" "

# MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**The 4740 (Special) meeting of the Brisbane City Council,**

**held at City Hall, Brisbane**

**on Thursday 20 June 2024**

**at 7.32pm**

**Prepared by:**

**Council and Committee Liaison Office**

**Governance, Council and Committee Services**

**City Administration and Governance**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

[TABLE OF CONTENTS i](#_Toc169808016)

[PRESENT: 1](#_Toc169808017)

[OPENING OF MEETING: 1](#_Toc169808018)

[APOLOGIES: 1](#_Toc169808019)

[CONSIDERATION OF NOTIFIED MOTION – Investment Policy; Debt Policy; Pensioners Partial Rebate of Rates and Charges Policy; Not-for-profit Organisations Partial Rebate of General Rates Policy; Payment of Overdue Rates and Charges Policy; Not-for-profit Kindergartens Partial Rebate of Rates and Charges Policy; Infrastructure Charges Debt Management Policy; Brisbane Infrastructure Charges Resolution (No. 13) 2024; Not-for-profit Affordable Housing Providers Partial Rebate of General Rates Policy; Amendment to the *AP290 Brisbane Housing Supply Incentive Policy*; Stores Board Submission – Amendment to Significant Contracting Plans and a Sole Source submission; Stores Board Submission – Significant Contracting Plan for Recyclable Materials Recovery Services; Amendment to Administrative Arrangements; and Delegation of Council’s powers: 2](#_Toc169808020)

## PRESENT:

The Right Honourable, the LORD MAYOR (Councillor Adrian SCHRINNER) – LNP

The Chair of Council, Councillor Sandy LANDERS (Bracken Ridge) – LNP

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LNP Councillors (and Wards)** | **ALP Councillors (and Wards)** |
| Krista ADAMS (Holland Park) (Deputy Mayor)  Greg ADERMANN (Pullenvale)  Adam ALLAN (Northgate)  Lisa ATWOOD (Doboy)  Fiona CUNNINGHAM (Coorparoo)  Tracy DAVIS (McDowall)  Julia DIXON (Hamilton)  Alex GIVNEY (Wynnum Manly)  Vicki HOWARD (Central)  Sarah HUTTON (Jamboree)  Kim MARX (Runcorn)  Ryan MURPHY (Chandler)  Danita PARRY (Marchant)  Steven TOOMEY (The Gap)  Andrew WINES (Enoggera)  Penny WOLFF (Walter Taylor) | Jared CASSIDY (Deagon) (The Leader of the Opposition)  Lucy COLLIER (Morningside) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition)  Emily KIM (Calamvale)  Charles STRUNK (Forest Lake) |
| **Queensland Greens Councillors (and Wards)**  Seal CHONG WAH (Paddington)  Trina MASSEY (The Gabba) |
| **Independent Councillor (and Ward)**  Nicole JOHNSTON (Tennyson) |

## OPENING OF MEETING:

The Chair, Councillor Sandy LANDERS, opened the meeting with prayer and acknowledged the traditional custodians, and then proceeded with the business set out in the Agenda.

Chair: I declare the meeting open.

## APOLOGIES:

Chair: Councillors, are there any apologies?

Councillor DIXON.

**684/2023-24**

An apology was submitted on behalf of Councillor Steven HUANG, and he was granted a leave of absence from the meeting on the motion of Councillor Julia DIXON, seconded by Councillor Alex GIVNEY.

Chair: Are there any further apologies?

Councillor CASSIDY.

**685/2023-24**

An apology was submitted on behalf of Councillor Steve GRIFFITHS, and he was granted a leave of absence from the meeting on the motion of Councillor Jared CASSIDY, seconded by Councillor Lucy COLLIER.

## CONSIDERATION OF NOTIFIED MOTION – Investment Policy; Debt Policy; Pensioners Partial Rebate of Rates and Charges Policy; Not-for-profit Organisations Partial Rebate of General Rates Policy; Payment of Overdue Rates and Charges Policy; Not-for-profit Kindergartens Partial Rebate of Rates and Charges Policy; Infrastructure Charges Debt Management Policy; Brisbane Infrastructure Charges Resolution (No. 13) 2024; Not-for-profit Affordable Housing Providers Partial Rebate of General Rates Policy; Amendment to the *AP290 Brisbane Housing Supply Incentive Policy*; Stores Board Submission – Amendment to Significant Contracting Plans and a Sole Source submission; Stores Board Submission – Significant Contracting Plan for Recyclable Materials Recovery Services; Amendment to Administrative Arrangements; and Delegation of Council’s powers:

*(Notified motions are printed as supplied and are not edited)*

**686/2023-24**

The Chair, Councillor Sandy LANDERS, then drew the Councillors’ attention to the notified motion listed on the agenda and called on the LORD MAYOR to move the motion. Accordingly, the LORD MAYOR moved, seconded by Councillor Fiona CUNNINGHAM—

*That Council resolves to:*

*1. ADOPT the:*

*(a) Investment Policy at Attachment “A” for the 2024-25 financial year;*

*(b) Debt Policy at Attachment “B” for the 2024-25 financial year;*

*(c) Pensioners Partial Rebate of Rates and Charges Policy at Attachment “C” for the 2024-25 financial year;*

*(d) Not-for-profit Organisations Partial Rebate of General Rates Policy at Attachment “D” for the 2024-25 financial year;*

*(e) Payment of Overdue Rates and Charges Policy at Attachment “E” for the 2024 25 financial year;*

*(f) Not-for-profit Kindergartens Partial Rebate of Rates and Charges Policy at Attachment “F” for the 2024-25 financial year;*

*(g) Infrastructure Charges Debt Management Policy at Attachment “G” for the 2024 25 financial year;*

*(h) Brisbane Infrastructure Charges Resolution (No. 13) 2024 at Attachment “H” with effect on and from 1 July 2024;*

*(i) Not-for-profit Affordable Housing Providers Partial Rebate of General Rates Policy at Attachment “I” for the 2024-25 financial year;*

*2. AMEND the “AP290 Brisbane Housing Supply Incentive Policy” adopted on 24 October 2023 by Council resolution 235/2023-24 as set out in Attachment “J” with retrospective effect to 24 October 2023;*

*3. APPROVE the Stores Board Submission – Amendment to Significant Contracting Plans and a Sole Source submission as set out in Attachment “K”;*

*4. APPROVE the Stores Board Submission – Significant Contracting Plan for Recyclable Materials Recovery Services as set out in Attachment “L”;*

*5. APPROVE the Amendment to Administrative Arrangements as set out in Attachment “M”; and*

*6. DELEGATE certain powers of Council, specified in Column 1 of the Table of Delegations of Power to the delegates listed in Column 2 subject to any limits or special conditions listed in Column 3 and on the general conditions of delegations as set out in Attachment “N”.*

Chair: LORD MAYOR, is there any debate?

Councillor JOHNSTON: Point of order.

Chair: Point of order, Councillor JOHNSTON.

**Seriatim *en bloc* for debate and voting - Items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6**

|  |
| --- |
| At that time, Councillor Nicole JOHNSTON rose and requested that item 2, AMEND the “AP290 Brisbane Housing Supply Incentive Policy” adopted on 24 October 2023 by Council resolution 235/2023-24 as set out in Attachment “J” with retrospective effect to 24 October 2023; item 3, APPROVE the Stores Board Submission – Amendment to Significant Contracting Plans and a Sole Source submission as set out in Attachment “K”; item 4, APPROVE the Stores Board Submission – Significant Contracting Plan for Recyclable Materials Recovery Services as set out in Attachment “L”, item 5, APPROVE the Amendment to Administrative Arrangements as set out in Attachment “M” and item 6, DELEGATE CERTAIN POWERS OF COUNCIL, SPECIFIED IN COLUMN 1 OF THE TABLE OF DELEGATIONS OF POWER TO THE DELEGATES LISTED IN COLUMN 2 SUBJECT TO ANY LIMITS OR SPECIAL CONDITIONS LISTED IN COLUMN 3 AND ON THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF DELEGATIONS AS SET OUT IN ATTACHMENT “N”, be taken seriatim *en bloc* for debating and voting purposes. |

Chair: LORD MAYOR, item 1.

LORD MAYOR: Okay, Madam Chair, the matters on item 1, which are various policies that come through each year, I assume will be largely non-controversial, but I’ll just say a few things briefly because I understand there are other items that Councillors want to talk about. I’ll particularly just mention the item B, the debt policy briefly, if I can find the right notes. This debt policy is required the *City of Brisbane Regulation 2012*. It states the new borrowings planned for 2024-25 financial year and the next nine financial years as well. It sets out the principles that are used by Council to borrow for funding purposes. I can confirm that borrowings over the four-year budget period have remained unchanged compared to the previous budget estimates. However, timing of the borrowings have changed, so the overall borrowings over that period of time, four years, are unchanged but there’s a timing switch between different financial years.

