chamber as well.

With respect to the question, the department is committed to continuing to develop a positive workplace culture that reflects the Queensland Public Service values. Under my leadership, as acting director-general for the past seven months, the department has operated in a responsible and sustainable manner within a tight fiscal climate. With approximately 80 per cent of our staff having front-line roles, the department is also proud of our cultural diversity, with an above sector benchmark for the percentage of staff with a disability, an above sector benchmark for the percentage of staff who are women and well and truly over the sector benchmark for staff who identify as Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander.

In terms of the Working for Queensland survey results, on one hand the survey reflects a point in time when the annual survey was conducted. It is however acknowledged that the survey results can identify trends from successive years. At the heart of my department's survey results is our department's workforce culture.

We need to understand the context of the department's workforce culture. First, it is a workforce that is culturally and gender diverse. A strong percentage of our staff enjoy flexible working arrangements to improve the employee work-life balance. It is also a workforce which is still developing its capability in certain areas, as evidenced by the capability blueprint which I commissioned shortly after I took over the position of acting director-general in December. This blueprint is to help inform my executive leadership team on our organisational capability, performance and service delivery, the findings of which we are still considering.

Notwithstanding this workforce context, the department, under my leadership, has reviewed a number of its HR policies and procedures, in particular looking at our bullying and complaints management processes. Under my leadership these issues have been elevated to the executive leadership team so that we can apply a systems approach to these issues. This demonstrates the seriousness with which myself and my executive leadership team take the issue. It further demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement.

Furthermore, the department under my leadership has strengthened the capability of the Corporate Services Division to improve its internal capacity to respond to these matters. This is also in addition to the department reviewing and renegotiating a memorandum of understanding which I have entered into with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women for the provision of external corporate service expertise to bolster a department of our size. This includes legal and audit and risk monitoring functions as well as access to a suite of HR tools and training packages. Finally, all of this work complements the department's ongoing commitment to investing in the skills and capabilities of our staff. This financial year we have prioritised the training of our staff, with approximately one in three staff members in the last financial year undergoing some formal training.

If we are to look at the Working for Queensland survey results, we cannot overlook a couple of important statistics. First of all, 83 per cent of departmental staff have reported that their work group is committed to delivering excellence in service to our customers and a further 87 per cent have reported that people in their work group treat customers with respect. It is on that basis that I am proud of the work that my department has done following the Working for Queensland survey results.

**CHAIR:** I refer to page 6 of the DATSIP Service Delivery Statements. Can the Deputy Premier explain how the Queensland government is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank you for the question, Mr Chair. As I have remarked upon already in these proceedings, closing the gap is a critical policy priority for the Queensland government. It should be for the federal government and it should be something that all Australians commit to in an enthusiastic way. On 12 February this year we saw the Prime Minister release the 10th Closing the Gap report, with national progress showing only three of the seven targets were on track. As I said before, we are failing more than we are succeeding in terms of the Closing the Gap targets.

To improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to a refresh of the Closing the Gap agenda by working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Palaszczuk government is committed to refreshing the Closing the Gap agenda so that our targets meet the challenges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face. We are working to improve life expectancy, mortality rates for Indigenous children under five, early childhood education, year 12 attainment and employment outcomes.

While there has been some progress in early education and overall improvement in reading, writing and numeracy, we know that to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage more needs to be done. That is why the Palaszczuk government has committed more than \$11 million in 2018-19 to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. It includes a whole range of things. I will touch on some.

One is the commitment to build splash parks in communities of Pormpuraaw, Napranum and Mapoon, providing a place for children to learn and play and to use gross motor skills. It also includes a commitment of \$2.7 million over four years and a \$416,000 per annum ongoing commitment to establish and maintain the Kowanyama Men's Shed and Women's Meeting Place. This initiative creates a safe space for community to run health and wellbeing programs. We are also funding a \$1 million commitment to ensure that traditional Torres Strait Islander child-rearing practices can be recognised at law and a \$3.7 million three-year project for history, research and legal services.

To reach targets in employment, the Palaszczuk government is extending the Back to Work regional program, which has already seen more than 1,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people gain employment since 2016. To reach targets in early education, we are providing almost \$11 million for Early Years Places, which provides a mix of different programs including playgroup, early childhood education and care, health services and parenting support. To reach targets in health we are expanding the Deadly Choices program by providing \$16 million over two years that will empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make healthy choices for themselves and their families.

I reflect on the fact that there is much that needs to be done. Of course there are specific programs in other agencies—in health, in education, in community services, in child safety, in youth policy and in the area of domestic and family violence. These are some of the programs that are specifically led by the agency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, but right across government there are specific programs that target improvements in health, education, life choices and parenting. I am sure that other ministers will speak to that.

**CHAIR:** Can the Deputy Premier please explain what impact the Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2021 will have on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Queenslanders?

**Ms TRAD:** The Queensland government Reconciliation Action Plan is an exciting initiative. It was developed in partnership with Reconciliation Queensland and Reconciliation Australia. We are working together to build on current efforts to achieve reconciliation and to contribute to reconciliation across the three key areas of relationships, respect and opportunities.

I was pleased to launch the RAP during National Reconciliation Week this year, with the implementation of the RAP commencing in July, with each RAP action having a measurable target. Actions to improve relationships include participation in key cultural events such as the National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. The targets set for these actions include holding 10 internal and external events during National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. Having attended quite a number of these events I can say that it does matter. It means a lot to communities that government turns up and is seen and respects what is happening on the ground and joins in the cultural celebration and the acknowledgement of first nations people. It is very important that we do that.

Actions to increase respect include increasing the knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements through implementing cultural capability training for public sector employees and building cultural capability in schools. The targets set for these actions include implementing a foundation training package with a review date by 31 July next year and

reviewing the Australian Curriculum from 2018 to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are authentically and meaningfully addressed to help teachers embed Indigenous perspectives.

Actions that foster opportunities include the continued implementation of the Queensland Public Sector Workforce Strategy to increase the proportion of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Queensland public sector and to increase government procurement from Indigenous businesses. The targets set for these actions include increasing the proportion of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Queensland public sector to three per cent by 2022 and that 300 Indigenous businesses secure a share in government procurement during the 2018-19 budget at a total spend of \$250 million.

The Cultural Agency Leaders Group, chaired by DATSIP, will actively monitor the implementation of the RAP. This work will be supported by the director-general, RAP champions and a whole-of-government working group that will coordinate data collection and monitoring of actions and targets. The impact of the RAP actions and targets will be assessed through a number of formal and informal processes. These include the development and the implementation of systems to track, measure and report progress against activities, undertaking a review and updating the RAP on an annual basis, conducting an external review of the RAP that will be commissioned by January 2020 and working with Reconciliation Australia and Reconciliation Queensland towards a future RAP.

To ensure transparency, Reconciliation Action Plan achievements, challenges and learnings will be publicly reported to Reconciliation Australia by November each year. DATSIP will also complete and submit the RAP impact measurement questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia by 30 September each year. This is an online questionnaire designed to measure progress against the minimum requirements of the RAP program. Reconciliation Australia compiles this information to measure the collective impact of RAPs nationally.

**Ms BOYD:** I refer to page 3 of the DATSIP SDS. Can the Deputy Premier please advise how the Moving Ahead strategy will increase participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in training, employment and business ownership?

**Ms TRAD:** Thank you very much, member for Pine Rivers, for the question. The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to improving the lives of Queensland's first nations people and supporting them to fully participate in Queensland's vibrant economic, social and cultural life. Economic participation we know is critical. It is a critical component to any agenda of progress. Current data suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are less likely to be employed than non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

In late 2017 the Palaszczuk government released *Moving ahead: a strategic approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland's economy—2016 to 2022*. The Moving Ahead strategy drives targeted and sustainable changes to increase employment and business outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Moving Ahead includes a vision that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participate fully in Queensland's growing economy through skills, through training and employment, and through business growth and development. To realise this vision, the Moving Ahead strategy will focus on five priority areas: to build a more skilled and diverse workforce; to focus on youth and plan for future success; to build our partnership with industry; to increase entrepreneurship, business growth and innovation; and to overcome barriers and realise opportunities to completion.

The Moving Ahead strategy includes 27 actions that will directly increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in training and employment and business ownership and development. The implementation of the Moving Ahead strategy is led by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Additionally, it continues to deliver a range of policies and programs to increase economic participation opportunities.

As at June this year, DATSIP placed 1,551 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into jobs within a range of industries through its two employment placement initiatives in the 2017-18 period. To break this down, DATSIP's Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office placed 563 people into jobs in Queensland's Capital Works Program within the discrete Indigenous local government communities in the cape. DATSIP's Youth Employment Program, YEP, responds to priority 2 of the Moving Ahead strategy to improve student transition to further education, training and employment through the Youth Employment Program and particularly focuses on young people finishing school, and it placed 988 candidates.

To further increase employment and training, the Palaszczuk government has 14 strategic partnership agreements through a memorandum of understanding with partners across Queensland in a range of sectors including agriculture, health, resources, construction and tourism. These partnerships deliver benefits including employment, education and training outcomes, procurement opportunities and increased workforce diversity.

The Queensland government Building and Construction Training Policy ensures selected Indigenous projects commit to supporting opportunities for employment, skills development and business supply for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. DATSIP also negotiates agreed and voluntary Indigenous economic participation targets with agencies and industry partners for economic projects that are unable to service the minimum requirements of the training policy due to exhausting Indigenous capacity within areas.

Completed projects during 2017-18 outside the discrete Indigenous local government communities in the cape provided employment opportunities for 605 workers across 137 projects, provided 56 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with accredited training and resulted in approximately \$6 million in business supply opportunities for Indigenous businesses. This equates to a total of over \$18 million to directly improve the economic wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

DATSIP Enterprise Queensland Indigenous Program, or EQuIP, supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises to supply to the Queensland government and the private sector. At least 250 Indigenous businesses and organisations across Queensland, including in Aurukun and Palm Island, have received assistance since June 2016.

DATSIP will also work in partnership with other agencies such as Employment, Small Business and Training to secure collaborative and coordinated investments to develop capability across the Queensland Indigenous business sector. The growth in development of a diverse and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business sector is further supported by the Queensland government's Indigenous Procurement Policy, which supports Queensland government agencies to increase procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

I reflect on the fact that the Commonwealth Games RAP and the procurement policy around Indigenous businesses was an outstanding success. I want to reflect on the fact that, when done right, ensuring that Indigenous businesses have government procurement opportunities reaps enormous benefit for Indigenous businesses and their employees.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Treasurer. We might ask the member for Moggill if he has any further questions.

**Dr ROWAN:** I do. Minister, following the acting director-general's outlined strategy and plan to address organisational bullying and leadership and organisational fairness within the department, will you as minister guarantee that the next lot of staff survey results will be much improved compared to the 2017 Working for Queensland results for the department?

**CHAIR:** I am not sure that that is rephrasing a question.

**Dr ROWAN:** A point of order: we heard the acting director-general basically outline a strategy and a plan to address organisational bullying and leadership and organisational fairness, which is problematic in the Working for Queensland survey results for 2017. All I am asking is, given that has been outlined by the acting director-general, whether the minister is comfortable enough to conclude that, as a result of those strategies, staff satisfaction and the survey results will be improved for 2018. It goes to the heart of government.

**Ms BOYD:** That is not a point of order.

**CHAIR:** I think the member is trying to clarify. I have a problem that the question is effectively seeking an opinion on the opinions of others through a future staff survey.

**Dr ROWAN:** It is seeking ministerial accountability in relation to the plan that has been outlined by the acting director-general.

**CHAIR:** Member for Moggill, I want to finish. Perhaps you could rephrase it to ask whether the minister is confident and whether she could outline further the strategies that are taken towards that, or something in that vein.

**Dr ROWAN:** Thank you, Chair, for the guidance. Minister, do you have confidence that the outlined strategy and plan will lead to an improvement in staff satisfaction within the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for Moggill for his question. I do have confidence that the acting director-general has assembled the right strategies to respond to the survey. I can absolutely guarantee for the member for Moggill that we will not do what the former Newman LNP government did with regard to public servants—and that is sack them overnight after promising that their jobs would be safe and that they did not have anything to fear from a Newman LNP government.

**Dr ROWAN:** Point of order, I come back to standing order 118 in relation to relevance.

**Ms TRAD:** And I will just come back to context and history.

**Mr MANDER:** You have been very well behaved, Treasurer. Just keep it in check for another 20 minutes.

**CHAIR:** Member for Everton, that is really uncalled for. The point of order was put by the member for Moggill. It was a legitimate point of order and I am dealing with it. The member for Moggill has put the point of order that the question was about future strategies. I know there was comparison but I would ask the Deputy Premier to address the member for Moggill's question.

**Ms TRAD:** I think I have, Mr Chair. I have nothing further to add.

**Dr ROWAN:** We will move on. I have other questions. I would like to come to the acting director-general. I refer to page 6 of the SDS, specifically the 2018-19 service area highlight of 'supporting the responses to the Youth Sexual Violence and Abuse Steering Committee's findings'. Given it is now a year and a half since the Smallbone final report was to be concluded, can you tell us what the status of the committee's final report is?

