

TUESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2003

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. R. K. Hollis, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

PRIVILEGE**Real Estate Commissions**

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (9.31 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. Yesterday and today the *Courier-Mail* reported that I had appeared to have misled parliament about the content of a report relating to real estate commissions. The *Courier-Mail's* claim appears to be based on a draft report dated February this year.

The article is incorrect. At no time—at no time—in my ministerial statement did I refer to any report. I spoke only of a review which was subsequent to the draft working party group report. I refer to *Hansard* of 13 November, page 4920, which clearly shows that I only ever referred to a review and did not at any time refer to any report.

I told the House that the government had ruled out deregulation of real estate agent commissions because of a lack of evidence to convince us of the need to do so. I said that a recent Office of Fair Trading review found no need at this time to deregulate commissions. That is fact. I make no apology for that decision. We will not deregulate for the sake of deregulation. We will only do so if it will benefit sellers and buyers. If real estate commissions were to rise beyond their current regulated maximum level, this would only add dollars to the already inflated cost of housing.

I seek leave to table a letter from the Commissioner for Fair Trading to the *Courier-Mail* setting out the chronology of the review.

Leave granted.

PRIVILEGE**Gympie Hospital**

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (9.33 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. On 13 November I was asked a question by the member for Gympie about claims in her local paper that the Gympie Hospital had suddenly stopped carrying out emergency surgical procedures. At that time I told the House that Gympie Hospital never provided emergency surgery services. This was incorrect. I am advised that, depending on availability of appropriately qualified doctors, some emergency surgery has been done at times at Gympie.

At the time I told the House that the Gympie Hospital continues to provide emergency services to the people of Cooloola shire, just as it always has done. I remind the House that, although visiting medical officers at Gympie Hospital have provided emergency surgery and although surgeons have been on call to provide emergency surgery in the past, there has never been a full emergency surgery service at the Gympie Hospital as we have in larger referral hospitals.

Gympie Hospital provides a very good service to residents, but makes no pretence about being able to carry out the sort of emergency surgical operations that are more safely provided by larger hospitals where there is a bigger staff with medical professionals with the required skills. This government is committed to delivering a safe health service to Queensland.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from Her Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to certain bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the records of parliament.

19 November 2003

The Honourable R.K. Hollis, MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

I am pleased to inform the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on 18 November 2003:

"A Bill for an Act to provide for matters relating to disaster management in the State, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Magistrates Act 1991, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Education (General Provisions) Act 1989"

"A Bill for an Act to amend Acts administered by the Minister for Education, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000".

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

Governor

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that today I have received from the Auditor-General a report entitled *Audit Report No. 2 2003-04: Results of a review of governance at James Cook University and the Queensland University of Technology*. I table the said report.

Ms P. HANSON; Mr D. ETTRIDGE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that, in accordance with the resolution agreed to by the House on 11 November 2003 relating to matters referred to the Crime and Misconduct Commission concerning the arrest and prosecution of Pauline Hanson and David Ettridge, I have written to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, forwarding a copy of that resolution, and I table a copy of that correspondence and resolution.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER, FLORAL ARRANGEMENT

Mr SPEAKER: I note honourable members' interest in the floral arrangements on my dais. I can assure members that I am not celebrating the English Rose's Rugby World Cup win. The honourable Minister for Local Government has brought these beautiful roses from Bundaberg to brighten the House for this last sitting week of the year. I thank the minister for that.

PETITIONS

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

Regional Race Meetings

Mr Johnson, 3 petitions, from 6,780 petitioners in total, requesting the House to reassess the discriminatory cut backs of regional race meetings throughout regional Queensland and reinstate all race meetings and ensure prize money, as race meetings are an essential part of the social fabric in rural, regional and remote areas.

Public Transport, Cairns

Mr Pitt from 264 petitioners requesting the House to direct the Department of Transport to undertake a review of bus routes, service times, frequency of service and the provision of disability accessible buses in the southern suburbs of Cairns.

Scarborough Boat Harbour Precinct Breakwater

Mr Hollis from 1,573 petitioners requesting the House to not approve any residential or multi-level development and halts the sale of the reclaimed Scarborough Boat Harbour Precinct Breakwater and that it protects the existing mangrove stand on the south western edge from any extensions proposed for that area and that the mangrove stand and adjoining reclaimed foreshore be protected and given to the people as enduring parkland.

PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

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

14 November 2003—

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to a paper petition presented by Miss Simpson from 672 petitioners regarding dredging of the Mooloolah River mouth. This response replaces a previous response tabled on 31 October 2003

Ms Vickie Power
32 Coomaroo Crescent
Minyama Qld 4575

Dear Ms Power

Thank you for the recent petition asking for urgent dredging of the Mooloolah River mouth and an assurance that timely maintenance dredging is undertaken on an ongoing basis in the future. This petition was received by the House on 11 September 2003 and forwarded to me for my direct response by the Clerk of the Parliament.