2024-25 borrowings have increased, but future years’ borrowings have decreased. Additionally, QTC (Queensland Treasury Corporation) borrowings over the 10‑year budget period have substantially decreased by $219 million, resulting in an approved debt-per-capita position over the 10-year period of $1,206 per person compared to $1,631 per person. In terms of other items here that I just wanted to mention briefly—okay, no, I don’t have anything further to say on those item 1 issues. As I said, they’re all relatively non‑controversial things that we do each year and none of them should be a surprise to any Councillor.

Chair: Thank you.

Further speakers on item 1?

Councillor CASSIDY.

Councillor CASSIDY: Thanks, Chair.

**S****eriatim – Item 1(b)**

|  |
| --- |
| Councillor Jared CASSIDY requested that item 1(b), Debt Policy at Attachment “B” for the 2024-25 financial year, be taken seriatim for voting purposes. |

Councillor CASSIDY: Look, we’ll be supporting all of these items except for 1(b), because what we have seen—and I understand a debt policy is required, I just don’t support the LNP’s debt policy that they’re bringing forward today. Because we’ve seen the results of that, $3.1 million a week now in interest payments alone, eating into Council’s ongoing abilities to deliver services. Now I know the LNP have a position around service delivery versus inner-city infrastructure, they’ve made that extremely clear, not just in this budget but in recent weeks. So clear that the LORD MAYOR has literally said that, that his preference is spending money on infrastructure in the inner city than delivering services in the suburbs of Brisbane.

That obviously now extends to suburban infrastructure as well, what a lot of people consider to be Council services, like their community sporting clubs and libraries and environment centres and things like that. We certainly don’t support the approach of this LNP Administration when it comes to managing debt. I’ll have a bit more to say in the second lot: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, so I’ll just leave it there for this section.

Chair: Thank you.

Further speakers?

Councillor HUTTON, on item 1.

Councillor HUTTON: Thank you, Chair. I rise to speak on item 1(l), which is the significant contract for recyclable materials recovery services. Our Administration has proudly overseen the recycling of over—

Councillor JOHNSTON: Point of order.

Chair: Point of—

Councillor HUTTON: Apologies.

Chair: Thank you, Councillor JOHNSTON, point of order, yes.

Councillor JOHNSTON: Yes, seriatim?

Chair: Thank you and can I just clarify, just before we go further, with 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 you wanted them separate to item 1? Or are you wanting them all separately?

Councillor JOHNSTON: No, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 together.

Chair: Yes, just checking. Just for seriatim, yes, thank you. Sorry, yes, thank you, for debate.

Any further speakers?

Councillor JOHNSTON.

Councillor JOHNSTON: Yes, thank you. I rise to speak on item 1, which is the adoption of the policies for the year and I too will not be supporting Council’s debt policy. The LORD MAYOR and Councillor CUNNINGHAM’s earlier explanation about debt are quite astonishing. This Council has got itself into an extraordinary position where debt is increasing, interest is exponentially increasing, taking away from the funds that are available to deliver services and we are dipping into the emergency overdraft just to keep things running. Now the debt policy that we’re being asked to approve for 2024-25 does the following. This year it says that Council is planning to borrow $475 million. Last year, at the same time we had this debate, Council told this—the LORD MAYOR told this Council that Council planned to borrow $275 million in this financial year. In fact we’re now borrowing $200 million more than what we said last year.

Now Councillor CUNNINGHAM stood up only a few minutes ago and said this Council is delaying borrowings. I’m not sure what her meaning of delay means, but when you increase your borrowing, yes, when you increase your borrowings exponentially on what you said you were going to do last year to this year, that’s not a delay, that’s actually an increase. But it’s even better, if you go back another year, so you go back to 2022, just two years ago, this Administration said in 2024‑25 that it would actually only borrow $190 million. That is an exponential increase, almost $300 million more Council is planning to borrow this year than they said two years ago.

Now the big question is why? We know why, because the LORD MAYOR’s signature projects, including the Metro, including the green bridge, including Moggill Road, have all blown out in costs and they are costing ratepayers to the tune of hundreds of millions of more in debt and borrowings. Millions more every week, every week in interest payments, which adds up to hundreds of millions of dollars in extra interest. So when this LORD MAYOR says we’re only borrowing the same amount, well not based on what we’ve been forecasting as a Council. When Councillor CUNNINGHAM says we’re delaying our borrowing, she actually means they’re increasing.

Now Councillor MASSEY earlier today said something in her speech on the budget as a whole that was quite interesting, which is you can’t trust the LORD MAYOR. Now I haven’t said this myself for a very long time because all trust has been broken, but this LORD MAYOR says one thing when he presents the budget to this place and then changes it significantly. Now before they stand up and say she doesn’t understand and things change and forecasts change, you know, sure, of course they do. But you know, this Council has to have a responsible financial management system. Simply saying from one year to the next we’ll borrow $200 million extra or $300 million extra, when they cannot manage the major projects, is not good financial management.

These aren’t sensible savings the Administration is making, these are desperate savings that they have to make to cover up the blowouts in the major projects and try and reduce—imagine the LORD MAYOR likes to quote, you know, if the chaos of Labor and the Greens were to do this, rates would be this much higher. Imagine if another $400 million hadn’t been cut in November, how much more the LORD MAYOR would have to borrow. It would probably exceed Council’s actual borrowing facility, which I think is $500 million on the overdraft. So when the LORD MAYOR stands up and says there’s nothing to see here, there so is. They can’t be trusted to manage this city’s finances reliably.

Now it gets better. In 2025-26 next year, Council is actually forecasting that they’ll spend—borrow $200 million. Just two years ago Council said that would be $55 million. In 2026-27 Council is borrowing only $50 million, they think, then $45 million, then $50 million. In that furthest year out, 2028-29, that was supposed to be zero. Presumably post-2028 the LORD MAYOR doesn’t really care because he doesn’t think he’ll be here, but it just shows that this Administration cannot be trusted. Their debt forecasts have been wrong and are changing not just a little bit, they are changing by hundreds of millions of dollars to fund their massive project blowouts and cost overruns and financial mismanagement. That is not good enough and I don’t support it.

Chair: Further speakers on item 1?

Okay, so we will now put item 1(a)—

—sorry, LORD MAYOR, did you want to respond?

LORD MAYOR: Yes, just briefly. Look, I won’t be lectured about financial management by Councillor JOHNSTON, because I remember when we had a critical decision to make in this Council on the Legacy Way tunnel, Councillor JOHNSTON wanted to go for a sole source arrangement with one particular company, which would have cost over $2 billion instead of the $1.5 billion Legacy Way ended up costing. I remember it well.

*Councillors interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: It is true, we all remember it.

Chair: Councillors, please don’t call out across the Chamber.

LORD MAYOR: Anyone that was there at the time remembers it. But the other thing is Councillor CUNNINGHAM made it really clear that by optimising when we borrow funds, we have saved significant money in interest. Councillor JOHNSTON clearly is not understanding what’s going on here. This is about when in the financial year borrowings are made. If there’s a particular amount that’s scheduled to be borrowed in a financial year, you know technically you could borrow it in the beginning of the financial year, you could borrow it in the middle, you could borrow it at the end. The officers have optimised the borrowings and by optimising the timing of the borrowings and delaying when borrowings are made, how much interest has been saved? $85 million over the term of the borrowing and in fact $10 million this year, this current financial year alone.

So there are various methods being put in place to optimise our borrowings and to make sure we reduce our interest payments, but we always borrow money to build infrastructure. We don’t do what they do up the road, which is borrow to hand out $1,000 cash payments to people where future generations are then lumped with the electricity bills of today. We borrow only to build things, that has always been our position. If there’s a question about why the borrowings are at this point now, it’s because we are building more than we have ever built before. Every dollar of borrowings has gone into a bricks and mortar asset that will live for a long time and benefit for a long time the people of Brisbane going forward.

These borrowings, as they always are each year, are approved by the State Government, they’re approved by the QTC, we go through a process to do that. Each year to this point they have not only been approved, but they have been assessed by the Queensland Treasury Corporation and we have continued to have a strong credit rating for 12 years in a row. Every one of those 12 years, Councillor JOHNSTON has got up and talked about financial management and how it’s all wrong and everything’s being done wrong, yet year-in, year-out we are given a strong credit rating by the Queensland Treasury Corporation, not someone who’s allied to us in any way.

*Councillors interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: Well, okay, that’s news to me. Apparently, the Queensland Treasury Corporation is allied to us.

Chair: Councillor JOHNSTON, Councillor JOHNSTON, I’ve already asked you not to call out. That’s one caution.