**Ms Williams:** I would like to thank the member for his question. The Queensland government is committed to addressing and preventing complex and difficult issues of youth sexual violence and abuse. Although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are disproportionately impacted by youth sexual violence, the issue is not specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people or communities. The lead agency for progressing this matter is the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

**Dr ROWAN:** Again to the acting director-general, the former minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, the Hon. Curtis Pitt, stated that the committee would deliver its final report in late 2016. There was an interim process in March 2016 and then the September interim report as well in relation to a number of recommendations. Is the report finalised? Have all of those recommendations been implemented? Where is it up to? Will the final report be available publicly?

**CHAIR:** That was a very long question, and there was some feedback meaning I could not hear some of it. My understanding is that it is about a report and the time line of it being released. I did not catch who you were asking the question to.

**Dr ROWAN:** I was going back to the acting director-general.

**Ms Williams:** I thank the member for the question. The Palaszczuk government is carefully considering the final report recommendations to ensure a holistic, integrated and long-term approach to addressing and preventing youth sexual violence and abuse. As I said, the lead agency for progressing this matter is the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

**Dr ROWAN:** I refer to question on notice No. 464, and I seek leave to table that and the minister's response.

**Ms BOYD:** Isn't that a question on notice? The committee has it. It is a record of the parliament.

**CHAIR:** Are we really—

**Dr ROWAN:** I want to refer to this, and that is why I am seeking leave to table it.

**CHAIR:** It is also part of our documentation for the committee. We all have it in our folders.

**Dr ROWAN:** That is fine.

**CHAIR:** Oh, it is a question on notice in the House, which is already tabled but you are making reference to it.

**Dr ROWAN:** That is right. I am seeking leave to table it again so that people have reference to it.

**CHAIR:** Fine. Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

**Dr ROWAN:** In that response, the minister has clearly indicated that it is the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women who has responsibility for implementing it. I seek leave to table a section from 'Supporting our most vulnerable young people'. I am seeking leave to table extracts from the *Queensland Youth Strategy action schedule*, and that is what this document is.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

**Dr ROWAN:** I refer the minister to dot point 20 at the bottom of the page, where it says for the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to 'Implement, monitor and report progress on actions developed to respond to youth sexual violence and abuse in West Cairns and Aurukun through the Youth Sexual Violence and Abuse Steering Committee.' It then outlines the development period and implementation and review by mid-2017. Does the minister still have the view that it is all the responsibility of her colleague Minister Farmer? What responsibilities does her department have given this document?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member. This is not a document. This is an extract from a document, and I think it looks like it is two years old. Mr Chair, can I say for the benefit of the member and the benefit of the committee, the appropriate ministerial responsibility for addressing issues specific to youth sexual violence is, as I have reported and answered in question on notice No. 464, the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. I am sure the member would be aware that there are a number of factors that are interrelated that touch on every segment of that portfolio. As my acting director-general has said, while there is an overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the issue of youth sexual violence, it is not exclusively an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's issue alone. It is not unique, so the appropriate minister responsible for this is the minister for families and child safety.

I will verify the actual date of this report. It is not a report; it is an extract from a report so I will make some verification in relation to this. Of course, we are all part of the Queensland government and DATSIP will continue to provide culturally appropriate advice and support in order to ensure that there is a response to the final report.

**Dr ROWAN:** Again, through to the minister, I refer to page 6 of the SDS with respect to 'monitoring outcomes and report (including annual report card and statement to Parliament) on a refreshed Closing the Gap agenda'. Will this include an Indigenous incarceration reduction target for Queensland?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. I draw the member's attention to the fact that we have published government priorities. I know that the Premier in her estimates hearing did canvass these priorities. One of these priorities is around keeping communities safe, and there is a target in there around reducing youth offending. Again, youth offending is not an issue that is isolated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. There is an overrepresentation, but I think it is important to keep that in mind in terms of the questioning. The minister responsible for youth justice is working very hard.

Mr Chair, with your agreement, I will just note that recently former police commissioner Bob Atkinson released a very, very comprehensive youth justice strategy which I think has been publicly applauded by a number of organisations out in the community in the youth and justice sector. There are specific recommendations going to the issue of the overrepresentation of Indigenous people within the corrective services system and also on how to prevent behaviour across-the-board in all young offenders. The government has prioritised.

**CHAIR:** Deputy Premier, we seem to be extending across to the youth justice portfolio in some of these questions. I know there is some crossover. This seems to be extending over to youth justice rather than your portfolio.

**Ms TRAD:** It is the government's priority that we reduce youth offending across-the-board, whether they are Aboriginal kids, whether they are kids of non-English-speaking backgrounds, whether they are regular Australian kids, whether they are kids who come from very challenging backgrounds—whichever they are. We want to reduce offending right across-the-board.

**Dr ROWAN:** I refer to SDS page 2 and that the department will 'lead the implementation of the Moving Ahead strategy and Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy to increase Indigenous participation in employment and business' here in Queensland. Minister, what performance metrics and monitoring are currently being used and/or anticipated to be used to achieve this outcome?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. I did talk about implementing key measurement tools within the Reconciliation Action Plan and in terms of moving ahead because, as we know, what we do not measure we do not progress and we do not fund going forward. I will take that particular question on notice and I will provide the detail metrics to the honourable member so that he can study it in greater detail. What I will say is that the framework that we used for the Reconciliation Action Plan and Indigenous business procurement opportunities through the Commonwealth Games was an outstanding success. It is something I think we can point to in terms of our system going forward.

**CHAIR:** I note we have taken that question on notice. There will be an opportunity to address it at the end if you are able.

**Dr ROWAN:** I heard the minister take it on notice and I thank her for that, but can I add to that. Can I also ask whether the government is focusing on specific geographical regions over the next 12 months in relation to their Queensland Indigenous procurement policy and whether there are particular reasons as to why that would be case?

**CHAIR:** Do you wish to add that to the question on notice?

**Dr ROWAN:** I am happy for the minister to answer that now, but I will defer to whether she wants to include that in a response.

**Ms TRAD:** We of course want all of our programs to be successful whether that is in the South-East Queensland region or whether it is in regional communities. We do have current programs that are specific to regional economies, like Back to Work, Works for Queensland and TIDS. These are all programs that are specific to regional communities. I do note that the Works for Queensland program is a highly successful program that sees Indigenous people and councils roll out community infrastructure projects that are exclusively delivered by local Indigenous workers, trainees and apprentices. This is reaping fantastic benefits, not only in terms of skills acquisition, training opportunities and pay packages back to local families but also in terms of community infrastructure.

I was on Palm Island recently and their foreshore development is just outstanding. It is a great piece of community infrastructure that all members of the community can enjoy, and it was built by local labour. This is a program that would have been axed if the LNP had won the election last November. I am very happy to stand my record and this government's record in Indigenous procurement, Indigenous employment and specific programs that train Indigenous people against the former Newman LNP government and the policies put forward by the LNP opposition at the last election any day of the week.

**Dr ROWAN:** I refer to SDS page 6 with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community alcohol management plans, and I ask: is the government planning to include other substance misuse reduction strategies as part of its reform agenda in that process?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. If the question is about other substances that are already currently prohibited then we will of course have a policing response to all prohibited substances. If the matter is in relation to whether we will continue to look at expanding the prohibition on products that contribute to home brewing, that is something that we are in active consultation with local communities about.

**CHAIR:** Do you wish to clarify or ask a further question?

**Dr ROWAN:** It was around all of those, Mr Chair. I was really getting to the heart of what other additional supply reduction, demand reduction and harm minimisation strategies the government is considering in relation to other substances beyond alcohol management plans. In relation to its reform agenda, will it include that as part of that reform process?

**CHAIR:** It seems to be a relatively repetitive question or a repetition of the same question rather than clarifying. It does seem to be the same question. Maybe we will move on from that.

**Dr ROWAN:** Mr Chair, I was trying to clarify that. Are other substances beyond alcohol and beyond just supply reduction strategies in relation to demand reduction and harm minimisation processes included in the reform agenda?

**Ms TRAD:** I might take that question in two parts and for the sake of the member and the committee I will repeat what I said earlier. Alcohol management plans are essentially about controlling the amount and the consumption of alcohol in Indigenous communities. If we are talking about drugs, they are prohibited substances and there is a policing response to that. If we are talking about sly grogging, again there is a policing response to that.

Fundamentally, I think the issue around harm minimisation in terms of positive futures for Indigenous communities, particularly discrete and remote Indigenous communities—the fundamental issue to progress harm minimisation and a reduction in dysfunction is the same there as it is in any community. It is about economic opportunity. It is about job opportunities. It is about healthy family environments. It is about health services and culturally appropriate education services. It is about having mentors and representatives in communities where kids and young people actually see their parents, their mentors, their uncles and aunties going to work and making a contribution to the local economy. Fundamentally, that is what needs to happen. Through the Queensland Productivity Commission report

and its key recommendations, we know that we can progress those priorities with local communities—with them, not to them—in partnership with them. That is a very important report—and our response—going forward.

We know that for a lot of communities—and I would assume that the honourable member has visited some discrete Indigenous communities. It does not matter what government you are talking about, the complaint and the concerns that are expressed by and large are the same. It is about community ownership, control and determination around the programs and the services that are delivered in their communities to address the economic, social and cultural needs of that community. We have made a commitment through our response to the Queensland Productivity Commission, which recommended in this way that we would be working with communities around local agreements for control, for self-determination, for ensuring that local decision-makers, local councils and traditional elders are part of the decision-making process around the programs and services that are provided in these communities for their use and benefit.

**CHAIR:** I now call on the member for Pine Rivers for a question.

**Ms BOYD:** I refer to page 3 of the DATSIP SDS. Can the Deputy Premier please explain how the Queensland government will assist with home ownership in remote discrete communities?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. This is an area that has been the long-held ambition of a number of governments, so I am very pleased to report on this issue. We are committed to facilitating the opportunity for home ownership in Indigenous communities. The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships' home ownership team supports opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in Indigenous communities to purchase their own home. The government is committed to supporting individuals and families to purchase a home. It will provide not only a secure place to live but an asset that can generate wealth and provide security for their immediate family and future generations. The Palaszczuk government is removing barriers to home ownership by providing comprehensive and practical support and consultation to applicants, councils and trustees to progress home ownership in Indigenous communities.

DATSIP is currently working in partnership with the Department of Housing and Public Works and the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy to assist families with the opportunity to achieve sustainable home ownership opportunities. To do this, DATSIP supports and consults potential applicants of home ownership to ensure that any land tenure barriers such as native title are addressed through Indigenous land use agreements, or ILUAs. Further consultation is also undertaken to ensure prospective home owners are aware of the risks and responsibilities of becoming a home owner and, where necessary, is a conduit between the client and other providers such as Indigenous Business Australia, the Public Trustee and banks. When required, DATSIP also undertakes research to identify and determine the beneficiaries of intestate estates to assist in resolving legacy issues. DATSIP also supports development applications in town-planning processes so that home ownership in these remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is an achievable option.

DATSIP has exceeded the SDS target of 22 home ownership opportunities for 2017-18 by three, with a total number of 25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants now owning their own home. It means that there are a number of home owners now in Poruma Island and Warraber Island in the Torres Strait, Woorabinda, Lockhart River, Palm Island, Kowanyama and Yarrabah. Through the Palaszczuk government, home ownership has become possible. Twenty-five families that might never have had the opportunity to own their own home now have long-term, secure housing that will have an impact on many generations to come. It is clear that progress is being made and that the Palaszczuk Labor government is taking the right approach.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I refer to page 3 of the DATSIP SDS. Can the Deputy Premier please expand on how land transfers to traditional owners in Cape York Peninsula are generating and expanding economic and employment opportunities?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank the member for the question. This is quite an exciting program and it has been a long-term project developed under successive Labor governments. Since its commencement, the Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution Program has returned almost 3.7 million hectares to traditional owners on the cape. This includes the transfer of 28 national parks covering an area of over two million hectares and unfettered Aboriginal freehold land covering an area of 1.5 million hectares. The transfer of Aboriginal freehold land is granted under the Aboriginal Land Act of 1991, which specifies landholding entities can be either a land trust or an Aboriginal corporation. Areas that are designated as national park are managed through a binding agreement between the landholding entity and the state.

The Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution Program supports each of the Aboriginal landholding entities to promote and take up economic development and job creation opportunities through land ownership and joint management of national parks. It is estimated that for each tenure resolution resulting in the transfer of land there is an average of 10 traditional owner casual employment opportunities secured. The program provides advice to community in meeting legislative requirements, in governance training, securing technical and other specialist advice, and on-ground technical assistance with natural and cultural resource management.

In the last financial year the program supported 25 traditional owners to complete a Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management. This resulted in full-time employment for graduates with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and other non-government land management agencies. Over 30 traditional owners also obtained direct employment through on-ground land management projects such as fire mitigation, pest and weed control, information and signage, cultural surveys, infrastructure clean-ups, reserve compliance and natural and botanical surveys.

As owners of Aboriginal freehold land, Aboriginal landholding entities have the ability to enter into licences and leases with third parties. This creates significant economic development opportunities such as leasing arrangements with tourism companies. Several groups on the cape are already receiving regular income as a result of this. In addition, land ownership attracts funds from programs such as the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program, the Commonwealth Working on Country program and the Indigenous Protected Area program. At least three Aboriginal landholding entities on Cape York Peninsula have sufficient funds through these programs to employ a full-time team of rangers plus a ranger coordinator.