As you would be aware the state government recently completed this dredging work. The natural currents and wave action in this location usually shift sand bars from the entrance channel without the need for human intervention.

However, on this occasion coastal conditions had failed to clear the entrance and it was necessary to use dredging equipment to speed up the process.

Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) carries out regular hydrographic surveys of the harbour entrance and in April 2003 became aware of the formation of the sandbar. Since that time, MSQ had regularly moved navigation markers and issued Notices to Mariners advising of the changed conditions. Consistent advice from MSQ over recent months was that the sandbar, although requiring care to navigate, did not present a significant safety risk.

Since 1987, sandbars have formed in the harbour entrance and subsequently disappeared through natural coastal processes over periods between a number of weeks and a few months.

The last time dredging was undertaken, the work was almost complete when heavy sea conditions caused the sandbar to reform in the entrance and it had to be completely redredged. This situation also happened in 1986, when the entrance was dredged twice within a few months, after the sandbar reformed.

This shows that the decision to dredge the harbour entrance cannot be made lightly, as it could result in a waste of hundreds of thousands of dollars if the sandbar quickly reforms, as has happened in the past.

Yours sincerely

(Original signed by Minister)

Steve Bredhauer

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads

Member for Cook

- Non-State Schools Accreditation Board—Annual Report 2002-03
- Queensland Tertiary Education Foundation—Annual Report 2002-03
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General—Annual Report and Financial Statements 2002-03
- Legal Ombudsman—Annual Report 2002-03
- The National Trust of Queensland—Annual Report 2002-03
- Cane Protection and Productivity Boards—Addendum Annual Reports 2002-03
- Department of Primary Industries—Annual Report 2002-03
- Department of Emergency Services—Annual Report 2002-03
- Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading incorporating Liquor Licensing—Annual Report 2002-03
- Greyhound Racing Authority—Annual Report 2002-03
- Queensland Harness Racing Board—Annual Report 2002-03
- Trustees of the Albion Park Paceway—Annual Report 2002-03
- Department of Families—Annual Report 2002-03

- Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy—Annual Report 2002-03
- Disability Services Queensland—Annual Report 2002-03
- Building Services Authority—Annual Report 2002-03
- Department of Housing—Annual Report 2002-03
- Residential Tenancies Authority—Annual Report 2002-03
- Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council—Annual Report 2002-03
- Island Co-ordinating Council—Annual Report 2002-03

17 November 2003—

- Anti-Discrimination Commission—Annual Report 2002-03
- Land and Resources Tribunal—Annual Report 2002-03

18 November 2003—

- Children Services Tribunal—Annual Report 2002-03

21 November 2003—

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to a paper petition presented by Mr Speaker from 2891 petitioners regarding the Scarborough Boat Harbour

Ms Jennifer Don
17 Second Avenue
Scarborough Qld 4020

Dear Ms Don

I am writing in response to the petition regarding the Scarborough Boat Harbour tabled in Parliament by the Honourable Ray Hollis MP on 6 June 2003. The petition requests the House to not approve the development and sale of state government owned land near the Scarborough Boat Harbour and requests that this and some adjacent land be given to the people as enduring parkland.

The land adjoining the Scarborough Boat Harbour referred to in the petition is controlled by the Port of Brisbane Corporation (PBC), which also manages the boat harbours at Manly and Cabbage Tree Creek, the Gardens Point moorings and a number of other public marine facilities along the Brisbane River.

The PBC recognised that there may be opportunities to better manage and re-develop these harbour facilities and in late 2002 it commenced a master planning exercise for the Scarborough and Manly boat harbours. Town planning consultants, Buckley Vann, were engaged to undertake the concept design work for the master planning for both boat harbours. Preliminary concepts of the master plan included a proposal to redevelop the currently vacant reclaimed spit area with a combination of commercial, retail and residential development with associated parklands and public facilities.

These initial concepts for possible long term redevelopments aimed at creating better community facilities had been prepared by the PBC and their consultants to promote public discussion. I understand that a major objective of the master plan was to "create good places that people will want to visit and use". In the process of providing for harbour users and enhancing harbour operations the PBC was aiming to respond to and balance community needs and visions.

The master planning process included a community consultation program. This involved direct discussions with community-based project reference groups, interviews with lessees and harbour users, community open days and council working group meetings.

However the redevelopment proposals raised public concerns and its associated public consultation process was criticised as being insufficient. The concerns raised by members of the public were noted by the government and the PBC. As a result of this, the PBC announced in mid-June that it would not be continuing with the Scarborough Boat Harbour master-planning project and that it did not envisage restarting the project in the foreseeable future.