LORD MAYOR: So the Queensland Treasury Corporation is an entity of the State Government, so I’m not sure how they can be allied to us. But yes, I’d say the opposite is probably true, but they continue to assess our finances as strong, our financial management as strong and they continue year after year to give this Council a strong credit rating. This debt policy will continue based on the projections that we have made and as I said, there’ll be changes in the timing but overall, in the 10-year timeframe our borrowings will be less than projected in last year’s budget, which is a good outcome, so I commend these items to the Chamber.

Chair: We’ll now put item 1(a), 1(c), 1(d), 1(e), 1(f), 1(g), 1(h) and 1(i) to the vote.

**Items 1(a), 1(c), 1(d), 1(e), 1 (f), 1(g), 1(h) and 1(i) put**

Upon being submitted to the Chamber, the motion for the adoption of items 1(a), 1(c), 1(d), 1(e), 1 (f), 1(g), 1(h) and 1(i) was declared **carried** on the voices.

Chair: We’ll now move to the vote for item 1(b).

**Item 1(b) put**

Upon being submitted to the Chamber, the motion for the adoption of item 1(b) was declared **carried** on the

voices.

Thereupon, Councillors Jared CASSIDY and Lucy COLLIER immediately rose and called for a division, which resulted in the motion being declared **carried**.

The voting was as follows:

AYES: 18 - The Right Honourable, the LORD MAYOR, Councillor Adrian SCHRINNER, DEPUTY MAYOR, Councillor Krista ADAMS, and Councillors Greg ADERMANN, Adam ALLAN, Lisa ATWOOD, Fiona CUNNINGHAM, Tracy DAVIS, Julia DIXON, Alex GIVNEY, Vicki HOWARD, Sarah HUTTON, Sandy LANDERS, Kim MARX, Ryan MURPHY, Danita PARRY, Steven TOOMEY, Andrew WINES and Penny WOLFF.

NOES: 7 - The Leader of the OPPOSITION, Councillor Jared CASSIDY, and Councillors Lucy COLLIER, Emily KIM, Charles STRUNK, Seal CHONG WAH, Trina MASSEY and Nicole JOHNSTON.

Chair: LORD MAYOR, items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 please.

LORD MAYOR: Okay, so item 2 or J is the *AP290 Brisbane Housing Supply Incentive Policy*. We’ve made our position on supporting new housing supply really clear. We’ve made this policy really clear, it was introduced last year. It’s all about bringing down the cost of building new homes. Now there are some people that live in a fantasy land that think that developers are land banking and sitting on property and making record profits while they do so. We’ve just heard a Greens Councillor say they are. Well look, I’m not sure if you’re aware of the news in recent times, but so many homebuilding companies have fallen over and shut down entirely, so many construction companies have folded. If they’re making record profits, it doesn’t appear so by the number of business closures in the construction sector, in particular in the homebuilding sector.

This idea that they’re somehow making record profits is a fantasy. It’s a case of the Greens believing their own political propaganda. It is just not true. The reality is if you are sitting on a parcel of land that has a development approval (DA) and you are not building, it’s not because you’re making record profits, it’s because you cannot make it stack up. To be clear, what this means is that the cost of building, if it’s an apartment building, or if it’s a home or several homes, is higher than the cost you can actually sell them for on the private market. That is a real thing and it is stopping so many homes being built right now, because construction costs are so high that they simply cannot build the apartments for a price that people are willing to pay or can afford to pay.

Taxing those people more is not the solution, the solution is to try and bring down the costs of building so that these projects can go ahead. We’ve heard that there are nine years of apartments supply that’s approved and it’s not because people are sitting on them making record profits. The other thing I would say is if someone is sitting on a parcel of land and they’re sitting on it for several years, do they have some kind of free ride there? They’re paying Council rates, they’re paying State Government land tax, they’re paying bank interest in many cases, every year they’re going backwards. There are so many incentives right now to actually build and if they’re not being taken up, maybe there’s a reason for that.

Let’s not talk about Green fantasy here, let’s talk about reality. The reality is we need to do our part to bring down the cost of building new homes and this policy does exactly that. Under the policy, community housing providers are given a 100% discount on their infrastructure charges and that’s for all approvals granted after 1 January 2022. Additionally, those who meet the criteria but are not community housing providers will receive a discount of up to 75% for approvals granted between 1 January 2022 and 31 August 2023. Discounts of 50% apply for approvals given between 1 September 2023 and 30 June 2025. This structure is very clearly designed to incentivise community housing, 100% discount.

Then next, to incentivise people who have already existing approvals in place to actually build. Then obviously to incentivise, but less so, new applications that have come in as well. This is all about bringing down the cost of building, as I said, to bring on more supply. It’s a policy that is one part of our approach to introduce and boost housing supply.

Item K is the Stores Board submission, which has already been flagged and talked about a number of times, which relates specifically to a couple of the projects underway at the moment. (1) Brisbane Metro and a number of components of Brisbane Metro works and (2) the Moggill Road corridor upgrade. Councillor MURPHY advised in his presentation that the overall cost of Brisbane Metro will be $1.55 billion and that is the case, including this submission. Effectively what is happening here is we’re making an adjustment to the contingency so that the project can be effectively completed without any further submissions needing to come through. It reflects obviously the pressures that the construction sector are under in every project at the moment.

Now we’ll hear all types of moaning and groaning no doubt from those opposite, but they don’t moan and groan about all the State Government projects that have had much, much larger cost increases, some to the extent that they now cost more than the entire Council budget and I’m talking about Cross River Rail. But pretty much any State Government project now is massively over budget and you won’t hear a peep out of the Opposition about that. But when there are pressures on our projects, it’s apparently only the responsibility of the LNP Administration and it’s only our doing and they ignore every other bit of information that all major projects are under cost pressures.

But we’ve heard this track before, we’ll hear it again tonight, but the reality is this submission allows us to complete those two projects by making some adjustments to contingency. So if there are further cost pressures experienced before the end of the project, there will be adequate contingency to cover those cost pressures. Now obviously our hope is that the projects can be delivered without using all of that contingency, but we must provide a responsible level of contingency to make sure the projects can be completed. Those two projects that I mentioned are covered in item K.

Item L is a submission for our recycling services and this is with Visy. As Councillors would be aware, Visy has provided recycling services for this Council for many, many years and is the preeminent provider of such services right across Australia and in fact globally. There are not a lot of competitors to this provider, although there are plans in the future for competitive operations to set up and arise. This contract is effectively a renewal of an existing arrangement, but it also reflects that there’s been a number of changes when it comes to the waste industry and pressures on recycling since our previous contract was signed.

The cost of dealing with our recycling has increased significantly as a result of this contract. We can’t go to a competitor because there is no competitor that can take our recycling, so this is the situation we are in at the moment. Having said this, I am reliably informed that the deal that we have struck with Visy is a very competitive deal compared to the deal that they have struck with many other councils. We are aware, in discussions with other councils, of what is being charged to other councils. Because of the tough negotiating and because of our size and scale, we have been able to get the best deal possible in the current arrangement.

But as I said, down the track, as we get competition in the marketplace, there will be opportunities to have a more favourable outcome. One of the things that’s happened obviously in recent years since the signing of the last contract was a change in the way that recycled materials are dealt with and there are changes to ensure that recycled materials aren’t sent offshore. I think that’s a positive thing. We don’t want our waste ending up in developing countries and that is a good thing that it is processed here.

But obviously that increases the cost as well and that has compared to the time when we signed the last contract as well. Our contract relates to largely what goes in the yellow-top bin. Visy’s operations are based here in Brisbane at Gibson Island in Murarrie. I’ve visited the plant on a number of occasions and it is a world‑class facility that continues to have investment in. It’s always good to see and prove with your own eyes to, I guess, the question that a lot of people are asking out in the community, where does the yellow-top bin recycling material go? Well I’ve seen it with my own eyes, it’s a wonderful facility and the MRF (materials recycling facility) that’s out there does a great job of sorting all of the recycled materials and processing them and reusing them as well, so this particular item I comment to the Chamber. Item M is the—

Chair: LORD MAYOR, your time has expired.

**687/2023-24**

At that point, the LORD MAYOR was granted an extension of time on the motion of the DEPUTY MAYOR, seconded by Councillor Julia DIXON.

Chair: LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Item M is the amendment to administrative arrangements and this one’s very straightforward. It’s relating to the City Planning and Sustainability division, so there was a structural change. It’s proposed that the branch City Parklands and Strategy and Support be merged into Natural Environment, Water and Sustainability. Not abolished; merged.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Chair: Councillor JOHNSTON, that’s your second warning. Stop calling out across the Chamber while the LORD MAYOR’s speaking.

LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: That is the only significant change in this particular proposal, aside from some very minor wording changes. Item N is the delegation of powers and City Legal has performed an annual review of the list of delegations and has made recommendations to make sure that they are correct and they reflect the current operating and decision‑making needs of the Council. In total there are 32 delegations being proposed, which includes two that are existing and are being amended. The delegations are derived mainly from the State Government acts, but also the Natural Assets Local Law. Obviously full Council does not need to make decisions relating to the *Caravan Parks and Relocatable Homes Parks Subordinate Local Law 2000*, so these decisions have been delegated elsewhere. This is something that comes through each year as delegations are amended and updated.

Chair: Further speakers?

Councillor CASSIDY.

**Seriatim *en bloc* - Items 3, 5 and 6**

|  |
| --- |
| Councillor Jared CASSIDY requested that item 3, APPROVE the Stores Board Submission – Amendment to Significant Contracting Plans and a Sole Source submission as set out in Attachment “K”; item 5, APPROVE THE AMENDMENT TO ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AS SET OUT IN ATTACHMENT “M”; and item 6, DELEGATE CERTAIN POWERS OF COUNCIL, SPECIFIED IN COLUMN 1 OF THE TABLE OF DELEGATIONS OF POWER TO THE DELEGATES LISTED IN COLUMN 2 SUBJECT TO ANY LIMITS OR SPECIAL CONDITIONS LISTED IN COLUMN 3 AND ON THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF DELEGATIONS AS SET OUT IN ATTACHMENT “N”, be taken seriatim *en bloc* for voting purposes. |

Councillor CASSIDY: We’ll be supporting item 2, the amendment—amending the Brisbane Housing Supply Incentive policy. There was a lot of debate when this was first brought in and what I said then stands for this debate now. We will be supporting it on balance. There are obviously things, concerns that we have within it. We are strongly in support of the incentives for community housing providers, in fact we’re strongly on record a long time before this LNP regime moved to supporting community housing providers in that space. We also on balance at the moment accept that this—you know, the limited nature of this policy is acceptable to us in supporting private developers delivering housing that is more affordable in the market than we are currently seeing and that construction is more affordable.

I know these figures are a bit out of date now, the last time I spoke to the UDIA (Urban Development Institute of Australia), as I’ve said in here about four or five months ago, the cost to build a unit in Lutwyche, for instance, in an eight or 10‑unit development was about $1 million in construction costs. So it’s not—I agree on that point, it is not affordable to construct that missing middle of unit developments. It is at the moment for townhouses and standalone homes, but they’re not going to rapidly fill the gap we need. So on balance, we do accept this and the LNP would never get up and say good on Labor Councillors for agreeing with them on these things, like we have on Stones Corner and like we—

*Councillors interjecting.*

Chair: Thank you, thank you, LORD MAYOR.

Councillor CASSIDY.

Councillor CASSIDY: As I said in the budget speech, we—things—and said earlier today in Program 4, things are rapidly changing in this space and we are willing to work with the Administration on these things. I don’t know why they’re so shocked about that sometimes. We have different ideas from time to time and that’s what debates are about, in canvassing different ideas, but where there’s something we will agree with we will of course vote in favour of that. On balance we will be supporting that one today.

I do find it interesting when the LORD MAYOR earlier said that developers are losing money on—say if they have, you know, have owned a block of land that might be zoned for high density residential, I don’t think any developers lost any money over the last nine years in holding that land. I suspect their capital gain would be enormous, the LORD MAYOR didn’t mention that. But I do accept that construction costs are extremely high at the moment and the kind of housing we need is not being delivered.

Item 3, the Stores Board submission. The LORD MAYOR spoke on this for 140 seconds, give or take, I timed that bit. Half of that was talking about Cross River Rail, about a minute or so, just over a minute the LORD MAYOR spent talking about this change to the significant contracting plan (SCP) for the Moggill Road project and the Brisbane Metro. The Brisbane Metro in terms of its construction, but also in its operational readiness. We know from what Councillor MURPHY has said and what the LORD MAYOR has said over the last two days, the Council cannot open and operate the Brisbane Metro bus project by November this year, or by June next year, because this Council is so broke, Chair.

They don’t have the money to do it, they don’t have the money to do it. So they’re seeking to use the contract negotiations with Translink and the State Government at the moment around growth funding for more routes in the suburbs, seeking to get that money to pull that into the Metro operational budget, because this Council is now so broke under the LNP regime that they can’t operate 36 buses. What the LORD MAYOR said is this, according to him, this is an increase just in the contingency, so there’s nothing to see here. This is like that Kingsford Smith Drive project where they used 100% of the contingency and apparently there was no problem and said there were some—well they didn’t, they used all but $1 million of that contingency.

So what we’re seeing here is an admission then, because the LORD MAYOR said this is contingency money so not really part of the construction budget. But then says that Councillor MURPHY’s factored in 100% of this contingency in the final figure he released publicly yesterday, that $1.55 billion, for almost all of Metro bus line 1 and 2 to be complete. Now they don’t seem to talk about that extra $450 million to complete part of the City Deal and I get it’s not all Council money. But there is an extra station to be built, the Woolloongabba station which was costed some time ago at $450 million.

That takes that project to $2 billion now, the Metro line 1 and 2. Councillor MURPHY got up here yesterday and claimed that $2 billion was farcical, well that’s what it is if you’re to complete Metro line 1 and 2. It’s $2 billion to roll out 36 buses, to roll up and down the South East Busway into a new stop at Woolloongabba and on the Inner Northern Busway on existing infrastructure. Now, after the budget’s passed, after we had opportunities for scrutiny of the significant contracting plan through information sessions and in debate, because that wasn’t included in the budget that was just passed by this LNP regime.

So two hours ago they passed the budget or thereabouts, then two hours later they bring a major change to this contracting plan with, you know, between various projects, hundreds of millions of dollars of increases. Which is then going to flow into that first quarter review where we’re going to be dipping further into cash reserves in Council. There’ll be further borrowings required over the next financial year, not to invest at that point in infrastructure, as the LORD MAYOR says, because that’ll be done and dusted, but the rot set in. It’ll be borrowing to keeping the lights on and borrowing to operate a bus system of 36 buses which is now sitting entirely and totally separately to the Translink network of suburban buses here in Brisbane.

So the budget that was passed was farcical to start with because there’s clearly no intention of carrying out all of the commitments that are in this budget, because all of the detail’s been removed, all of the costings have been removed from it. But now we find out that it’s all going to change anyway, it’s all going to change anyway, because we know that there are now blowouts locked into the Moggill Road project and into the Metro project. Not just to finish construction, but for a generation in terms of operational costs. So we certainly won’t be supporting item 3 today.

We will be supporting the contracting plan for recycling services. We accept that, you know, as a great Labor initiative recycling, yellow-top recycling, thanks Jim Soorley—they talk about William Jolly, they talk about Sallyanne Atkinson through our debate over the last two days. Then the LORD MAYOR gets up and talks about recycling but won’t mention that Lord Mayor’s name. But that was transformative, in the 1990s to introduce yellow-top recycling. I remember there used to be that divider in the bin, you used to put paper and cardboard on one side and cans and tin things on the other, then that was removed. I remember as a student at school in the 1990s, at primary school, that was something we were engaged about and learnt about, how sustainable Brisbane is and going forward how important that is to reduce waste going into landfill.

So a massive, massive change in the 1990s about our waste stream and removing recyclable materials from waste. What’s happened since? Nothing, nothing new, nothing new, in fact it’s gone backwards, it’s gone backwards. In terms of what’s filling up our landfill, it’s getting worse and worse and worse under this LNP regime. Because it’s all about, for them, greenwashing, it’s all about virtue signalling for the LNP, not about hard work. So we accept and we welcome the news that there will be some more competitive tenders available in the future, but we will support this one because recycling is too important not to.

We won’t be supporting items 5 and 6. I won’t seek an extension and go any further than this 10 minutes, but my comments from the discussion we had 12 months ago on these items, on the increasing use of delegations for things that don’t require delegations, just because this LNP regime don’t want scrutiny on them stands. We don’t support the level of delegation. Some need to be done, but not to the level of which this LNP Administration seeks—

Chair: Councillor CASSIDY, your time has expired.

Further speakers?

Councillor HUTTON.

Councillor HUTTON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I now rise to speak on item L, which is the significant contracting for the recyclable materials recovery service. Our Administration has proudly overseen the recycling of over 60,000 tonnes of recyclable material extended through our recycling bin network. Managing our recycling network requires facilities capable of processing high volumes of recyclable materials that we handle here in Brisbane. As the current contract is set to expire at the end of this month, the item before us today is an arrangement for these services moving forward. As the LORD MAYOR shared, Visy has a very long history of providing this service for Council and they remain the only facility in South East Queensland who has the capacity and capability to accept the amount of tonnes Brisbane collects.

Chair, our Administration is committed to increasing our recycling rate and whilst those on the other side of the Chamber reminisce about Jim Soorley and the days of inventing recycling, we know that Jim was good at recycling paper bags, very good at doing that.