**CHAIR:** We only have a very short time and I want to reserve some time for you to clarify any of the answers you have given. However, I think this is important. Can the Deputy Premier please advise how Queensland's \$500 million contribution to a national redress scheme will facilitate access to support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors of institutional child sexual abuse in Queensland?

**Ms TRAD:** I thank you for the question. You are right: it is a very important issue. We made the decision in April this year that we would allocate more than \$500 million to cover the redress of those Queenslanders who were abused in state run institutions as part of the national redress scheme. As we know, there was quite a significant overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in state run institutions, so it is critical that the government unit responsible for the redress rollout is very cognisant of cultural issues and conducts itself appropriately. I think the biggest concern that I have—and there is a need for us to ensure this—is that there is sufficient communication in communities around the scheme and how community members can access the scheme. Having dealt with the repatriation of other schemes and the fallout from that, I think it is very important that we continue to communicate and that we do so in a culturally appropriate way.

Of all of the survivors who took part in private sessions, almost 7,000 survivors, or just over 14 per cent of them, identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but of course that is a national figure and not just a Queensland figure. We completely understand that, if true healing is to occur, consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is very important in terms of how we roll out the scheme and how they access it. That is front and centre of our thinking and how we will implement the rollout of the national redress scheme in Queensland.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. On that serious note, the time allocated for the consideration of the proposed expenditure areas administered by the Deputy Premier has expired. Deputy Premier, there were two questions taken on notice. Is there anything you wish to add that might answer the questions that you have agreed to take on notice?

**Ms TRAD:** Yes, thank you very much. Can I just respond regarding the absentee surcharge on land tax. There is an exemption for a public officer of the Commonwealth or of the state who is absent in the performance of their duties. That would refer to ADF—

**Ms BOYD:** You will have to do another tweet, Tim.

**Ms TRAD:** In addition, there is also an exemption for employees sent overseas at the direction of their employer, provided they have been employed for 12 months and they stay overseas for less than five years.

In relation to on-course bookmakers, in its consultation with industry Treasury was informed that a \$300,000 threshold, double that of South Australia, would exclude the vast majority of small operators such as on-course bookmakers. The latest available statistics support this view. We are still consulting with bookmakers and the industry, as per my response.

On payroll tax, I wish to clarify that payroll tax rates in Queensland were the lowest of mainland states in Australia in 2017-18. I am also happy to report that in May 2018—just correcting the figure—Mackay's unemployment rate was 3.6 per cent, the lowest regional unemployment rate in this state, not 3.8 per cent as I answered.

In relation to the member for Moggill's question about the Moving Ahead strategy, I am happy to report that QIPP performance SDS metrics are that the total value of the Queensland government addressable spend with Indigenous businesses and the total number of businesses procured from—future metrics will also focus on data that will assist future investment programs, building the capability of Indigenous businesses to secure increased contracts in government and industry supply chains. Procurement opportunities are across the spectrum of geographical scope.

Lastly, I table for the benefit of the member for Maiwar the ministerial statement that came out in May last year regarding investment and royalties for a new resources policy and new resource placements.

Finally, Mr Chair, I thank you and all committee members. I particularly want to thank the secretariat. I do understand how much work goes into the estimates committee process. I know there is a lot of tireless work behind the scenes to get everything in order. I want to thank everyone who is here today from my agencies as well as everyone who helped them prepare: my Under Treasurer, Jim Murphy, and his entire team, particularly all the deputy under treasurers; from DATSIP, Acting Director-General Tammy Williams and deputy directors-general. I thank you all for the literally hundreds and thousands of hours put in by departments not only over the course of estimates but also in the preparation of the budget. It is truly an intensive exercise. I want to thank the DLOs and staff from the Cabinet Legislation and Liaison Office in both of my agencies for all of the work they have done. Finally, I thank my very hardworking ministerial staff and my chief of staff, Mark Bellaver, who have put in an enormous effort to make sure I was fully prepared for the day.

**CHAIR:** I also wish to express my thanks to departmental officials, especially Treasury, for their hard work in the preparation of the budget. I will not thank the secretariat yet because we still have another session to go. Leave is granted to table the document put forward by the Deputy Premier. There being no questions on notice, I thank the Deputy Premier, officials and departmental officers for their attendance. The committee will now adjourn for a break and the hearing will resume at 6.45 pm with the examination of the estimates for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

**Proceedings suspended from 6.03 pm to 6.45 pm.**

## **ESTIMATES—ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE—LOCAL GOVERNMENT, RACING AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS**

### **In Attendance**

Hon. SJ Hinchliffe, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Ms L Foley, Chief of Staff

**Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs**

Mr W Agnew, Director-General

Ms K Parton, Deputy Director-General, Strategy, Governance and Engagement

**Racing Queensland**

Mr B Parnell, Chief Executive Officer

**Queensland Racing Integrity Commission**

Mr R Barnett APM, Racing Integrity Commissioner

 **CHAIR:** During the break the Clerk issued a clarification in relation to the process of obtaining members' biographical information and confirmed that each member was emailed the document and given the opportunity to make corrections as part of the process. We will put that on the committee's web page and I table that as part of the process. Leave is granted.

The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2018 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. The committee will examine the minister's portfolio areas until 9 pm. The visiting members present are the member for Noosa and the member for Warrego.

I remind those present today that this hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules that apply to questions in parliament apply to this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief, relate to just one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preamble, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that the relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the Minister, Director-General, officials and departmental officers and the many members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard I ask officials and advisers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Minister or the Director-General. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of local government, racing and multicultural affairs open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Local government truly is the level of government closest to the community. Local governments throughout the state deliver many of the basic services that Queenslanders rely on every day: maintaining roads, keeping parks and gardens open, investing in public libraries and, yes, collecting our rubbish. Overwhelmingly, local governments across Queensland do an outstanding job delivering frontline services and representing their communities. The vast majority of the councillors and council staff I have met since becoming local government minister are hardworking, honest individuals. They are contributing day in, day out with the policies and strategic input that make their communities better places to live.

But there is more to local government than roads, rates and rubbish. Queenslanders also want to have trust in their local government institutions. They want to know that ratepayers' funds are being used wisely and that there are sound decision-making and governance processes in place. This kind of focus has become even more pronounced in recent months with a series of disturbing allegations about alleged activities in certain local governments making headlines. Let me be clear: these alleged behaviours only relate to a tiny minority; however, it saddens me that the reputation of local government

has taken such a hit. I have heard from councillors across the state that suspicion and disregard have impacted the entire sector. We have seen a loss of confidence and therefore trust. This is precisely why the Palaszczuk government is seeking to build even further on the wideranging local government reforms we have already delivered. We have seen the first tranche of Belcarra laws and we have more work to do in delivering on those commitments. We are also introducing a bill to dismiss the Ipswich City Council, which has been triggered by a series of massive governance failures that have ultimately resulted in dozens of charges against current and former councillors, officials and staff—something that I know the committee is very well aware of—but it is not all doom and gloom.

I have to say that I am astounded at the imagination, optimism, courage and hope for a brighter future that I see as I travel around the state and work with and talk to councils and understand the issues that local governments are confronting. Councils, I think, share the government's vision for a more accountable sector that is more financially resilient, one that can deliver for all communities regardless of their size or postcode. Queensland's peak local government industry body, the LGAQ, also shares our vision for reform, and I thank their leadership for working with the government on these matters. Transparency and accountability are the foundation stones on which we build governments, be they state or local, that people can have confidence in. With confidence comes trust. I am determined to see the trust returned so that the good work of local governments can be celebrated throughout the state and we can continue to build on the excellent relationship between the Queensland government and its local governments that serve our communities right throughout the length and breadth of Queensland.

**CHAIR:** The minister made reference to a small minority of councillors. In relation to standing orders 115(c) and 233, I remind all members to exercise care about matters that may invoke the sub judice rule. Would all members please scan their questions to ensure that they are not in breach of the standing orders by referring to a matter that is before the courts?

**Ms LEAHY:** I would like to welcome departmental officers to this committee hearing and thank them for their attendance. Minister, I note that in 2017-19 the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program was heavily oversubscribed, with 194 projects unsuccessful. Minister, 10 years down the track we are now seeing the impact of the approximately \$1 billion that was removed from the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program by previous Labor governments. What does the government intend to do about this infrastructure crisis in local government?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I thank the member for Warrego for the question. The Local Governments Grants and Subsidies Program, which is a \$61.5 million program, has seen some 92 projects for 73 local governments in recent times. It is a vitally important grants program that supports local governments to deliver community, economic and social infrastructure projects. It delivers key projects that meet community needs; contributes to sustainable and liveable communities; aligns with state, regional and local priorities; supports economic growth, innovation and community development; increases job creation and trains students in local communities; contributes to building safe, caring and connected communities; enhances access to infrastructure and services; supports Queensland communities to be more resilient to natural disasters; and reduces future expenditure on asset restoration.

In 2017 the department announced that the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program would be a two-year program—which was very welcomed by local government—offering \$60 million for projects over the 2017-18 and 2018-19 financial years, as you alluded to in your question. All 77 local governments were eligible to submit projects for assessment as part of annual application based competitive funding. Due to savings also being available from prior years, the total allocation for the 2017-19 program was, as I mentioned earlier, \$61.5 million. That saw some 73 councils deliver 92 different projects to support local jobs for Queenslanders.

It is important to understand that this program works in partnership with local government. It provides up to a 60 per cent subsidy on eligible projects, but generally they are projects that local governments themselves must be engaged in. Let's be clear: what we saw under a previous government that made the biggest hit on local government capability in this area and the role of the state working with local government was the damage that was done under the Newman government. We saw LGGSP cut and there was no such thing as Works for Queensland, which is a program that is vitally successful.

**Ms LEAHY:** We saw cuts in 2009 too.

**CHAIR:** Order! Member for Warrego, let's start off on the right foot. We put the question and we allow the minister to answer it. If you have a question that follows up on any specifics or if you have another question, you can put that afterwards. Those are the standing orders we are following.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** During that period we also saw that funding for discrete Indigenous communities was down, and what I am saying are all things that were entirely agreed with by the LGAQ. There are plenty of statements where they have said that. We also saw the impact of there being no indexing under the Newman government. As recently as last year the LGAQ said that there has never been more money for local government from the state, so I do not agree with the premise of the question. What I do believe is that we are working well with local government to provide support, and the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program is a great, great example of how that is being delivered.

The reality is that items on this particular program are not as large as they may have been in the past, but the biggest cuts and the biggest damage was done in the 2012-14 period. What we have done with further programs, most importantly for regional councils, is the delivery of the Works for Queensland package, which has delivered the best opportunities that councils appreciate and welcome.

**Ms LEAHY:** I refer to the answers to questions on notice regarding the review of grants to local government. What date will the report and recommendations be made publicly available, and will the opposition be considered as a stakeholder in this process?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I want to first thank the member for Warrego for the question. Certainly there is no question—and I think I have demonstrated this so far in my time as the minister—that I would make sure that the opposition is fully briefed on any programs and processes going forward. There is no question that the grants review is a major step and will inform a major set of reforms in this area. I can assure you that the opposition will be appropriately briefed when the time is right, and how you want to regard that—whether that means stakeholder status or not—it is up to you to determine whether you think that is the case.

What I can assure you is that these matters are due to be considered soon at the highest levels of government, and that gives us a great opportunity to work with all of the key stakeholders and to work across government to ensure that we deliver a process that not only responds to the recommendations that have come from the review of grants to local government in terms of current and future state assessments, as the review is titled, but also ensures that we take on fresh input into how we can ensure that the approximately \$976 million, including Commonwealth assistance, that was allocated to infrastructure grants in local government in 2017-18 alone is delivered as effectively as it can be and ensure that we minimise the associated administration costs in the delivery process and literally provide as much bang for the buck as we can for local government. That is the purpose. That is the reason we committed to the review in the first place in consultation with the sector and have worked on it so strongly and set aside funds in this budget for the delivery of recommendations.

**Ms LEAHY:** Thank you, Minister. Referring to page 4 of the SDS at dot point 3 with regard to implementing the recommendations from Belcarra, can the minister advise when the government first learned about any concerns at Ipswich?

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order, Mr Chair. I am just seeking some direction here around whether that would actually fall under the rules of sub judice.

**CHAIR:** I think that all members need to be careful in both the question and the answer, but I think the answer could be put without breaching standing orders 115(c) and 223. However, I do caution the minister about his approach.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** What I can speak about is my role in my time as minister. Certainly when I became the minister there were some concerns and issues that had clearly been in the public realm by that stage in relation to the Ipswich City Council. Matters have progressed in that time to the point where we now see some 15 people, including a former mayor and the current mayor, facing 79 charges including against employees and other council contractors and others associated with the council. The deepest elements of these matters have clearly come to light in the time since the actions when the CCC had been conducting their inquiries and I would prefer not to say too much more about that while those inquiries are continuing. I understand they will be reporting in relation to Ipswich City Council matters in a further way in the near future, but that is a matter that another committee might want to cross-examine the chair of the CCC about at a future estimates committee hearing.

**Ms LEAHY:** Minister, did the department raise concerns in your incoming ministerial brief in November 2017?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** There is no question that there was an incoming ministerial brief in relation to matters relating to the Ipswich City Council, and I knew as a consequence of those briefings that my predecessor, Minister Furner, had referred matters to the CCC throughout the course of last year. That was a matter that was well known to me.