In your petition it is also requested that this land be given to the people as enduring parkland. This would then allow public access for recreational purposes. Currently the public already has a high degree of access to this area with the present system providing for the reasonable needs of the majority of stakeholders. There is a balance under the current land tenure arrangements which provides for the long term management needs of the PBC as boat harbour manager as well as allowing for realistic and safe public access.

The current dredging program at the boat harbour clearly highlights the strategic importance of the PBC maintaining its control provisions under the present tenure arrangements. With the increasing limitations on the disposal of dredge spoil at sea, the ability of the corporation to use part of this area as a temporary dredge holding area will be more important. That usage needs to be managed with regard to the engineering, environmental and safety requirements. The PBC is best placed to manage those issues.

The interest that you and the other petitioners have shown in this proposal is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

(Original signed by Minister)

Steve Bredhauer

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads

Member for Cook

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to a paper petition presented by Mr Lucas from 2457 petitioners regarding the Manly Boat Harbour

Mr Colin Ramsay
3 Curtis Street
Manly Qld 4179

Dear Mr Ramsay

I refer to the petitions regarding the Manly Boat Harbour tabled in Parliament by the Honourable Paul Lucas MP on 20 August 2003 and 28 October 2003. The petitions request that Parliament not approve the development and sale of land in the vicinity of the Manly Boat Harbour and request that this and some adjacent land be given to the people as enduring parkland.

The land adjoining the Manly Boat Harbour referred to in the petition is controlled by the Port of Brisbane Corporation (PBC) which also manages the boat harbours at Scarborough, Cabbage Tree Creek, the Gardens Point moorings and a number of other public marine facilities along the Brisbane River.

The PBC recognised that there may be opportunities to better manage and redevelop these harbour facilities. In late 2002 it commenced a master planning exercise for the Scarborough and Manly Boat Harbours. Town planning consultants, Buckley Vann, were engaged to undertake the concept design work for the master planning for both boat harbours.

Some initial concepts for possible long term redevelopments aimed at creating better community facilities had been prepared to promote public discussion. I understand that a major objective of the master plan was to "create good places that people will want to visit and use". In the process of providing for harbour users and enhancing harbour operations the PBC was aiming to respond to and balance community needs and visions.

However the redevelopment proposals for both harbours raised public concerns. The PBC announced earlier in the year that it would not be continuing with the master planning proposals for the Scarborough Boat Harbour in the foreseeable future.

The PBC is currently reassessing its proposals for the Manly Boat Harbour in light of the suggestions and concerns expressed through the community consultation process. The PBC is continuing to consult with community groups in this regard and it is anticipated that the result of those consultations will be announced in the near future.

The petitioners also request that this land be given to the people as enduring parkland. However, there is a balance under the current land tenure arrangements which provides for the long term management needs of the PBC as boat harbour manager as well as allowing for realistic and safe public access. It is therefore necessary that the area remains under the control of the PBC.

The interest and the concerns of the petitioners are noted.

Yours sincerely

(Original signed by Minister)

Steve Bredhauer

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads

Member for Cook

24 November 2003—

- Queensland Law Reform Commission—Annual Report and Statement of Affairs 2002-03

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997—

- Explanatory Notes for Body Corporate and Community Management Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 263

Stock Act 1915—

- Stock (Cattle Tick) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 2003, No. 277

Youth Participation in Education and Training Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 278

Pest Management Act 2001—

- Pest Management Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 279

Evidence (Protection of Children) Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 280

Tourism Services Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 281

Tourism Services Act 2003—

- Tourism Services Regulation 2003, No. 282 and Explanatory Notes for No. 282

Tourism Services Act 2003—

- Tourism Services (Code of Conduct for Inbound Tour Operators) Regulation 2003 and Explanatory Notes for No. 283

Treasury Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 2002—

- Treasury Legislation Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2003, No. 284

Arts Legislation Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 285

Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000—

- Police Powers and Responsibilities Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2003, No. 286

Cremations Act 2003—

- Cremations Regulation 2003, No. 287

Child Protection (International Measures) Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 288

Child Protection Act 1999—

- Child Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 289

Second-hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 290

Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000—

- Property Agents and Motor Dealers Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 292

Public Trustee Act 1978—

- Public Trustee (Fees and Charges Notice) (No. 2) 2003

MINISTERIAL PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial paper was tabled by The Clerk—

Minister for State Development (Mr Barton)

- Statement of Paul Fennelly, Coordinator-General, giving details of negotiations by the proponent of an infrastructure facility of significance with the owners of land to be taken by the Coordinator-General to acquire the land by agreement under section 125(6) of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled—

Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport (Mr Mackenroth)—

Report on an overseas trip to world financial centres in Tokyo, London, Frankfurt, Munich, Zurich, Toronto, Boston, Chicago, New York and San Francisco with the Queensland Treasury Corporation from 15 September to 26 September 2003

Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts (Mr M Foley)—

A response to Public Works Committee Report No. 81—Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE Redevelopment Stage 2 (Mooloolaba)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Gold Coast Schoolies Week 2003**

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.38 a.m.): The vast majority of genuine schoolies celebrating at the Gold Coast are behaving very well. In the first three days, only 26 of the 113 people arrested in connection with Gold Coast Schoolies Week were in fact schoolies. This was despite crowds of 30,000 at Surfers on Saturday night and 25,000 on Sunday night.