*Councillors interjecting.*

Councillor HUTTON: Yes, exactly right, but I can tell you this Administration is focused on the Towards Zero Waste program that we have ahead for the next four years. While we do encourage all of our residents to recycle, we also want to have industry partners who have the capacity and capability of using these recyclable materials. The LORD MAYOR spoke about Gibson Island and the paper recycling that we have there. They also have a great program with the Containers for Change deposit scheme, that’s where the cans and bottles go from our recycling bins. They’re two fantastic circular economy outcomes for our city and as the contract does draw to the end, securing a reliable and efficient service provider is imperative for our continued recycling efforts. I do want to put on record my appreciation to the waste team for their efforts in negotiations and as the LORD MAYOR did share, this has been a good contract for our city and we look forward to seeing the support of the Chamber. Thank you.

Chair: Further speakers?

Councillor JOHNSTON.

Councillor JOHNSTON: Yes, thank you. I rise to speak on items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Firstly, I want to start with Council’s Housing Supply Incentive policy. If this policy—this policy has essentially two parts to it. One addresses a significant and real problem and may in fact be useful to the community and that is providing a 100% discount on infrastructure charges to community housing providers. These are the providers who will build affordable and social housing for people in Brisbane who desperately need it, so that is a good initiative. The problem, however, is in what the LNP are also doing here, which is embedding developer welfare into this policy. Essentially developers who build units in certain parts of the city will get up to a 50% discount on infrastructure charges. Now there is no obligation for them to build affordable housing or social housing, they’re just getting a straight up discount from the LORD MAYOR on infrastructure charges. Now—

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor JOHNSTON: Again, again, yes. The big problem with this is the city needs infrastructure. We know the LORD MAYOR can’t build it, he’s cut pretty much every kind of infrastructure you can think of, whether it’s drainage or roads or whatever it might be. The LORD MAYOR’s unable to deliver infrastructure through Council’s other recurrent forms of income and now he’s cutting the contributions developers make to improving the infrastructure our city needs. That means less infrastructure in areas where growth happens. The drainage is not upgraded, the road network’s not upgraded, the parks aren’t upgraded, the libraries aren’t upgraded.

So the impact of it is in parts of this city the LORD MAYOR is going to incentivise developers to jam more people in with less infrastructure to support them. Now that is the wrong approach to this and that is even made even more stark by the LORD MAYOR saying earlier today that, you know, incentives that are being provided to developers aren’t working now. So what’s his solution? Let’s just provide more incentives to developers. The LORD MAYOR is in denial that there’s land banking going on. There is. The LORD MAYOR’s own Council is approving the use of residential land for commercial purposes.

They are, through material changes of use, allowing developers to take land zoned for residential development and convert it into commercial purposes. Now this Council’s policy settings are all wrong. This unfortunately is about a 50% good policy, the other 50% is just a mistake, it’s just a mistake and it won’t, it really won’t do anything other than jam more people into areas with less infrastructure. You know, yes, I don’t even know if the amounts are going to end up being enough for a developer to build like—I mean he’s probably had private conversations with his mates at the Property Council about this, but you know, we’ve never seen any rationale to support this change and none’s provided in the Council papers before us today.

With respect to item 3, the significant contracting plan. It is astonishing that this Council, straight after announcing the budget, has to come back seeking approvals to increase funding for its signature projects. Not just by a little bit—by a lot. We have discussed, tonight, the Metro in quite some detail because it’s a bad project and it is getting worse. We know that the contract that the LORD MAYOR and Council have entered into for the Metro basically is—and I quote, a bespoke complex contract arrangement—bespoke. So, apparently only Brisbane City Council can enter into this kind of arrangement. I mean, governments at state, at the Federal level, all around the world—they seem to enter into contracts. Yes, they blow out, too. I’m not saying they don’t, but Council’s, bespoke complex contract arrangements, I suspect have helped get Council into this mess.

It’s also in this mess because of the failed business planning, business scoping and detail that was needed before this project actually started. We know that the changes in scope to this project have cost this Council millions and millions of dollars, and that is simply bad management. Now, we’re seeing the outcome of that. We’re seeing the outcome of that in that at some point in the next year—thank you to the Councillor for Marchant—the Metro’s going to start, but it can only start as the LORD MAYOR has attempted to extort the State Government if the State Government gives Council money to run the Council bus network. So, the LORD MAYOR has built a project—or not quite. He hasn’t built it yet. He’s built a project but it’s something he cannot actually run.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor JOHNSTON: There’s no money. There’s no money. I mean, it’s just—it’s one of those things where it should be an episode of *Utopia* all on its own—all on its own. Because, yes, yes, were going to keep throwing money at this—more. Here’s hundreds of millions more, hundreds of millions more—and, oh, oh, oh my God. We can’t actually run it. Uh-oh. What are we going to do? Oh. That big bad State Government. They’re going to have to do it. It’s their fault that we haven’t done it. Who does this? Who does this?

I mean, if there is a problem and this a bus arrangement with Translink isn’t agreed, then what’s going to happen? What’s going to happen? Maybe the LORD MAYOR will give up his $100,000 a year in extra funding and give it to the bus drivers. I honestly have no idea how on earth Council’s got itself into this diabolical situation from starting out, as Councillor MURPHY so proudly decided to tell everybody yesterday, with a Paris-style underground rail service to a few electronic buses that Council can’t afford to run.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor JOHNSTON: Moggill Road is even worse. Moggill Road is an absolute debacle. We’re back less than a year later—less than a year later, again, because of poor project scoping. Council just announces these projects and say, we’re going to deliver them at any cost. That is not a sensible way to engage in building major contracts. Again, we’re seeing that unknown risks at the time—in less than nine months, apparently significant risks on the Moggill Road project have been identified. To be honest, I think the biggest risks to this Council are the LORD MAYOR and his LNP Administration because they seem to be unable to manage major projects. This is not something that has just happened this year or last year. It’s been building and building and building. For all the new Councillors who are here, in 2009, this Council had no debt. Yes, the State Government forced Council to sell its water assets, but that money meant Council was debt-free.

Under this LORD MAYOR and his leadership team, debt has skyrocketed $3.8 billion and every single major project that they have touched has gone poorly. It’s not good enough. With respect to item 4, the Visy contract—honestly, it’s 8.30 at night. The meeting was delayed so the LNP could have drinks with their outgoing staff member. We are now debating one of the most significant services that Brisbane City Council provides, which is recycling, and this is when the LNP choose to do it. They could have done this weeks ago in the ordinary course of business but didn’t.

Here are the questions I’ve got about our waste contract. Because it’s not in the two pages that we’ve got on this—two pages. It’s appalling. What improvements are we making in the contract? What new materials are going to be recycled? What innovations are going to be delivered? There’s nothing. It looks like we’re just desperately clinging on to doing the same thing we’ve always done. At a time when you’re renegotiating a major contract, that is when to get productivity and innovation gains with a new provider. Council hasn’t even done that. We are going to be left rueing a 10-year contract that doesn’t have the flexibility to manage the complex needs of recycling in this city.

Finally, with respect to the administrative arrangements, yes—parkland management has been abolished. It’s been folded into another part of Council. Parks don’t rate a mention in this LORD MAYOR’s strategy. As I always say, there’s no way I’ll support these delegations. This LORD MAYOR’s lazy. He doesn’t want to make decisions that this Council should be making.

Chair: Further speakers?

Councillor MASSEY.

**Seriatim – Item 2**

|  |
| --- |
| Councillor Trina MASSEY requested that item 2, AMEND THE “AP290 BRISBANE HOUSING SUPPLY INCENTIVE POLICY” ADOPTED ON 24 OCTOBER 2023 BY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 235/2023-24 AS SET OUT IN ATTACHMENT “J” WITH RETROSPECTIVE EFFECT TO 24 OCTOBER 2023, be taken seriatim for voting purposes. |

Councillor MASSEY: Earlier today, I said developers should be paying their fair share. I said that also last year when this initially came to Chambers. The truth is community service providers can provide affordable housing. We’ve seen some good success stories in this space for community service providers. Again, had this just been about community service providers, it would have been a completely different policy—but it’s not just about community service providers. It’s about private developments—private developers who are, again, and continuing to—I think from memory, this initially came into Chambers in October last year so where are we? Within nine months, have, again, received another handout, another cut.

The thing about that is, is we are talking about infrastructure charges, here. We’re talking about the deliveries for our communities that will make them thrive, that will make them healthier, more connected—not just to each other, but also to the rest of the city. We’re talking here about parks, drainage, sewerage, road intersection upgrades, which are downgrades. We’re talking about all the bits and pieces that high density and growing communities need. We know—and I’ve talked about this before—that there are pockets where density has already started, where the amenities for them are not keeping up.