**Ms LEAHY:** Can the minister advise the committee if there was a specific recommendation of the CCC, either initially or subsequently, to introduce the draft Local Government (Dissolution of Ipswich City Council) Bill to remove the council? I am happy with a yes or no?

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**Ms LEAHY:** Was there a specific recommendation—

**CHAIR:** Member for Warrego, there is a point of order before the committee. Member for Pine Rivers, what was your point of order?

**Ms BOYD:** Thank you, Chair. I ask for your guidance in relation to sub judice but also anticipating debate of a bill that is currently before the House.

**CHAIR:** My understanding is that—

**Ms LEAHY:** There is no bill before the House.

**CHAIR:** My understanding is we have concluded Belcarra and we have said to the House that there will be further legislation to be put forward, but we have not put anything before the House. It has not been put on the *Notice Paper*.

**Ms BOYD:** Sorry, I thought it had.

**CHAIR:** That is all right. Member for Warrego, do you want to restate your question please?

**Ms LEAHY:** Thank you, Mr Chair. Can the minister advise the committee if there was a specific recommendation of the CCC, either initially or subsequently, to introduce a draft Local Government (Dissolution of Ipswich City Council) Bill to remove the council—a specific recommendation either initially or subsequently? Just a simple yes or no would be fine.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** No.

**Ms LEAHY:** So then, Minister, why did you state publicly on ABC Radio that the CCC told you to take this action?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** What I said is that the chair of the CCC had made it very clear to me that he believed that the action that was needed in order to achieve the transparency, the accountability, the certainty—which is, again, a phrase I will specifically use—that is needed in order to deliver a good-quality local government in Ipswich would be the dismissal of the council. He has made that clear to me that he believes that that is the best outcome. He did not make recommendations as to how that should occur and I did not say that he did that and I did not say that the CCC had made that recommendation. I said the chair of the CCC.

**Ms LEAHY:** Minister, how many times have you met with the CCC in relation to the Belcarra recommendations or any concerns regarding Ipswich? Is there a continual engagement by you with the CCC on these issues?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I have met formally on a few occasions with the chair of the CCC. I have been in communication with him on a regular basis. We ensure that any matters that are brought to my attention that I should be referring to the CCC are referred as quickly as they can be. As I was alluding to earlier, it is my understanding that that had been the case with the former minister. That had been happening on a regular basis.

In the circumstances of an ongoing investigation when there has also been a need to take action in relation to Ipswich City Council, in my belief it has been important and prudent to have an ongoing dialogue with the chair of the CCC in order to make sure that the chair and his staff are not surprised by things that might be coming along the way. Indeed, he has made it clear that he did not want me to be surprised by things as they come along. He has been very careful and prudent not to say anything to me or to provide me with any information that could be misused, and that is quite correct and right. I equally have been prudent and careful not to divulge matters that are internal government matters or anything like that, but we have kept in touch and kept each other informed in order to ensure that there are no actions that we might take that might jeopardise the proper responsibilities and roles of either the CCC or indeed the department and the government.

**Ms BOLTON:** Minister, I refer to page 2 of the Service Delivery Statements. Is there any progress in the efforts for smaller councils in South-East Queensland such as Noosa, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim and Somerset to be reclassified as regional councils in order for them to access the Works for Queensland program?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I appreciate the question from the member for Noosa and I understand her interest in this, because the Works for Queensland program is indeed so very successful and is delivering such great outcomes for regional councils outside of South-East Queensland. I cannot go anywhere in the state outside of South-East Queensland without having mayors and councillors praise the Works for Queensland program and its delivery and the way in which it empowers councils to not only make good decisions but also smooth out the employment challenges that they have, and employment challenges are a big thing in this regard.

At this stage the scope of the successful Works for Queensland program is still limited to councils outside the south-east corner, and this is because unemployment is generally higher in regional Queensland and first and foremost the Works for Queensland program is a job-creating program. That is its intent. It is about smoothing out jobs and providing an impetus for job creation. However, I have to say that I am always open to suggestions and we will always review the program guidelines from time to time with feedback from stakeholders.

I certainly have been, I must acknowledge, approached by councils within South-East Queensland. I think it would be imprudent and inappropriate for the large, highly sustainable and managed councils in South-East Queensland to be making approaches about this, but there have been other councils and other regions within councils about which representations have been made, including, I must note, representations from the member for Redlands about the southern Moreton Bay islands in relation to this sort of issue.

I must make it clear that, because the program is envisaged and created as a job creation program targeted at regional Queensland, that is where it is contained to at the moment and it is very much for those regional councils—for those smaller outlying councils in particular—where their day labour workforce does not have the work that can provide for continuity of employment. The Works for Queensland program plays a very important role in smoothing out the employment opportunities for that day labour workforce in particular for those councils, and that is why it is such an important matter for particularly those remote and rural councils. It plays a very important role in the management of their own workforce as a consequence. As I said to the member for Noosa, I am always looking and always interested in how we can improve and deliver better for councils and for Queensland. I take your interest and I know that there has been feedback from councils in South-East Queensland around this matter too.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I refer to the minister's response to question on notice No. 7 in relation to complaints received about the Ipswich City Council and the service area description on page 3 of the SDS of the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs relating to integrity, governance and financial sustainability, and I ask: have Ipswich ratepayers had sufficient access to information on council owned entities and are the financial statements of council owned entities such as Ipswich City Properties required to be consolidated into the financial statements of the parent council?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I thank the member for Redlands for the question. The short answer is, no, they are not. Accessing information on the Ipswich City Council owned entity Ipswich City Properties, or ICP, has been somewhat difficult. There has been very little transparency from people, frankly, who should have known better.

When I read in the 7 March 2018 McGrathNicol report, which was tabled by me in the parliament last night, that the controlled entities were set up to assist council to operate more effectively without having to consider the Local Government Act 2009 provisions, I was not surprised given the findings that were detailed more broadly in the McGrathNicol report. Yet the directors of ICP, all of them either councillors or senior council staff, are very familiar with the Local Government Act and, therefore, very aware of the transparency requirements of that act—requirements that are put in place so that Queensland's ratepayers can have good visibility as to how their money is spent.

The act prescribes that a council may not borrow money without the permission of the state's Treasurer. A council may not, without going to tender, dispose of property, including land, without the express permission of the Minister for Local Government and a council must comply with procurement rules. A council controlled entity need not. These are just three examples that are very pertinent to Ipswich City Properties. I seek leave to table a copy of the March 2018 organisational chart of five of the Ipswich City Council controlled entities. We have copies available.

**CHAIR:** Has this document been tabled before?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** It is a page out of the McGrathNicol report that was tabled last night.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** As you can see from that, each entity includes directors James Lindsay, Councillor Paul Tully and Andrew Roach, that is, CEO, councillor and CFO respectively. They are joined by Craig Maudsley and Councillor David Morrison in the case of Ipswich Motorsport Park, or the IMP. As of March 2018, Mr Maudsley and Councillor Morrison were CFO and councillor respectively. At that time, Councillor Antonioli is a director of ICP.

These people all clearly in their roles require a working knowledge of the Local Government Act in order to undertake those day jobs, but the principles of transparency and accountability that are so deeply embedded in the Local Government Act and which should be understood to be important are clearly easily disregarded once these same people assume the mantle of their responsibilities at Ipswich City Properties. None of these directors brought special skills to the boards of these Ipswich City Council owned entities and nor were they impartial. It is far from difficult to imagine that the shady practices of ICP directors would not taint the Ipswich City Council workplaces.

I also seek to table an October 2015 letter from the ICP company secretary, Andrew Roach, to the Ipswich City Council CEO, Jim Lindsay, spruiking the glory of a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape the city's CBD.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Let us think about that document for a moment. Mr Lindsay and Mr Roach, both directors of ICP, Mr Lindsay and Mr Roach, both employees of the Ipswich City Council—CEO and CFO respectively—are writing to each other spruiking this process and the project of the ICP. It is pretty farcical.

Lastly, could I touch on this morning's comment on the ABC Radio Brisbane breakfast program by Councillor Paul Tully, who said he knew nothing of the McGrathNicol reports, yet this note from acting CEO Gary Kellar, following a December meeting, refers to the need for a special meeting of council in January to consider the report. The minutes show that Councillor Tully, among others, attended that meeting. I seek leave to table both the acting CEO's note and the minutes of the January special meeting of the Ipswich City Council.

**CHAIR:** These are public council minutes?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** They are—of the special meeting.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** In answer to the question asked by the member for Redlands, there are very grave concerns about sufficient access to information and, indeed, attempts to cover up whether that information was available and how it should have been made available. These are matters that I think are entirely appropriate to have raised.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Thank you. I refer to page 71 of Budget Paper No. 4 in relation to building integrity in local government. Will the minister advise how many councillor complaints have been received in the 2017-18 financial year across the state?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I thank the member for Redlands for the question and for her ongoing support of accountable and transparent local government—something that I know she is quite passionate about. To provide context, complaints about councillor conduct other than the conduct of Brisbane City Council councillors are managed by the complaints framework under the Local Government Act 2009. In the 2017-18 financial year, 162 formal councillor conduct complaints were received by the department comprising 244 separate allegations. Twenty-two of those formal complaints were in relation to alleged corrupt conduct and were referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission. Eighteen allegations of misconduct were referred to the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal and 61 allegations were referred to the regional conduct review panels for investigation, hearing and determination. Four of the allegations of the lesser offence category of inappropriate conduct were sustained by the department, including two about the inappropriate conduct of mayors. Along with formal complaints against councillors in Queensland, both my office and the department receive annually many hundreds of letters from ratepayers unhappy with either the conduct of their local council or a decision that it has made. I have to say that these numbers are not recorded, because there are so many.

The committee is no doubt aware that, to address the concerns relating to the complexity and impartiality of existing complaints frameworks, this government commissioned an independent review into the councillor complaints system, which was tabled alongside the government's response at

Mr Furner's estimates hearing last year. The bill emanating from this review was passed on 17 May this year and the new framework is on track to be in full swing by the end of the year—something that I know will be very welcome for those people who are interested in local government throughout the state but also particularly welcomed by councillors themselves, because it is a much better system than the one that we have had to use when dealing with those 162 complaints during the last financial year. The councillor complaints process that will be in place fully in December will be a very big improvement. As I say, it is one that is not only welcomed by people interested in good local governance and councillors but most particularly welcomed by CEOs who were put in the difficult position in local governments right across the state.

**CHAIR:** I refer to page 5 of the department's SDS. Will the minister advise why it is so important for the government to ensure that there are strong communities across the state?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Thank you for the question. Clearly, local government plays a really important role in developing, sustaining and supporting those strong communities. The Palaszczuk government is very committed to working with local governments and others to support strong communities because, without strong communities in our regions, we cannot have a strong Queensland. That is fundamental to the nature of our state.

Rural and regional communities are driving our agricultural and tourism industries, which are vitally important to the development of the state as well. They are such a very important hub for a whole range of our diverse industries. That is why, through its many different funding programs, the Palaszczuk government is providing opportunities for local government to invest in the new and improved infrastructure and facilities that support those communities and the industries that sustain and develop them. That results in communities that are not only more liveable but provide opportunities for councils to boost their economies and employment, as I was saying. That livability of communities in terms of sustaining and retaining population is very important. That is something that I hear very strongly when I am visiting communities, particularly in the west of the state.

Often, what really makes these communities so special is the sense of community spirit that comes alive when they come together to celebrate or to respond to a crisis of some sort. I think that is something that, as Queenslanders, we can be really proud of. Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to visit Barcaldine during the Tree of Knowledge Festival. The festivities started with a street festival on Friday night with the school choirs and then there were some go-cart races among the food vans.

**CHAIR:** We have been there together.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** We were there a couple of years ago and saw the vitality of these communities. I was also there for the races on the Saturday. I know the member for Mermaid Beach will be keen to get out to see the grass track.

**Mr STEVENS:** I love country racing.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** He loves country racing—I can assure you that you will hear more about that later tonight—and also seeing the goat races after the races—

**Mr STEVENS:** People going home.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I assume that that was some sort of reference to me as a goat. I missed that.

**Mr STEVENS:** No, Minister.

**CHAIR:** No, I would have picked up on that, Minister. Most of the interjections from the member for Mermaid Beach are not to be taken that seriously, but I would have picked up on that.

**Mr STEVENS:** No, it was not against you, Minister.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** These sorts of festivities are a great example of the way you see the community spirit come alive and the sheer numbers of people who come out for all of those activities and others that went on over the weekend—not just from the town but from surrounding towns and the stations. They mixed with a really huge influx of tourists. It was really something to behold. That is something that could not have happened without the council. It could not have happened without the way in which we support the council. Something that is really inspiring to me as the Minister for Local Government is to see the Palaszczuk government work with local governments, particularly those rural and remote councils, to support their activities.

**Ms LEAHY:** My question is to the director-general, Mr Agnew. When did the department first raise concerns about the conduct at Ipswich? When did the department receive its first complaint about Ipswich? Did the department raise these concerns with the former local government ministers?

**Mr Agnew:** I thank the member for the question. I might take some advice on the timing of the receipt of complaints. I started in this role in May.

**CHAIR:** It is fairly specific, Mr Agnew. If you wish to take the question, when you have the details—or if you could get the details now, whichever way you prefer—

**Mr Agnew:** We can certainly tell you quite quickly the number of complaints received in relation to Ipswich. I think that number may already have been referred to.

**Ms LEAHY:** I would be happy for you to take that on notice. Perhaps if you could give the committee some dates.

**CHAIR:** Mr Agnew, you are unable to take it on notice under the standing orders. I have just informed the member for Warrego that you would have to ask the minister in order to take it on notice. Would it be possible that you could report back to us by eight o'clock or else we will seek to see whether the minister can take it on notice. Returning to the question from the member for Warrego, you are going to get back to us at some point?

**Mr Agnew:** Yes, we will seek to get back to you as soon as we can.

**Ms LEAHY:** That is fine, Mr Chairman. Minister, you have made quite an in-depth study of what has been happening at Ipswich and you have had a number of chats with the CCC. Can you advise the committee if the government's legislation to stifle the Supreme Court action effectively covers up any damaging information about the government and/or its members?

**CHAIR:** I think there are a number of problems there to do with standing order 115(b). Firstly it is argumentative, there is definitely inference about the actions of the member but also a hypothetical matter about what was to be uncovered. In that way I am going to rule that question out of order. I invite you to rephrase it in a way that does not offend the standing order and you could certainly put the question again.

**Ms LEAHY:** I will move on.

**CHAIR:** I invite you to rephrase it if you wish to put the question again or move on.

**Ms LEAHY:** I will move on, Mr Chairman. My next question is again to the director-general, Mr Agnew. Can advice be provided by the department in relation to both the first and the second show-cause notices for Ipswich City Council and can that advice be tabled for the benefit of this committee—the advice the department provided?

**Mr Agnew:** I would say the nature of the advice that was provided to the minister in relation to those show-cause notices was largely of a legal nature in relation to the minister's powers under the act and providing advice to the minister around the options the minister had available in exercising those powers and I would say a lot of that advice would be under legal privilege.

**Ms LEAHY:** Did the department have any reservations about these notices at all?

**Mr Agnew:** The advice that we provided to the minister was of a legal nature and that would be under privilege.

**Ms LEAHY:** Were there any reservations from the department at all?

**Mr Agnew:** I cannot disclose it. They are of a legal nature.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Point of order.

**CHAIR:** There is a point of order.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Under standing order 115 we are sailing very close to the wind in terms of questions that are currently before the committee.

**CHAIR:** I am not sure about that one. I will let the question stand. We had a conversation with the Clerk this morning about whether ministers could contribute to a question addressed to the director-general or other officers. If the director-general feels that the minister could add to that answer, just as the director-general can refer to other officers they can also suggest that the minister may want to add to that question. The question stands, member for Warrego. I think the question has been put. Do you want to put it again?

**Ms LEAHY:** I will move on, Mr Chairman.

**CHAIR:** Do you have anything further to add, Mr Agnew?

**Mr Agnew:** I was just going to raise again, if I could, that the court case in relation to the second show-cause is still ongoing so we do need to be very careful in terms of discussing those matters as well.

**CHAIR:** I do not think it offends sub judice but I imagine that there is caution in the department when you have presented a case before the court and I understand that caution.

**Ms LEAHY:** I am happy to move on, Mr Chairman, although my next question is to the director-general again. Mr Agnew, in relation to the Works for Queensland program, what is the average cost of a sign for a Works for Queensland project? Do you have an average costing of the signage?

**Mr Agnew:** That is a matter of detail I might need to seek some advice on from the department.

**Ms LEAHY:** Do you have a rough ballpark figure?

**Mr Agnew:** I am advised that the councils produce the signs themselves so that is not funded by the department. We have not had disclosure of the cost of those signs.

**Ms LEAHY:** It is a requirement of the program that each project—and there are some 600 projects—have a sign; is that correct? There would be some cost and that sign would come from the Works for Queensland allocation of funding?

**Mr Agnew:** It is a requirement of the Works for Queensland program; that is correct. We do not have a cost estimate for that sign at the moment. I am advised that that is a reasonably standard requirement for a number of funding programs—for federal programs as well as state programs.

**Ms LEAHY:** There are in the questions on notice some 600 projects, so if the signs were roughly about \$250 each—

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order: I draw the member's attention to questions that are repetitive in nature. I believe that the director-general has answered this question two or three times already this evening.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, member for Pine Rivers. I think two times the question was put slightly differently. There was some repetition in the questions. We first asked what was the cost of the signs that were required and then there was a confirmation that the signs were required and now there seems to be an argument advancing again that signs are required. I would counsel the member for Warrego that questions do need to not be repetitive.

**Ms LEAHY:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. Mr Agnew, do you agree that signage is best use of taxpayers' money from Works for Queensland, which is a jobs program? Is the signage the best use when youth unemployment—

**Ms BOYD:** Point of order.

**CHAIR:** I think I can anticipate that the question seeks the opinion of the director-general and in that way offends the standing orders. It could be rephrased in a way that did not seek opinion, but in that way it is against the standing orders so if you could rephrase please, member for Warrego.

**Ms LEAHY:** Is the signage the best use of taxpayers' funds when youth unemployment in the outback region is over 60 per cent? Wouldn't it be better if that signage was actually going to creating jobs for youth in the outback region?

**CHAIR:** We have advanced the question to be both seeking an opinion and advancing an argument which offends two different standing orders. We could put this question in a way that did not. Member for Warrego, perhaps you could move on or rephrase the question for a second time in a way that does not offend the standing orders.

**Ms LEAHY:** I will move on, Mr Chairman. I refer to page 3, dot point 7, building local government integrity. In terms of building local government integrity, and with a number of mayors already stood down and another councillor currently facing serious charges, has there been any other behaviour identified at this point that may warrant further charges being laid against any councillors?

**CHAIR:** I think by definition this is not sub judice because the charges have not been laid. I guess the question can be put.

**Ms LEAHY:** It is about the future.

**CHAIR:** I think caution should be exercised in the answer, Minister, if that is fair enough to say.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I guess my answer would be that, in relation to the sorts of matters that I think the member for Warrego is alluding to, I am not the primary prosecuting authority. The department is not either, but there might be some circumstances where there is some space in that. These are matters that are watched and observed very closely and, as I referred to earlier, close engagement and understanding is in place with the CCC, which is the body that is the primary body, and has been in recent times the primary body, pursuing matters and taking up matters that result in charges being laid.

I guess I want to come back to reiterating that these matters that you are alluding to—the suspension matters and the provisions that are in the act—all come back to being related to offences that relate to integrity and not other matters. I think there are some circumstances at the moment that are getting a lot of publicity that relate to other matters that are not strictly integrity offences and I would prefer not to comment any further.

**CHAIR:** I also think we do have a relevance question to the expenditure of the local government department. You have made clear that you are not the prosecuting authority so if this line of questioning is to be continued we would have to take into account that this department is not the authority to either proceed with or speculate upon charges to be laid.

**Ms LEAHY:** Mr Chairman, page 3, dot point 7, specifically talks about building local government integrity. It is quite clear in the SDS. If I could please move on.

**CHAIR:** With respect, the minister made clear that the department of local government does not lay charges and certainly does not speculate about charges to be laid against councillors, which was the question that was asked. I made that commentary if we were going to continue down this line of questioning. I wanted to give you guidance about any future questions, not to have you argue with me over that fact.

**Ms LEAHY:** Is the minister able to explain, under his urgent new powerful legislation, why charges for child sex offences were excluded from the list of disqualifying offences requiring a councillor to automatically be stood down?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I thank the member for Warrego for her question because this is an important matter to clarify. It comes down to that statement I made in answer to the previous question that the matters that relate to the suspension power, the automatic suspension power, relate to integrity offences. The list of offences that were included were offences that, on the basis of advice from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, were regarded as integrity offences, offences that would be the subject of not broader matters in the Criminal Code—not everything, but matters that related to the integrity positions. It related to people holding positions of power and positions of influence.

I can understand that the concerns or the challenge of the offences that the member has made mention of not being included in that list of offences, but I have acted, and subsequently the government and the parliament have acted, based upon advice from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

**Ms LEAHY:** Minister, isn't there something fundamentally wrong—

**CHAIR:** Member for Warrego, wait for the call, if you can. Has the member for Noosa any further questions?

**Ms BOLTON:** No, thank you, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** I call the member for Warrego.

**Ms LEAHY:** Isn't there something fundamentally wrong with the approach to local government, then, when a councillor can be stood down for stealing a pencil but not for child sex charges?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I do acknowledge the concern that the member for Warrego has in that regard. I am concerned about that measure. I share your concerns about that, but fundamentally, as I said in my answer to your previous question, the laws that the government has put in place have been based upon advice about the definition of integrity offences and we have to be careful that we do not overshoot this. The example offences that you make reference to are difficult to reconcile with this commentary, but we have to be careful about not overshooting this in relation to the suspension provisions because—

**Ms LEAHY:** It is about undershooting too.

**CHAIR:** Member for Warrego.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I do understand the motivation of the member's concerns, but that is where we have landed and that is where the parliament has landed.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister. I now call the member for Pine Rivers.

**Ms BOYD:** Will the minister please advise the committee of the details of the many projects being undertaken by local government through the Works for Queensland package, as referenced on page 5 of the SDS of the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The Palaszczuk government believes that councils know which projects they need to drive jobs in their regions, which is why we are backing them through the Works for Queensland program. As I said earlier, it is vitally important that we make sure this program delivers right across the

state. One of the best elements of the program is looking at the depth and breadth of the projects being undertaken. I get a real opportunity to see that first-hand as I travel around the state. The program does not dictate to councils that they must fix roads or build buildings; rather, it allows them to undertake projects in their communities that their budgets would not normally allow.

Whether it is a new streetscape in Mount Morgan, a water play area in Julia Creek or repairing footpaths in Goondiwindi, Works for Queensland is delivering for people right across the state. It is unlocking industrial land that can be used to bring jobs to Warwick, it is driving safety near a school in Yeppoon and it is providing tourist facilities for RV campers near Kilkivan. Done right, those projects do not just support local jobs during construction but also help boost local economies in the long-term through more tourists, more investment and other activities that bring more jobs. That is why the Palaszczuk government went to the election with a commitment to extend Works for Queensland for another three years with a further \$200 million to help local governments drive their economies forward.

As I said earlier, everywhere I go in rural and regional Queensland, mayors, councillors and CEOs are all in agreement that Works for Queensland has been a massive boost for their communities. They are very pleased to see our continued commitment, which will deliver more jobs and more infrastructure right across the state. However, I have to note that prior to the last election the LNP refused to commit to Works for Queensland. To this day, it still refuses to acknowledge all the good that it is doing right across the state. Indeed, it sounds like they do not even want to have signs to let people know what is happening. There is a great opportunity for this to become a bipartisan matter. I put my hand out and implore the LNP to support Works for Queensland, to ensure that it becomes an institution for local government in this state for the good that it provides.

**Ms Leahy** interjected.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** You can reciprocate.

**CHAIR:** Minister and member for Warrego, this is not an opportunity for friendly or otherwise repartee across the table. We are putting questions and taking answers.

**Ms RICHARDS:** With reference to page 2 of the SDS, could the minister please advise how the department is contributing to the Queensland government's plan to create jobs by supporting local government infrastructure projects?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** As we were talking about earlier, one of the programs administered by the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs is the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program, which is a \$61.5 million commitment by the Palaszczuk government over the period 2017-19. It supports local governments in delivering key infrastructure projects that support community needs and aligns with state, regional and local priorities. It supports economic growth and innovation. It supports natural disaster resiliency and contributes to building safe, caring and connected communities.

All 77 local governments were eligible to submit. It was assessed as part of the competitive annual funding round. As I said earlier, eligible project costs are subsidised by up to 60 per cent, meaning a real partnership between state and local governments to drive positive outcomes. A wide number of objectives and a vast array of projects are being undertaken by local governments across the state. However, all of them have one thing in common: all those projects will enhance local communities right across the state.

To demonstrate the breadth of the program, some of the projects being funded through the LGGSP include the construction of a geothermal power plant to service the town of Thargomindah, a new hanger for the Windorah aerodrome, replacing asbestos lined sewer pipes in Aramac and even the redevelopment of a pool in Rockhampton, swinging back onto the coast. The program is especially important in rural and regional towns where local governments would struggle with the costs of delivering many of those projects, even though they may be very badly needed. We know that many towns are seeing critical infrastructure reach the end of its usable lifespan, so these partnerships are critical in renewing and expanding them to cope with higher demand. Whether it is a bridge replacement in the Banana Shire or the rejuvenation of a broad walk at Mooloolaba, the Palaszczuk government will continue to work in partnership with local government right across the state. It is important that those projects get the funding that they deserve to deliver better economic opportunities and, indeed, better communities.

**CHAIR:** Could the minister please advise how the service area objective providing high-quality and timely administration of both the local government system and local government funding programs, as referenced on page 3 of the department's SDS, is being met in relation to the Weipa normalisation process?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** As the committee and, indeed, the parliament more broadly would be aware, there have been periodic discussions with Rio Tinto and its predecessor, Comalco, about the feasibility of establishing a local government for Weipa. I find that a lot of people are surprised to learn that there is a part of the state that does not have local government in the way that—

**CHAIR:** I only found it out recently.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** There you go. Only a few weeks ago I was in Weipa and met with representatives from the town authority's Weipa Working Group, which is led by the formidable Mr Michael Rowland, and also with representatives from Rio Tinto. There is an in-principle agreement on a way forward in relation to normalisation, while recognising that the transition will need to be carefully planned to achieve the goal. In 2009, the then Department of Infrastructure and Planning, Rio Tinto, the Weipa Town Authority and the Cook Shire Council began to re-examine the feasibility of establishing a local government for Weipa. It was clear that any proposal at that time would not be sustainable without significant support from Rio Tinto and/or the state government, along with the rationalisation of services and rates and fee increases. Understandably, it was decided not to go on with it at that point.