So, when we talk about these developer tax cuts—and today, we had this conversation. There’s a lot of denial going on with the LORD MAYOR. The LORD MAYOR, again, spent a lot of time talking about the Greens. The LORD MAYOR spent a lot of time saying how if they were making record profits, how could the Greens believe it? Well, we never said we think they’re making record profits. What the Greens have been saying is that developers do land bank. Developers have said land bank. A couple of weeks ago, I was using some quotes that developers said about land banking. The DEPUTY MAYOR, through you, Chair, stood up and said, that’s not appropriate for this program—but maybe it is here.

As I stated, an example of a well-known developer in Brisbane has publicly said, “we only build one development at a time to ensure maximum price”. Another developer has—private developer has said, “if you understand your competitors and they haven’t got much land left, you’ll reduce your supply and wait for them to finish and jack up your price”. Another one said, well, people in property development have said that land banking reflects good business practice, right? The reason why this is good business practice is, of course, developers are businesses. Yes, the LORD MAYOR has acknowledged this. We all acknowledge that a developer is a business.

When a business like a property developer knows that it can keep its stock, it’s not going to build. It knows that zoning could change, which would increase the price of the land that it’s on. Let me be clear, if developers were in such pain, were making so many losses, well, where’s the rapid sale of land right now? Where is it? Do we see all these developers in crippling pain, selling heaps of land right now at low prices? No, we’re not seeing that. We’re just seeing land that have DAs approved that sit undeveloped, never built. Developers are often better off financially to drip feed supply and maintain high prices and higher margins. That’s business. That’s business, because they are a business. If we’re going to use traditional economics, supply and demand, you limit supply, you get higher prices. That’s neo-liberal economics—neo-classical economics—sorry. Neo-classical economics.

So, of course, sites are being banked. Of course, where sites are being banked where they were drawn from the market, what that also means is the developers that could be ready to build aren’t able to build on them. This fantasy land to say—and am I saying that all developers are land banking? No. That’s not what I’m saying. I’m saying that it does exist. For the LORD MAYOR to come up here and suggest that we’re saying property developers are making record prices—we didn’t say that. We didn’t say these businesses are making records. We’re saying that they’re land banking. To come here and say that, and again, give cuts to them, give handouts to them, give developers more when there are no guarantees they’re going to build.

We’ve seen that they’re not building. Even with the handouts that the LNP Administration and the LORD MAYOR have been giving, they’re not building. We’ve seen it historically. The land prices are going to go up. They can build at another time. So, had this policy just been about community service providers, it would have been a completely different policy and that could have actually helped us in what is—and I repeat—the worst housing crisis in history since The Depression.

On item 4—sorry—item 3. I’ll speak on item 3 briefly. Look, when I spoke—now, maybe—gosh—before the break, so now, a long time—longer than expected—before—on the overall budget, I said, we’ve got no money and we can’t trust whatever is in the budget book. Here we are, mere hours later, making significant changes—amendments to significant contracting plans for multiple projects, but particularly the Metro and particularly Moggill Road. That’s what I mean by, we couldn’t trust the budget. This is hours later. God knows what will happen in the next three months to four months, to five months. These are significant changes that could have been in the budget but they’re not. Instead, they’re here in this meeting.

Like I’ve said previously, I did have a very—I actually had a—I think it was a 45—one hour meeting with Minister Mellish and we talked about various things. One of the things that we talked about was actually the Metro and the contract with the State Government. A couple of people in this side are point on. We can’t run the Metro because we have no money. Any future deal that’s supposed to increase network service in our city, shouldn’t be—and let me be clear about my words—shouldn’t be a part of a deal that just offsets the blackhole of the Metro.

I think that’s the main concern—I’m paraphrasing here—of the State Government—that any future deal doesn’t just pull Brisbane City Council out of the mess that it’s gotten instead into with the Metro. It’s a shame that it’s like this. It’s a real shame that it’s like this because we shouldn’t be having this discussion now. This should have been out in the open. Obviously, Moggill Road—the estimates keep spiralling upwards and upwards and upwards.

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor MASSEY: It’s doubled. It’s more than doubled, I believe. So, here we are so I stand by what I said a couple of hours ago. We can’t trust anything in the budget, and we’ve got no money and we’re in deep trouble.

Chair: Further speakers?

Councillor WINES.

Councillor WINES: Thanks, Madam Chair. I’m just taking a moment now to reflect upon item number 3 in our agenda today. That is, of course, the significant contracting plan alterations in reflection of a need to lift the contingency to better accommodate what has been a very difficult economic environment, particularly for major infrastructure projects. We’ve heard it before, but I’ll say it again. Ove the past three years, the cost of fuel is up 44%, concrete is up 42%, steel is up 36%, electricity is up 22% and the cost of road and bridge construction generally is up 22%. This is in an environment where we see significant growth, particularly in the industry, with demand for labour—in particular, to deliver construction projects of this nature. The increased demand, therefore, the increase in prices for the skilled labour required, is expected to continue to increase with new 2023 estimates projecting a peak that will hopefully conclude in financial year 2027-28.

The supply side of labour and training has not yet responded appropriately to this sharp increase in demand. There is expected to be a 78% surge in labour requirements across Queensland, which will significantly affect the price of major infrastructure projects throughout Brisbane and the entire state from 2024 through 2028 with about 70% of the existing labour demand in these areas, where the workforce challenges already exist, significantly exacerbated. The construction and building industry has seen an increasing surge since pre-COVID levels and are having impacts upon a whole range of businesses. We see the effects here, we see the effects—thankfully it has stopped—but there was a period where the news would report that mum and dad builders would fail almost weekly. That’s a reflection of the increased input costs and the increased pressure particularly on the construction industry. We, at our core—particularly infrastructure—is a construction industry exposed area of this Council.

So, one of the things that I wanted to take a moment to discuss as well that we often don’t go into this level of detail in this meeting—but I thought it was important to reflect upon the fact that when you do a project like the Moggill Road—the Indooroopilly roundabout removal and the Moggill Road corridor upgrade, there are a number of elements to the project where we must engage a subcontractor. That contractor has a monopoly in the industry. They set a price and if they don’t like what’s going on, they increase the price and you’ve got no say in it. Now, famous and best examples are Urban Utilities, Telstra and NBN Co. Let me take a moment to reflect upon some increases over the last 12 months from those entities that we must deal with. They are price setters. They are monopolies. Work cannot proceed without their cooperation.

NBN—we work to their timeframe so can I assure all Councillors and you, Madam Chair, that NBN is no better to us than they are to residents when they deal with their timeliness. Increased costs just for NBN are $0.5 million. Negotiations with Telstra as a result of the required telecommunication improvements through the Moggill Road corridor increased costs just—this is not the whole cost, this is what Telstra, the monopoly in the market, has made us pay or else they would not proceed with our work, $9 million. APA Gas, $1.8 million increase, and Energex, $1.2 million, on top of the already agreed amounts. Just those increases from dealing with monopolies have to be reflected in our work as well.

We know that this is a significant project in an older part of the city. We’ve had instances where drains weren’t where they were supposed to be in the plans. Effectively, all underground services have had to be upgraded, but I know that it is an important project. I appreciate the consideration of this Council in the capacity—to lift up the capacity to use contingencies in this project in case price risk for both labour inputs and dealing with monopolies goes up. In the near future, I hope it doesn’t, but I think it’s important to reflect that it may.

Now, I also know that this is a key project in the western suburbs. The Indooroopilly roundabout, as we often discuss, something like 19 collisions requiring hospitalisation between the years 2013 and 2018. From memory, I might be required to tidy that up, but regular and routine collisions, regular and routine hospitalisations, traffic lights on a roundabout, lanes coming and going on a roundabout. This new project will make that area significantly safer. I know that the residents of Pullenvale Ward will materially benefit from this project. I know that the residents of Walter Taylor Ward will materially benefit from this project. I said at the end of last term that Councillor JOHNSTON would be returned, largely thanks to my work on the Moggill Road roundabout. Her margin’s up. She brags about it, but the truth is it’s all mine. It is all mine.

Look, I know one must only reflect that her vote in Chelmer, Graceville and Sherwood—20%, 25% of that—that’s work that I earned for her. It’s times like this where I enjoy basking in the gratitude of Councillor JOHNSTON which she always sort of likes to wheel out, but even despite her constant and pointless criticism, we will look after the people of Sherwood, Graceville and Chelmer as well, delivering a significant improvement to their travel time, an improvement to their public transport system and their way of life, regardless of her criticism.

Chair: Further speakers? No further speakers?

LORD MAYOR, right of reply?

Councillor MURPHY: Sorry.

Chair: Sorry, LORD MAYOR.

Councillor MURPHY.

Councillor MURPHY: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise to speak on all items. Firstly, I just wanted to congratulate Councillor CASSIDY and the Labor Team for their position on housing—on the Housing Incentive policy. This is a fresh change for them and clearly this is a point of difference between them and the Greens. It is starting to emerge. It’s getting a little bit crowded over there in the policy space for a while, Madam Chair, so glad to see that some divisions are emerging. Hopefully we’ll see more and more different policy positions taken from the Labor Party and the Greens.