However, then Rio Tinto began to devolve more responsibility to the Weipa Town Authority, along with increased training and support from the now Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs to assist in capacity building. In 2016 the working group was re-established to provide a formal vehicle for dialogue between all the parties regarding a sustainable local government model for Weipa. I can advise the committee that the next stage in the process will see the working group progress a proposal to the government in late 2018 on potential models for local government.

It is vital that when this transition occurs it is done in a way that creates a sustainable representative local government for Weipa that will be robust in the long term. That is why we need to get it right, now. Weipa has become a real service centre for the western cape and for the cape more generally. The fact that what has become such a significant centre does not enjoy the same form of local government that people across the rest of Queensland enjoy is something that we do need to work on, but we need to get it right and make sure it is sustainable. The work that is being undertaken is very important. It is an example of one of the most significant elements of work that the department is doing.

**CHAIR:** With reference to page 4 of the department's SDS, could the minister outline how capacity building in local government is resulting in positive economic outcomes for councils across Queensland?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The Palaszczuk government and, indeed, the department are working tirelessly to build capacity and improve financial sustainability in councils across the state. We want local governments to operate ethically, transparently and accountably and to promote sound governance and financial stewardship. In order to do this, the department has delivered a range of capacity-building programs to assist councils to operate within the local government principles as set out in the Local Government Act.

In the 2017-18 financial year, more than 600 councillors and local government officers participated in workshops on topics such as councillor inductions, roles and responsibilities, procurement and contract management, governance and effective meeting procedures. Indeed, my department also delivered 'So you want to be a councillor' workshops for candidates in the lead-up to by-elections in the Livingstone Shire, Fraser Coast, Central Highlands, Charters Towers and Gympie regions.

In terms of important economic and infrastructure outcomes, the department facilitated a capacity-building program for the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire to assist with the delivery of safe and reliable drinking water infrastructure. Capacity-building promotes excellence. I want to highlight that this year the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council won a national award for excellence with the development of an emergency telecommunications system that keeps residents in contact with each other and the rest of the world in times of natural disaster. I take this opportunity to again congratulate Mayor Desmond Tayley, his council colleagues and council CEO Eileen Deemal-Hall for their outstanding achievement.

Those are just a few examples of councils doing excellent work, serving their communities across the state. The Palaszczuk government is very proud to support them in that endeavour. Too often we hear only the bad news stories coming out of a select few local governments. Chair, I am glad that your question has given me an opportunity to shed light on some really good news and give great examples of councils doing good things.

**CHAIR:** I call the member for Pine Rivers for some more good news.

**Ms BOYD:** Referring to page 15 of the SDS of the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs, could the minister please outline how the Whitsunday Coast Airport terminal expansion project is vital to tourism in the Whitsundays?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I am really pleased that the Palaszczuk government has been able to support—

**CHAIR:** At eight o'clock we want to transition to Racing, so please keep that in mind as you answer the question, Minister. My apologies.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I did not want to be broken in midstream, but I will keep going. I am pleased that we have been able to support the expansion of the Whitsunday Coast Airport, which is generating local jobs and providing opportunities for local businesses, as well as boosting tourism in the region. The Whitsundays is one of Australia's most popular and beautiful tourist destinations. Every year, hundreds of thousands of visitors from Australia and abroad travel to the region to enjoy that beautiful part of the world.

The airport upgrade will ensure the airport facilities can cater for the growing domestic tourism market on the back of record visitation numbers and will also position the region for potential future moves to cater for international flights. The terminal upgrade will include increased floor area for the terminal and an internal baggage claim area with a baggage carousel, the colocation of check-in facilities for all airline operators, the refurbishment and expansion of the departure lounge and the relocation of the cafe into the lounge, and the provision of floor space for customs and quarantine facilities for future limited international carriers.

The government's \$14 million investment has now been allocated across two years, aligning with the detailed project requirements, with \$10.5 million budgeted to be spent this financial year. The refurbishment of the airport is an important step for the airport and the region. It is another example of the way in which we are supporting and facilitating investment and jobs in the state.

**CHAIR:** I welcome the member for Surfers Paradise, who has previously sought leave to attend the committee. In accordance with our motion, he has been granted leave. Mr Agnew, do you have any follow-up details on matters you were previously asked about that you thought you might be able to get tonight?

**Mr Agnew:** I am about to provide some follow-up. In relation to the first question around the department's awareness of complaints against Ipswich City Council, essentially there were numerous complaints following the March 2016 local government elections which went to the CCC and essentially led to the commencement of the Belcarra review. The department has received 15 complaints about councillor conduct at Ipswich City Council since the March 2016 elections. The conduct which is the subject of these complaints has ranged from inappropriate conduct to one finding of misconduct from the tribunal and allegations of corrupt conduct.

In terms of Operation Belcarra, the department was aware the investigation was underway and monitored the public hearings over that time. A brief was provided to Minister Furner in June 2017 regarding the charges against the mayor at that time, Paul Pisasale, including background on tribunal matters at that point.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Director-General. The committee has now concluded its questioning of the Local Government portfolio area. We will now move to its examination of the estimates for the portfolio areas of Racing and Multicultural Affairs.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I welcome the minister, the director-general and staff to estimates. It is a pleasure to be here. My first question relates to Multicultural Affairs and is to the director-general. It relates to the costs for the staff in Multicultural Affairs as outlined at page 14 of the SDS. I understand from the transcript that last year there were 30 staff in Multicultural Affairs and the staffing cost was \$3.21 million. Could you tell us what the staffing cost is for this year with 48 staff and confirm that there are 18 extra staff?

**Mr Agnew:** In terms of the reporting of staff in that particular table on page 14, the numbers in that table include the distribution of the corporate overhead and staff in central office. The explanation for the increase in staff is that Multicultural Affairs Queensland is now part of a smaller department compared to its previous home in the department of communities before the machinery-of-government change. The 30 staff for Multicultural Affairs remained. The additional 18 is the distribution of central staff within the new Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs. The specific cost of those 48 staff I might seek detail on.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I am happy for you to take that on the notice, if that is okay, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Certainly. Can you endeavour to get back to us and if you cannot then you can get the minister to take it on notice.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I will turn to racing now. I refer to the answer to a pre-estimates question on notice which states that the expenditure of \$3.7 million for the Brisbane Racing Club Eagle Farm track remediation project estimated to be expended in 2017-18 was deferred to 2018-19. Can you explain to the committee why that has happened given that only three months ago—in March—we asked question on notice No. 59 and in your answer you mentioned that \$3.7 million had been allocated for this project? I know that I went around a bit.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Can you clarify that?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** The answer to question on notice No. 59 of 6 March 2018 was that Racing Queensland has allocated a budget of up to \$3.7 million for the project, having acknowledged that they have already spent \$2.815 million since 1 July 2017. Your reply to estimates question on notice No. 15 was that the expenditure of \$3.7 million for the remediation project has been deferred to 2018-19. I am seeking an explanation of that.

**CHAIR:** Is the question about the balance of the \$3.7 million—

**Mr LANGBROEK:** It is passing strange that the two amounts are exactly the same. I suppose I am wondering whether is it another \$3.7 million or it is a portion of the \$3.7 million, as the chair just said.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I am taking a bit of advice on that to clarify that for myself.

**CHAIR:** Is this something that we can return to later rather than take up the time of the member for Surfers Paradise for questions?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I am happy to get clarification on that.

**CHAIR:** We will note that and return to that question rather than delay the member for Surfers Paradise.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Could I ask the CEO of Queensland Racing to come to the table. My question is about staff costs. I note at page 14 of the SDS that there are six in the department. How many staff are there at Racing Queensland and what is the staff cost?

**Mr Parnell:** The staffing costs for Racing Queensland and the head counts are normally detailed in our annual report. We are finalising those at the moment. It will have staff cost details in that.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Minister, can you advise us how much the Monteith report cost? We sought this answer last year and it was unable to be provided.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I might actually refer that question to the CEO of Racing Queensland. Having dealt with that firsthand, that is something he can deal with.

**Mr Parnell:** The cost of the Dale Monteith review was \$52,250.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Can I ask the CEO what the long-term plans are for harness racing and greyhound racing in terms of an infrastructure plan? Having been at Albion Park it is obviously something that has been perplexing the harness racing fraternity and the greyhound fraternity for some time. Can you give the committee some idea about future infrastructure planning for the racing codes in Queensland?

**Mr Parnell:** The government approved our current infrastructure plan in March last year. That approval included \$26.2 million towards approved projects with the Ipswich Turf Club, our country regional plan, track remediation work at Eagle Farm, which the minister has talked about, and capital grants for capital works at the Brisbane Racing Club.

In alignment with that, an updated infrastructure plan was submitted to the minister in autumn. He has asked for further work to be done on that. What is envisaged in our plans for infrastructure for all three codes follows an expression of interest process over the last 12 months looking to identify new sites. Deloitte's study on population and participant mapping showed that those were best suited in the south and western corridors of Brisbane. There is a short list of sites which has been established for both harness and greyhound racing. For commercially confidential reasons, we continue to work those to ground to short-list those into preferred sites for the future.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Minister, I think you might have mentioned that it is down to four sites. I read that just the other day. Can you advise what consultation will happen or has happened with stakeholders such as the harness racing club at Albion Park? They expressed to me that they really do not hear much about what is happening to them. They are perplexed about what is happening at their site.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** As the CEO of Racing Queensland has said, this has been a matter of ongoing work and engagement with a range of stakeholders. Things are being narrowed down. I can say, having been at a greyhound event at Albion Park a couple of weeks ago—the Origin Greyhound Series event, which was spectacularly successful and a great promotion for the code—that these matters were the subject of conversation and ongoing engagement. I have certainly also been meeting with representatives of the harness racing code from the Albion Park club and other clubs and other interested potential participants in the industry. I have engaged with them to indicate how important it is that we get these facility issues right.

While we are in this phase of finalising locations, it is very difficult to engage at anything more than a higher level. Once you narrow it down to locations you are then putting Racing Queensland and therefore the whole of the industry at a disadvantage in relation to potential site owners who are obviously going to try to get the best price they can for particular localities. We are in a very difficult situation at the moment in terms of getting that right, but I can assure you that my door is open and I have been meeting with and going to visit people involved in all codes, particularly the harness and greyhound codes in recent times.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Could you please give the committee and the racing fraternity of Queensland a time frame around the process at Eagle Farm?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I want to say in relation to Eagle Farm that it has been good to see that there has been progress. Since some sharp and hard words that I had to say earlier this year it has been gratifying to see good work going on and strong engagement rather than, as I was saying at the time, finger pointing between Racing Queensland and the Brisbane Racing Club. Everyone involved is working together on achieving the delivery of a quality, sustainable track as soon as they can.

I will not be making the mistake of predicting now when it will be available. My measure, as it was back then and will continue to be, is having confidence in the participants in the industry and seeing the track successfully remediated and tested by participants. That is the only measure there will ever be. I am not going to be setting a date. I am not going to making predictions about a date now. What we need for the success of this new track at Eagle Farm is for it to be proven and demonstrated to be sustainable and reliable.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I have a question for the CEO about the relationship between QRIC, the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, and your organisation. I do not want to speculate about that. I would like you to advise the committee about the relationship. Is communication at a correct level given the recent events surrounding prize money being paid out at the Toowoomba Cup and Guineas Day? There were a couple of media releases about that.

**CHAIR:** Member for Surfers Paradise, could you make your questions relevant to the forward estimates. There seemed to be multiple parts to your question. Could you ask a single question related to forward estimates that we are attempting to pass?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** It is budget estimates, Chair. Given that QRIC is a new organisation, my question is about the relationship between QRIC and Queensland Racing. Can you advise the committee about that relationship?

**Mr Parnell:** The QRIC relationship—obviously, as you know, I have recently joined the Racing Queensland organisation as CEO only a matter of 10 weeks ago—has been to make sure that we have both robust but also good business practices between our organisations and the need to work closely together. With that in mind, Ross and I have engaged on a regular basis on how we improve that. We will continue on improving the working relationship because ultimately the racing industry requires us to work closely together.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** There is no question about that. My next question, Minister, is about a media statement that you released a few weeks ago about a \$12 million annual prize money boost for the Queensland racing industry. Of the \$12 million, \$8.6 million went to thoroughbreds, \$3 million to greyhounds and \$400,000 to harness racing. Can you please explain to the committee how and why the prize money was apportioned in that way?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Before coming to that question, in relation to the \$3.7 million for Eagle Farm, I am advised that Racing Queensland has allocated the funds in 2017-18, but claims for funding from the department to Racing Queensland are made in arrears so that the payment will actually be made in 2018-19. That explains the discrepancy that you were concerned about.

In relation to the prize money, I did make that announcement, with the support of Racing Queensland, about that good news for Queensland and for the industry, noting that that \$12 million increase in prize money was made possible by the Palaszczuk government's commitment to the \$70 million country racing package. I was quite proud to be able to be a part of announcing that outcome.