Madam Chair, firstly, just on the Stores Board submission—the amendment to the significant contracting plan and the sole stores submission. As I mentioned earlier in the information sessions and in the Program 1 budget debate yesterday, this brings Metro’s maximum anticipated budget to $1.55 billion. It does provide additional contingency so we may not use all of the money that has been allocated under this SCP. In fact, I very much hope that we can meet that original budget that Graham Quirk first outlined all the way back in 2016 and land right in there at $1.54 billion. Wouldn’t that be a feat, Councillors, if we could do that after eight years of this project to match the budget right bang on with all of the challenges that we’ve experienced, all of the supply chain issues, all of the BPIC (Building Products Industry Council) and union issues that we’ve had to deal with? That would be amazing.

You know what I think that would mean, Madam Chair? I think it means we would add another award to our cabinet because we’ve already got seven awards that Brisbane Metro has won now, from IAP2, from local government managers, from the International Union of Public Transport. We haven’t even carried a single passenger, Madam Chair, but we’ve won seven awards, but we don’t get any plaudits for that from the Opposition or the Greens or the Independent Councillors. A remarkable achievement, actually. I went and had a look at how many awards Cross River Rail has won in the same period. I think they’ve won an award for most tragic public transport project in the country for all of the changes that the Coordinator-General has had to make to make it work and all of the cost blowouts that they are experiencing.

We know as well, Madam Chair, that the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program blew out by I think—what was it—a whopping $3.6 billion? Just a little bit, but Mark Bailey did put it on the website, which is the most open and transparent way to explain to people across—anyway, I digress.

Now, Councillor CASSIDY said that we’re broke and that’s why we’re going to the State, cap in hand, to renegotiate the transport contract. Actually, no, Councillor CASSIDY. We’re going to the State to renegotiate our transport contract because they put that in the deed of approval we got for Brisbane Metro. It actually says, to start Brisbane Metro, we need to renegotiate the transport contract with them, so that was a requirement that they placed on us. Not a requirement that we placed on them. The second point I would make, Councillor CASSIDY, is that you were elected to this place as a Brisbane City Councillor, not a Labor City Councillor. It is in the city’s best interests to have growth funding for bus services.

Under your Labor State colleagues, Brisbane has been starved of growth bus services for over 15 years. Easily over a decade, but more like 15 years. That means that there are suburbs that have grown from—just like in Councillor KIM’s ward—they were farm sites 15 years ago. Now, they’re bristling with housing, and they have no new bus services. In Brisbane, buses do two-thirds of all public transport—not rail. Councillor CASSIDY says, we’re obsessed. No, the State has been obsessed with Cross River Rail and just throwing billions of dollars into that black hole while there’s a perfectly good bus network with a great project, Brisbane Metro, that is augmenting that and making sure that we have the capacity to grow into the future. They have effectively left that to wither on the vine and so services haven’t changed in this city in 10 to 15 years and the State is to blame.

We will be telling Brisbane residents about that, absolutely. We have made that very clear. The LORD MAYOR’s made that very clear. If we cannot strike an agreement with the State that provides that growth funding for our city—not for us, not for the LNP Council, not for the Brisbane City Council—but for the 1.2 million residents of Brisbane that rely on this public transport to be improved. Every other city in this country has had better public transport in the last 10 years—better bus services, new bus services, high-frequency services. Brisbane is a city frozen in time and we are seeking to address that through our contract renegotiations. In fact, Brisbane today has 82,000 fewer bus trips than it had 10 years ago, so actually, we’re going backwards. It’s not even frozen in time. I actually gave them too much of a compliment, but it’s even worse than that, Madam Chair. That is no way for us to conduct ourselves.

Councillor CASSIDY also mentioned the Brisbane Metro Gabba station. Well, Councillor CASSIDY, the Metro Gabba station—I don’t know if you recall why the State wanted to have a Metro station at Woolloongabba. Does anyone want to guess why they might have wanted to have a station? Oh. LORD MAYOR?

*Councillor interjecting.*

Councillor MURPHY: Yes. That’s right. There was going to be an Olympic stadium at The Gabba and so there was a desire—a strong desire to connect in The Gabba Cross River Rail station with a spur of the Brisbane Metro line, extending off the South East Busway into that current busway configuration that is there that will be redeveloped potentially as part of The Gabba redevelopment. Then the State absolutely—well, I can’t say what I want to say—what they did in terms of the venue plan but let’s say they botched it and so now it’s at QSAC (Queensland Sport and Athletic Centre). This is a State-led City Deal project, Councillor CASSIDY, and we have no idea where they’re leading this project at the moment.

So, I would absolutely not say that any of that money is part of our project. It’s not part of Brisbane Metro. It’s never been on our Metro balance sheet. It’s there, if they want to do some improvements at The Gabba, there’s an open offer there of part funding to that but it certainly is not part of Brisbane Metro anymore. Maybe when there was a Gabba stadium, fair enough to say, but absolutely not anymore.

We also had Councillor CASSIDY say, it’s $1.5 billion for just 36 buses. I think that’s a real shame and an insult to the thousands of workers that are working on this project at over 10 worksites across the city that have rejuvenated and upgraded stations at the Cultural Centre station, at UQ Lakes, at Griffith, at Buranda, here in Adelaide Street, the tunnel, underneath the tunnels, as well at the surface treatment that changes every day outside the City Hall. It’s clearly more than just 36 buses. In fact, just the other day, Councillor COLLIER—when I did say they were buses, Councillor COLLIER interjected and said they weren’t buses. So, I don’t know if the Labor team is even aligned on what the Metro is, but it is buses—but they’re very good buses, Madam Chair.

Now, Councillor JOHNSTON said that this Metro is a bad contract and getting worse. I absolutely refute that. Metro’s been a great contract and I would say, skilfully managed by the Project Director, Stephen Hammer. We have had exactly the type of contracts that we’ve needed in exactly the type of procurement scenario we’ve required. Where we’ve needed pain-share, gain-share, we’ve done that. Where we’ve needed hard dollar contracts, we’ve done that. Where we’ve needed open cost-plus arrangements, we’ve done that. That’s why we’ve won seven awards, Madam Chair. Metro’s about to go platinum if we can hit that $1.54 billion budget. I can absolutely tell you that. Now, she’s said we were extorting the State. Absolutely not true but we are going in for our fair share after being starved of growth funding for over 10 years, and almost certainly 15 years. We make no apologies for that. We won’t. She also called them electronic buses, which I found very entertaining.

Now, Councillor MASSEY continued her hatred of developers, here. We remind Councillor MASSEY, Madam Chair, that private developers deliver 98% of housing in this city so if you want to rely on two per cent of the community housing market to build the housing for the rest of us, it’s not going to happen. It’s just not going to happen. We talk to community housing providers and Councillor ALLAN talks to community housing providers a lot, Councillor MASSEY. They’ve got approved DAs, too, and they can’t start because of the market conditions at the moment—so nothing to do with us—to do with the market and the environment that has been created. Many of which we’re all dealing with in this sector.

The final thing I will say about Councillor MASSEY’s contribution, Madam Chair, is she said she had a meeting with Minister Mellish. What were the outcomes from that meeting? Come in here and talk to me about a meeting with Minister Mellish and to ask me to do some things that he said. There seems to be no outcome. I remind Councillors in this room, this is what happens when you elect Greens. You don’t get outcomes. You get meetings.

Chair: Councillor MURPHY, your time has expired.

Any further speakers?

Councillor STRUNK.

Councillor STRUNK: Yes. Thank you, Chair. I’d like to speak and reflect on what Councillor WINES said in regards to the increases in costs of the Moggill Road roundabout or upgrade. He mentioned the NBN and Energex and Telstra, or whoever. They are a monopoly and there’s nothing that we can do about that monopoly. We just have to cop the increases that they want to lay upon us, probably because they probably had some reasonable—I’m trying to think of the word—it’s late—it’s late—a reasonable reason—a reasonable reason, if I can put it that way—of wanting to increase it.

Yes, they are monopolies, and yes, we do have to deal with them, but you left out one of the biggest monopolies that have skin in the game in that roundabout project. Which one is it? Which one is it? Oh. Through you, Chair, if I can put it out there, who’s got—who has the biggest monopoly in South East Queensland? The Brisbane City Council. We are a monopoly. If you’re a ratepayer—unless you move—you’ve got to cop all the rate increases. What can you do about it? Nothing. You’re going to cop all the charges and fees going up, and they were 10% this year. You can’t do anything about it. So, before you start slanging off at some of the other monopolies, you should look at yourself as a member of the Administration and realise that you art part of the monopoly. That’s all I have to say, Chair.