As for the setting of the prize money and the allocations amongst the codes, the Racing Act 2002 specifically prohibits the minister from directing Racing Queensland on the setting of prize money. It was a Racing Queensland decision. They made the determination about how that prize money was allocated amongst the codes and, indeed, the quantum of that amount. I am very pleased that I was able to play a part in announcing that prize money boost because it was made possible by the Palaszczuk government commitment to the country racing package.

**CHAIR:** Member for Surfers Paradise, you have another three minutes, so you have time for one or maybe two questions.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** In that case, I want to ask the CEO about sample collections at race meetings. Is the organisation confident that it has world's best practice in sample collections with the recent issues to do with—

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Chair, I suspect that the member for Surfers Paradise wants to ask that question of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commissioner, rather than the CEO of Racing Queensland.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I am happy for the commissioner to answer that.

**Mr Barnett:** I thank the honourable member for the question. If I understood and remember the question correctly, it was about the efficiency of our sample collection procedures. I can assure the committee that this year the commission has done more testing than it has done in previous years. In previous years we had collected around 17,500 samples across the three codes of racing. This year we have collected nearly 21,000 samples. The effort that has gone into both the testing of all winning animals across all three codes plus our random and targeted testing of other animals is significantly improved.

The results for those are approximately the same in previous years. In the last few years there have been 90 positive swabs across the three codes for all testing. This year the figure is 85. I can say that we are also preparing a sampling strategy that will take into account a better integration of all of the intelligence and operational functions of the commission. We will certainly be advanced in the work that we can do thanks to an injection of about \$8 million in capital for the acquisition and replacement of some new instruments at the Racing Science Centre which do give us greater capacity than we have had in the past.

**CHAIR:** Minister, do you want to add anything?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** No.

**CHAIR:** We turn now to the member for Pine Rivers to ask a question.

**Ms BOYD:** With reference to page 2 of the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs' SDS and the country racing support package, could the minister please outline the success of the recent Battle of the Bush series?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Without a doubt, from the moment it was announced to the time the winner flashed past the post on 23 June, the Battle of the Bush series was an outstanding success for thoroughbred racing right across Queensland. The series of 16 qualifying races across eight regions of the state gave gallopers the opportunity to race at Doomben on a Group 1 race day and presented trainers, connections and jockeys with the same chance. Events such as these show the importance of country racing to the fabric of communities with the race days providing economic and social benefits, as we know. We know that racing contributes more than \$1.2 billion into the Queensland economy and, importantly, around 47 per cent of that is in regional areas of the state.

What the Battle of the Bush did for racing in regional Queensland was something quite special. It created a real buzz in the industry about which region might produce the winner and the excitement of racing in the final on a metropolitan track. Let there be no mistake: people were very keen to get into that field for the final. Some trainers took their horses to multiple events across the state in a bid to qualify. Indeed, the winner of the final, held on 23 June at Doomben, Mason's Chance, placed at four

qualifiers from Bowen to Thangool before making it through at its final start at Barcaldine. The connections estimated that, by the final, Mason's Chance had travelled nearly 10,000 kilometres such was their desire to win the event.

Already I am hearing of owners and trainers looking to buy horses specifically to target next year's series. It is this sort of investment—this confidence in the sector—that the Palaszczuk government will continue to support and back through our support for country racing. This is a great example of how that package that we went to the last election on has delivered for racing already this year.

**CHAIR:** Speaking of country racing and having been to the Barcaldine races twice, in relation to page 6 of the department's SDS, could the minister outline why it is so important to provide a support package for country racing in Queensland?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Thank you, Chair, for your question and thank you for your support for country racing in Barcaldine and other places. The Palaszczuk government recognises how important country racing is to the social and economic fabric of rural and regional Queensland. You only need to travel to one of these events, as you clearly have done, to see the way that town people, farmers young and old, families and individuals come out to celebrate their communities through racing.

While there are social benefits to country racing, there are also very significant economic benefits that need to be recognised. Of the 9,548 FTEs in racing, 4,606 of them are in regional areas. That is why it is so important to back the racing industry not just in the south-east corner but across the state. That is why at the last election we took to the people a package that takes this into account and recognises this importance—a \$70 million package that will promote, support and grow country racing in Queensland. The package is delivering stability and certainty to country racing and will provide \$60 million for the operation of country racing and \$10 million over four years for critical infrastructure, repairs and maintenance.

With over 100 non-TAB race clubs in Queensland that conduct about 260 race meetings per year, it is clear to see that racing is here to stay and that the Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to making sure that it stays in as healthy a state as possible. We have by far the largest network of country racing venues in the nation. This funding recognises the extra costs incurred in continuing with races that mean so much to local communities everywhere.

I have been lucky enough to have been the minister as we see this package roll out and deliver. I have also been lucky enough to have travelled to a number of these clubs as minister and have seen firsthand what these events mean to the people who live there. Country racing is at the core of many of these towns and we are committed to making sure it stays that way. It has been a great partnership between the government and the industry right across the length and breadth of Queensland.

**Ms RICHARDS:** With reference to page 51 of the SDS, could the minister please outline what benefits a three-year licence renewal process will bring to the racing industry and its participants?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** No matter what industry someone is in, when they are in it for themselves, as I know as someone who has been in small business myself, one of the great bugbears is the amount of paperwork that you have to do. Trainers across the three codes are no different. That is why I was proud to announce the introduction of the new three-year licence renewals through an online process.

This change was done in consultation with the racing industry and follows the introduction of RanDLE, the new customer relationship management tool, by the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission. Feedback from industry clearly indicated that there was a strong desire to remove the administrative burden from licensed trainers, and there is no better way to do that than via a combination of the three-year renewals and the online systems. To further ensure that this process could be rolled out successfully, it was very importantly trialled with the licensing of 1,797 stablehands and 289 kennel attendants. As of 30 June 2018, all of these had been transferred on to three-year licences.

In addition to the three-year renewals, there has been a simplification of the categories for thoroughbred trainers, making it even easier to renew. These changes will not only benefit trainers across the codes but also free up QRIC staff from the often laborious process of entering data from paper forms on an annual basis. It has been a real win-win for everyone. The QRIC staff will, in turn, be able to assist in other areas of the business and deliver other services to clients more effectively.

I can advise the committee that these changes have been implemented in a way that still maintains the integrity of the overall licensing system. As with all elements of racing integrity—the stewarding, the testing regime or the licensing—the Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that the highest standards are upheld across all three codes of racing. We have great support from the leadership of QRIC in that regard.

Together with QRIC, we will explore what else can be done to make it simpler for people involved in the racing industry to administer the key functions of licensing while maintaining the integrity of the system. I want to congratulate the commissioner and all of his team on the successful implementation of the three-year licensing and the online environment.

**Ms BOYD:** In relation to page 6 of the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs' SDS, could the minister please provide information as to how the investment in country racing has lifted prize money for racing across the state, including for metropolitan racing?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** As I alluded to earlier in answer to another question, one of the important elements of the \$70 million country racing support package that the government took to the last election was the idea that by backing country racing as part of the social fabric, as a social good, it would allow Racing Queensland to boost prize money. That is why in February I was pleased to announce, as the shadow minister mentioned earlier, a \$12 million boost to prize money for race meetings right across Queensland. The prize money will benefit all three codes of racing, with \$8.6 million to thoroughbreds, \$3 million to greyhounds and \$400,000 to harness racing.

Included in this boost is an additional \$527,000 for the northern cups, which is the series of races along the seaboard north from Rockhampton culminating in the Cairns Cup. This is a highlight of the provincial calendar as trainers chase the cups northwards in Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns. What this prize money boost means is that metropolitan premiere stakes races have been increased by 16.6 per cent to \$70,000 and regional TAB races have seen an increase of between 16 and 20 per cent. Standard regional and provincial clubs have also seen increases across many categories of prize money.

While the boost has been widely applauded across the racing industry, I am aware that Racing Queensland cannot be seen to be standing still. I know that the CEO of Racing Queensland, and indeed the whole board, is constantly working towards ways of increasing revenue streams into racing through commercial opportunities. I am confident that, through the work that the board and the CEO will be doing, racing is on a solid footing and is in a position where it is able to expand and grow and will naturally be able to provide increased opportunities for further prize money increases into the future.

**CHAIR:** With reference to page 6 of the department's SDS, could the minister please advise of some of the challenges that you are aware of that are being faced by country racing clubs in relation to their infrastructure and facilities?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Thank you, Chair, for that question. As I have mentioned on a couple of occasions—and I will never stop mentioning it because it is such a great package—the Palaszczuk government went to the last election with a \$70 million country racing package, which is about sending a signal of faith in the racing industry in rural and regional Queensland. We know that in many cases the clubs that hold these races only race a few times per year, but they are still vital in terms of being a focal point for their communities. They also help support jobs in those communities, with trainers, jockeys, stable attendants and even more workers relying on racing to support their employment.

We also know that the vast majority of these country race clubs are run by volunteers going above and beyond to put on great events for their communities. One of the challenges that many of these clubs face is the infrastructure and facilities that they are able to offer the public and indeed the workforces in racing when those people descend upon those country tracks. We also know—and I know the member for Mermaid Beach will agree with this—that the gender mix of participants in racing has changed dramatically over the past 20 years. More and more females are involved at all levels as jockeys, trainers, owners, on committees and in other areas. What has not kept pace with that is the facilities at many clubs, and this is particularly true when it comes to jockey change rooms. Female jockey rooms are often converted storage rooms and are usually much smaller and less comfortable than those enjoyed by their male colleagues. This may have been acceptable when there were only one or two female jockeys—and I say 'may'—but this is certainly no longer the case. We know that today around 70 per cent of apprentices are females.

**CHAIR:** Was that 70 per cent?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Yes, 70 per cent, so the pressure is on facilities and it will only become greater. That is why the country racing package, as I mentioned earlier, contains \$10 million over four years for those clubs to address their infrastructure needs. This will enable clubs to prioritise works on tracks with government support, freeing up funds for other projects. Having recently visited the Emerald Jockey Club and having looked at their jockey rooms and heard about their plans to expand female

jockey change rooms, I know they will be just one of the many who will be looking to cater for the rapid growth of female participation. I think that is yet another exciting part of the country racing package that is supporting country racing right across the state.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister. I now call on the member for Surfers Paradise if he has any questions to put to the minister.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** My question is to the commissioner of QRIC. Commissioner, you spoke earlier about stable and kennel inspections. Given the \$28.8 million budget at page 55 of the SDS, could you advise the committee how many charges have been made by QRIC and how many successful prosecutions have occurred?

**Mr Barnett:** I thank the honourable member for the question. It is important to realise that the Racing Crime Squad, who are the QPS officers seconded to the commission, do not answer in any sort of a line of command to me. They are operationally managed by the Queensland Police Service. I can certainly provide figures about the number of arrests and charges that they have preferred. Would that be of benefit to the committee?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Yes. Any of those numbers would be appreciated.

**Mr Barnett:** In the last financial year, the Racing Crime Squad charged 45 offenders with 89 offences. In a general sense, the staff of the commission, including the integrity investigation team and the racing stewards, issue a range of penalties and infringements across the three codes. As an overall figure, I can say that the figure for the last financial year for the number of original decisions made, which effectively are penalties, is just over 1,600 across the three codes.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Commissioner, my next question is to a staffing issue which is page 54 of the SDS. The legislation outlines that you are able to appoint a deputy commissioner but the annual report for 2016-17 does not list anyone for that position. In April 2018, in a media release it was stated that this position had been filled by Mark Ainsworth. Can you confirm that for the committee?

**Mr Barnett:** Yes. I can confirm that on 26 April this year Mr Ainsworth was appointed as the first deputy racing integrity commissioner for the commission. An executive recruitment campaign was undertaken. Mr Ainsworth was identified as the preferred candidate for appointment.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Can you advise what happened? The annual report for 2016-17 notes that the position was vacant but it said, 'A professional contractor was engaged to assist with management of the operational responsibilities of this office.' Can you advise who that contractor was?

**Mr Barnett:** Yes. That was a gentleman by the name of Mr Todd Hunt from a company called P2E. He was engaged to assist me before the commission actually commenced in assisting in the implementation and transition of the start-up of the commission. He remained assisting me for the majority of the 2016-17 financial year.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** In other words, you were not ready to have a deputy commissioner on board at the commencement of the integrity commission; is that correct?

**Mr Barnett:** No. We did in fact undertake a selection process in that year for a deputy commissioner but the position was not filled at that time and the process was recommenced at the end of last year.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Was the deputy commissioner position advertised?

**Mr Barnett:** Yes, and there was a full and open merit selection process.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Can you advise the committee how many other people applied for the position? It could be commercial-in-confidence—

**Mr Barnett:** No. I think the figure was in excess of 50.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Thank you. Who formed the panel that recommended the appointment of Mr Ainsworth?

**Mr Barnett:** That was myself, Mr Sal Perna, who is the Victorian Racing Integrity Commissioner, and I have had a blank about the third panel member, but I can come back to you with that.

**CHAIR:** We might take that as a question that you can come back to at the end if it comes to you or someone else may assist.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I also understand that the role of deputy commissioner would be accompanied with an executive officer or executive assistant role. Could you advise when that position was filled and who was on the panel that recommended that appointment?

**Mr Barnett:** I do not have the exact details of that selection process with me. There is an AO5 executive assistant to the deputy commissioner but I cannot give you the exact details of when that was filled or who was on the panel. I can certainly take that on notice.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I am happy to have it taken on notice if the minister is pleased to do so.

**CHAIR:** The process of the estimates committee is that only the minister can take a question on notice.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Minister, I am just asking about the details of the appointment and the appointment process of the executive assistant role to the deputy commissioner. I asked when it was filled and who was on the panel that recommended that appointment. I am happy to have that on notice.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I am happy for it to be taken on notice. It could even be possible that we could get something before the end of the evening, although it might be getting a bit tight now.

**CHAIR:** We will try to get it this evening, but we have made the undertaking that it will be taken as a question on notice if it cannot be answered by the end of the evening.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Minister, there have been concerns raised about the appointment of the deputy commissioner, so I am asking if you will make a commitment to this committee that you will ensure that there is either a review or some investigation of the process of appointment to reassure the public that everything is above board.

**CHAIR:** Can you repeat the question? I lost the thread of the argument a little bit.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Certainly. Minister, concerns have been raised about this appointment. Will the minister make a commitment to this committee that he will ensure there is a review of the process of appointment to reassure the public that everything is above board?

**CHAIR:** The question is: will the minister have a review?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Thank you, Chair, and I thank the member for the question. To recap on these matters that the commissioner has referred to, Mr Mark Ainsworth was appointed as the first deputy racing integrity commissioner of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, as the commissioner said, on 26 April this year. An executive recruitment campaign was undertaken and Mr Ainsworth was identified as the preferred candidate for the appointment. Prior to his appointment, Mr Ainsworth was a detective superintendent in the Queensland Police Service working at the Crime and Corruption Commission as the director, corruption operations. Further, he led the Queensland Police Service task force into greyhound racing and performed the role of integrity adviser to the then minister for racing.

Mr Ainsworth has an in-depth understanding of the critical role of a deputy commissioner in supporting the commissioner to implement strategies to enhance confidence in the racing industry. Throughout his work, Mr Ainsworth has established networks within key industry stakeholders, including with the RSPCA and key law enforcement agencies. He has, from my observation, clearly had a devoted career serving the people of Queensland and it is modelled to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, accountability and professionalism. This has been reflected in the roles he has undertaken during his career and has made him an ideal appointment for the role of deputy commissioner.

The commissioner has advised me on the processes along the way as this matter has been dealt with. I have every confidence that there are no issues with the appointment process. I have had no letters, I have had no phone calls and I have had no suggestions that there have been any concerns about the appointment process. Member for Surfers Paradise, if you have those concerns or if you know people who have those concerns, I suggest you refer them to the appropriate authorities if there is some deeper concern about this appointment process. Certainly, this is an outstanding candidate who has been appointed. On all of the information that has been before me, it has been a rigorous, proper and thorough process.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I thank you for that reassurance, Minister. You could tell by my questions that I was simply teasing out the questions about the process itself, about which you have now reassured the committee.

Commissioner, I have a question again about testing for substances. Could you advise the committee about the significant publicity that has been given with particular issues for substance testing, whether it is cobalt, and the effects on licensees? We are seeing an increased number of licensees who are having their livelihoods affected. Is what the commission doing in relation to the effects of cobalt and other performance-enhancing drugs up-to-date with world's best practice in other jurisdictions? The licensees who are coming to see me—and some of them are seemingly battler trainers—are struggling, yet their lives are being really badly affected by positive swabs.

**CHAIR:** I may be paraphrasing you. The question is—actually I am not sure.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I am asking the commission to update the committee about the process of assessing particular agents that might supposedly be performance enhancing.

**CHAIR:** Is it up to date with the science—

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I am asking what the commission can advise us about what their research is doing internationally and locally for Queensland licensees who have been very badly affected.

**Mr Barnett:** I thank the member for the question. I am in a position to give the committee some advice about the issue of cobalt in particular if I may. Cobalt is a trace element that is naturally occurring in the environment. It is present in water, animal food and some dietary supplements. Cobalt is also present as part of the structure of vitamin B12.

Cobalt misuse has been regulated by the equine rules of racing since October 2014 in the harness code, January 2015 in the thoroughbred code, and in greyhound racing since September 2015. Because cobalt exists in the environment and in food and is, in fact, an essential trace element, its use is regulated by way of thresholds in both urine and blood samples. The various thresholds were established following extensive studies involving thousands of samples.

Cobalt can be misused by trainers in an effort to improve the performance of racing animals through its potential to act on the process that regulates red blood cell production. In 2017-18 the commission detected 23 samples that contained cobalt at levels above the regulatory threshold at which point cobalt is deemed to be a prohibited substance under each code's rules. This is an increase on the 15 samples reported positive for cobalt in the previous year.

A number of submissions have been made by trainers in defending proceedings against them including challenges to the accreditation of laboratories and the statistical and physiological basis of the regulatory thresholds. The commission, along with racing regulatory bodies in other jurisdictions, continues to vigorously defend the veracity of the regulatory thresholds and testing methodology. In summary, these thresholds are set by the national governing bodies and they are enforced by us.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Minister, can I ask you about the Racing Infrastructure Fund? For example, the Gold Coast Turf Club has a \$39 million Racing Queensland approved master plan. Would you advise the committee if no further action will happen at the Gold Coast, whether it is for part of that master plan including a tunnel that was promised seven years ago, until Eagle Farm is finished, or are we awaiting the finalisation of the infrastructure plan that the CEO of Racing Queensland mentioned that is currently with you?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I thank the member for the question. The reality is that the Racing Infrastructure Fund is trying to deal with a range of projects across a range of critical issues across three codes and a diverse number of tracks, centres and facilities. While there are critical projects underway at the moment like the \$13 million redevelopment of Ipswich Turf Club's Bundamba racecourse—there is obviously the rectification works at Eagle Farm that you have made reference to, and there is some \$6 million of the country in regional capital works program underway at the moment. There is also \$3.5 million of critical capital works being undertaken at Doomben and Eagle Farm racecourses that have been approved under the Racing Infrastructure Fund. While a series of those things happen at the same time, I do not want to portray them as being a block to other things occurring. I do want to suggest that we are—and the fund is—conscious of the needs across a range of facilities. Particularly in light of the experience with Eagle Farm being out of action, there is a very strong consciousness of the need to ensure that the range of tracks in South-East Queensland have the capacity, the capability and the infrastructure to support them being used more effectively and with a greater array of facilities. I am not sure if the CEO of Racing Queensland has anything that he would like to add to that in relation to the Gold Coast specifically?

**Mr Parnell:** It is part of the infrastructure planning process. The review of the infrastructure fund does include consideration of the Gold Coast Turf Club master plan and funding has been sought for an allocation of scoping and planning works that go towards the next stage of that process. As the minister has highlighted, we are tracking on a return to Eagle Farm at some stage in the not-too-distant future. Gold Coast prioritisation is an important part of that infrastructure plan work we are doing.

**CHAIR:** For the remaining eight minutes we have some questions on Multicultural Affairs. We thank the CEO and the commissioner.

**Mr Barnett:** Can I just clarify?

**CHAIR:** My apologies. There were actually quite a few clarifying issues. Do you wish to clarify about the third member of the selection panel?

**Mr Barnett:** Yes, thank you, Chair. The third member of the panel was the deputy DG of the department of transport, Tracy O'Bryan.

**CHAIR:** There was another issue about a selection panel for the AO—

**Mr Barnett:** We do not have that information at this time.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I have something to clarify as well. I made reference to—and you remarked upon it too, Chair, so I want to be particularly clear to you that I did not get this wrong—70 per cent of apprentices throughout Queensland being female. I want to clarify that. Statewide, it is 59 per cent, but in regional Queensland it is a figure that I meant to say was close to 70 per cent. It is 66 per cent. My apologies, I did not mean to mislead the committee.

**CHAIR:** I understand the sentiment, Minister. Were there any other questions on notice? It was in the Multicultural Affairs section. Sorry. We might move on to the member for Redlands.

**Mr Agnew:** I had one in relation to the staff costs for Multicultural Affairs Queensland. The total cost of the staff listed in the SDS is \$5.7 million.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I refer to page 7 of the department's SDS. Will the minister provide an update on the Palaszczuk government's implementation of the Multicultural Action Plan?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I thank the member for Redlands for the question. As some members may be aware, the Multicultural Recognition Act 2016 requires the government to release a multicultural policy and action plan. In December 2016 my predecessor as minister for multicultural affairs, Hon. Grace Grace, launched the government's first multicultural policy under the act entitled Our story, our future. The policy focuses the government's efforts on three priorities for Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that have been identified in consultation with the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council and other community and sector stakeholders. These priorities are achieving culturally responsive government; supporting inclusive, harmonious and united communities; and improving economic opportunities.

To implement the policy across the whole of government it has an action plan that includes 104 actions reflecting programs and initiatives across 35 agencies to be delivered over three years from 2016-17 to 2018-19. I am pleased to advise that as at this month—July 2018—97 per cent, or 101, of the 104 actions have been progressed meaning the actions are complete or are on track. Of the 101, 27 actions have been completed and 74 are on track. Three actions are yet to commence, with implementation of the current action plan needing to be completed by 30 June next year, 2019. I understand that those three actions relate to one particular agency, and I will be supervising that engagement very closely. The annual reports for 2017-18 by agencies with actions in the action plan are due to be published by 30 September 2018. These will be made publicly available on my department's website.

In the time available, I would not mind giving one example of what has been delivered under the action plan, which is increasing the diversity of the Queensland Police Service. The QPS is designating police recruit positions specifically for people from non-English-speaking backgrounds at the police academy. At the end of September 2017 a total of 37 culturally diverse recruits had graduated through the program. All 37 are going on to enter the recruit training program. Of these, 17 recruits have graduated and have been appointed as constables. I think that is a great note of improving—

**Ms RICHARDS:** Fantastic.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:**—the diversity of the Queensland Police Service and making sure that that service, as it delivers great services to the people of Queensland, reflects Queensland as well.

**CHAIR:** Minister, I refer to page 7 of the department's SDS. Will the minister provide an update on the activities undertaken by the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council? Can he tell the committee why it adds value to Queensland society?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** The Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council was established by the Multicultural Recognition Act 2016. The council's purpose is to advise me in my capacity as minister about the needs, aspirations and contributions of people from diverse backgrounds; promoting the principles of the multicultural charter; developing and implementing government policies around multiculturalism; and ensuring government funded services and programs are responsive to the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Current members were appointed in August 2016 for a three-year term and come from varied backgrounds including community services, business, academia and the arts. The council produces an annual work plan to guide its activities for

each year. For 2018 its work plan includes the following priorities: workplace diversity, regional settlement, promoting diversity, shining a light on domestic and family violence, and implementation of aspects of the multicultural policy and action plan.

The council has met nine times including four times in 2017-18. In October 2017 the council met with the Queensland Social Cohesion Implementation Committee to discuss links between the cohesive communities action plan and the Queensland multicultural policy and action plan. The council also had community consultations in Toowoomba on 26 April 2018 on the disability insurance scheme workforce capability and in Rockhampton on 21 June 2018 on raising awareness of domestic and family violence and the support available. It is anticipated that the council will meet twice more this year, and I look forward to further engagement with them. It has been a great group of people who have played an important role in promoting the charter in particular but also providing really quality advice to me.

**CHAIR:** The time allocated for consideration of the proposed expenditure in areas of responsibility administered by the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs has expired. It almost expires when we take you through your title. The member for Mermaid Beach is also suggesting that the members are close to expiring. I am not sure if there were any questions taken on notice. There was an issue about a second panel. I do not know whether that was taken on notice. I do not believe anything was taken on notice. Is there any clarification that the officers or the minister wishes to make now? This is also the opportunity, Minister, if you wish to thank staff and the officers from the department.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Just to clarify, there was a matter in relation to the position for the EA to the deputy commissioner at QRIC. That has been taken on notice. That will be—

**CHAIR:** You had not taken it on notice formally before, but you are doing so formally now?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I want to confirm that that has been taken on notice. I also want to, through you, Chair, thank the committee members, the shadow ministers and the other members of parliament who have attended this estimates hearing. I want to thank my director-general and all of the staff of the department—all the departmental officers—who have supported this process not only tonight but over the past few weeks and more. I want to thank my staff for all of their support provided to me and their perseverance with me. I want to thank the Hansard staff and other parliamentary staff for their support of the successful running of this event. I congratulate you on having to deal with this right up til 9 pm tonight.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister. The committee resolved that answers to questions taken on notice must be provided to the committee secretariat by 10 am on Friday, 27 July 2018. You can confirm exact wording of any questions taken on notice in the proof transcript of this session of the hearing, which will be available on the Hansard page of the website within approximately two hours.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the public servants, officials, CEOs, the ministers, the Premier, Deputy Premier and all of the departmental officers. I would also like to thank the committee members and the visiting shadows. I thank the secretariat and especially Ms Trudy Struber, who puts up with Ray and me; she deserves a medal for that alone. Thank you also to Hansard.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Never hear him talk about medals!

**CHAIR:** That concludes the hearing of the estimates for the Economics and Governance Committee. I would like to thank my fellow committee members and visiting members. Thank you to everyone who assisted here today. I declare the meeting closed.

**The committee adjourned at 9.00 pm.**