Chair: Any further speakers? Any further speakers? No.

LORD MAYOR, right of reply?

LORD MAYOR: Thank you, to all Councillors who contributed. Now, starting with the last comment there, I like that one, but Councillors—sorry—residents do have the choice to move to other areas and pay more. Because that is the only choice. You move anywhere else in South East Queensland, you pay more in rates, and so they do have that choice. Guess what? They’re choosing to move here because we have the lowest residential rates in South East Queensland. I just wanted to also comment on particularly the Greens’ contribution—Councillor MASSEY’s contribution on development. We heard a correction—that she doesn’t believe that developers are making record profits. I swear that I heard that said. Did anyone else hear that—developers are making record profits? I don’t know. I’m pretty sure. I’m going to have to go back and check the transcript but that’s what I thought I heard, but—

*Councillor interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: Okay. I will. I will—but definitely, this idea that the Greens are going to make developers pay more—how much credibility does that line actually have? Do developers actually pay more or is it actually the people that buy the properties who pay more, i.e. the buyers and the renters? So, the Greens’ policy is to make buyers and renters pay more. They say it’s making developers pay more but it’s actually buyers and renters who pay more. That’s the reality. Look, I saw an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on this issue just recently. It was an opinion piece written by Emma Dawson. The headline is “The Greens’ housing plan won’t fix anything—it’s a campaign tactic”. Then Emma Dawson goes on to say, “the Greens’ plan, outlined by Housing spokesman, Max Chandler-Mather at the National Press Conference was bold on vision, big on rhetoric and entirely wrong on policy. It would, in fact, make the housing crisis in Australia worse.”

Now, who is Emma Dawson? Is she a developer? Is she a representative of the Property Council? No. Emma Dawson—

*Councillors interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: Emma Dawson—

Chair: One moment, please, LORD MAYOR.

Councillor MASSEY, I caution you to stop calling out.

LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Emma Dawson is not from the Property Council. She’s not from the development industry. She is not from the Liberal Party or the LNP. Emma Dawson is the Executive Director at a progressive Australian think tank. She was the Senior Policy Advisor in the Rudd and Gillard Governments, so a massive lefty is saying that the Greens’ housing policy will not work, and it’ll in fact making the housing crisis work. This is stating the obvious fact that we all know. Everyone knows it except for the Greens and the people, sadly, that they manage to con with their dishonest campaigns. So, we know that making developers pay more, as they say, is just code for making home buyers and renters pay more. Because that’s who actually pays in the end. That is not the outcome we want to see. We want to bring down the cost of housing. This policy coming through—the incentive policy helps to do that.

In fact, it’s great to see, just in recent weeks, the State Labor Government actually doubled down on our approach and has introduced the same approach. In fact, not only are we seeing infrastructure charges reduced to help bring down the cost. The State Government is offering to pay developers’ infrastructure charges as well, and so there is agreement here that the right thing to do is to bring down the cost of building. Not to make buyers and renters pay more. This policy will do this—but I just want to address one other issue. This was, I think, raised by Councillor JOHNSTON about, well, we need more infrastructure. Yes, we always need more infrastructure but the nuanced approach in this policy is that infrastructure charges are only reduced in areas that have good infrastructure.

So, this policy doesn’t just reduce infrastructure charges everywhere in Brisbane. It reduces them in areas that have good infrastructure—so areas that have good access to public transport and facilities, good active travel opportunities. It reduces the infrastructure charges in those areas and those areas, only. Whereas if you look at places like Rochedale or Pallara where new infrastructure is required in greenfield areas, we are not reducing the infrastructure charges. Why? Because the infrastructure charges are needed in those areas desperately to provide new infrastructure. This is a nuanced approach which responds by reducing the charges in the areas that have good infrastructure but not in the areas that don’t, and so it’s a really important point to make.

One final thing I just wanted to say about Metro—the idea that somehow we can’t afford this project, we can’t afford to operate it, we’re trying to extort the State Government, as has been claimed. Well, there’s only one extortion going in one direction. That is the Brisbane City Council was extorted by the State Government with no funding in growth for a decade and all of the burden went onto the Brisbane City Council—extortion. Secondly, when the Metro deal—we were forced to sign it at gunpoint, basically, by Mark Bailey—or knife blade—whatever you want to—analogy you want to use. They said, yes, we’ll approve the Metro, but you can pay for everything, and we’ll take all of the fare revenue and pocket it. Not even a reasonable approach to say, if you’re going to pay for the Metro, then the fare revenue should go back into the system. No. No. They said, we’re going to pocket all of the revenue. Guess how much revenue that is over a decade—$842 million. That is extortion. If you want to talk about extortion, that is extortion.

*Councillors interjecting.*

LORD MAYOR: I know that Councillor CASSIDY gets excited about the 50 cents but it will only last six months. We know it will only last six months because Labor wants to buy their way through the next election, and then they’ll say, oh, look, our priorities have changed. The 50-cent fares—it was good at the time. The money’s dried up and—

*Councillors interjecting.*

Chair: Councillors.

LORD MAYOR: Look, I think there’s a chance that Labor will win. I think there is a chance, and so—yes, we shouldn’t underestimate that, but—yes. Look, it’s anyone’s guess. It’s anyone’s guess, really. Look, we may even be having nuclear-powered Metros in the future. Anyway, I’m getting distracted.

*Councillors interjecting.*

Chair: All right, Councillors.

LORD MAYOR: I think we’re done, actually. We’re done.

Chair: Thank you, Councillors. Thank you.

Thank you, LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Finally, once again, I just want to thank all of the officers, the clerks, for their patience, and for a very long couple of days, and everyone that’s been involved in the background in making this budget possible and making the democratic debate possible over the last couple of days. I commend these items to the Chamber. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, LORD MAYOR, and Councillors, for your contributions.

We will now vote on item 2, attachment J.

**Item 2 put**

Upon being submitted to the Chamber, the motion for the adoption of item 2 was declared **carried** on the voices.

Thereupon, Councillors Trina MASSEY and Seal CHONG WAH immediately rose and called for a division, which resulted in the motion being declared **carried**.

The voting was as follows:

AYES: 22 - The Right Honourable, the LORD MAYOR, Councillor Adrian SCHRINNER, DEPUTY MAYOR, Councillor Krista ADAMS, and Councillors Greg ADERMANN, Adam ALLAN, Lisa ATWOOD, Fiona CUNNINGHAM, Tracy DAVIS, Julia DIXON, Alex GIVNEY, Vicki HOWARD, Sarah HUTTON, Sandy LANDERS, Kim MARX, Ryan MURPHY, Danita PARRY, Steven TOOMEY, Andrew WINES and Penny WOLFF, and The Leader of the OPPOSITION, Councillor Jared CASSIDY, and Councillors Lucy COLLIER, Emily KIM and Charles STRUNK.

NOES: 2 - Councillors Seal CHONG WAH and Trina MASSEY.

ABSTENTIONS: 1 - Councillor Nicole JOHNSTON.

Chair: We’ll now put item 3, item 5 and item 6; attachment K, attachment M and attachment N to the vote.

**Items 3, 5 and 6 put**

Upon being submitted to the Chamber, the motion for the adoption of items 3, 5 and 6 was declared **carried** on the voices.

Thereupon, Councillors Ryan MURPHY and Jared CASSIDY immediately rose and called for a division, which resulted in the motion being declared **carried**.

The voting was as follows:

AYES: 18 - The Right Honourable, the LORD MAYOR, Councillor Adrian SCHRINNER, DEPUTY MAYOR, Councillor Krista ADAMS, and Councillors Greg ADERMANN, Adam ALLAN, Lisa ATWOOD, Fiona CUNNINGHAM, Tracy DAVIS, Julia DIXON, Alex GIVNEY, Vicki HOWARD, Sarah HUTTON, Sandy LANDERS, Kim MARX, Ryan MURPHY, Danita PARRY, Steven TOOMEY, Andrew WINES and Penny WOLFF.

NOES: 7 - The Leader of the OPPOSITION, Councillor Jared CASSIDY, and Councillors Lucy COLLIER, Emily KIM, Charles STRUNK, Seal CHONG WAH, Trina MASSEY and Nicole JOHNSTON.

Chair: I now put item 4, attachment L to the vote.

**Item 4 put**

Upon being submitted to the Chamber, the motion for the adoption of item 4 was declared **carried** on the voices.

Chair: As that concludes the business of the Special meeting, I declare the meeting closed.

**RISING OF COUNCIL: 9.14pm.**

**PRESENTED: and CONFIRMED**

**CHAIR**

**Council officers in attendance:**

Victor Tan (Council and Committee Coordinator)

Ashleigh O’Brien (Senior Council and Committee Officer)

Billy Peers (Personal Support Officer to the Lord Mayor and Council Orderly)