Unfortunately, last night the picture was not so rosy. I am advised that police were disappointed with schoolies' conduct. From a crowd of about 8,000, 38 people—all males—were arrested on 44 charges. These figures are for the 24 hours to 5 a.m. Eighteen of those arrested were schoolies. Thirteen arrested schoolies were Queenslanders, three were from New South Wales and two were from Victoria. Of the 20 non-schoolies, 13 were from Queensland, two were from New South Wales and two were from Victoria and three international. That makes a total of 151 arrests, including a total of 44 schoolies, since the start of the festival on Friday.

The offences yesterday and overnight included 11 for drunkenness, 10 for disorderly behaviour, eight for indecent behaviour, two for drugs, two for insulting words, three for assaults, three for liquor offences, one for possession of suspected stolen property, one for offensive behaviour and three for obstructing police. Regrettably, overnight there was significant damage to a new residential complex in Ferny Avenue at Surfers Paradise. A police investigation is under

way after fire hoses appear to have been turned on at 2 a.m. today on the 27th floor of the complex and left to run. There are schoolies staying in the complex. However, at this time it has not been determined whether they were at fault. Investigations are continuing. I am advised that there is significant damage to carpets and the interior of the building.

We always knew that schoolies would be difficult. There are up to 50,000 young people from three states partying at the coast. I am pleased to report that, despite a very busy 24 hours for police, things were quieter for liquor licensing officers. In the 24 hours to 6 a.m. today, there were a total of 39 breaches/offences under the Liquor Licensing Act including eight adults found supplying/selling alcohol to minors, who frankly should know better; 11 infringement notices and two warnings issued to minors possessing or consuming alcohol in public, which carries a fine of \$225; one minor found on licensed premises, and again the fine is \$225; and 14 adults fined for consuming alcohol in public. In the 24 hours to 2 a.m., 11 schoolies needed help for alcohol consumption at recharge zones, which are part of our support network for genuine schoolies.

Police and liquor licensing officers have obviously been out in force upholding safe drinking regulations. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights police issued 138 infringement notices at the Gold Coast. Liquor Licensing officers at the Gold Coast detected a total of 85 offences and breaches under the Liquor Licensing Act. Enforcement action has ensued, and I have the details here. Also, two security guards face prosecution for being unlicensed. I seek leave to incorporate the enforcement action in *Hansard* for the information of members.

Leave granted.

Sixteen infringement notices of \$600 each for the sale or supply of alcohol to minors;

Two licensed premises ordered to close balconies after missiles were thrown;

One licensed venue facing prosecution for overcrowding;

Three licensed venues being investigated for minors on the premises;

Twenty-six 17-year-olds received infringement notices (carrying fines of \$225) for under-aged drinking;

Four 17-year-olds receiving infringement notices (carrying \$225 fines) for being on licensed premises;

Two 17-year-olds receiving infringement notices (carrying \$225 fines) for attempting to enter licensed premises;

Two cases involving 16-year-olds that were referred to the police;

Four infringement notices (carrying \$225 fines) issued for drinking in a public place;

One infringement notice issued for obstructing a fire exit; and

Eight warnings over fire safety in licensed venues.

As well, two security guards face prosecution for being unlicensed.

Mr BEATTIE: Let me say that schoolies has gone better than perhaps it could have. It has gone better than I anticipated, but that does not mean that there have not been problems. We said that there would be, and there have been. We have done everything we possibly can. The unsung heroes are the volunteers. I want to thank them for what they are doing. I want to thank the chaplains for the service they are providing. I want to thank all of those who are making this the success that it is. I do want to add, though, that I am disappointed. I think last night's behaviour could have been better. I hope that schoolies will continue to behave themselves and those who are behaving inappropriately reconsider their behaviour.

Tonight the Police Minister, Tony McGrady, and I along with the Police Commissioner will be visiting the Gold Coast after the function I am holding for the Indian-Australian community, and the Indian community from Queensland in particular. There is a reception here tonight. Following that I will be going to the Gold Coast. I will be accompanied by my wife, Heather. We will do whatever we can to thank volunteers for the assistance they have given to schoolies. I should say also that the minister who has chaired this committee, Merri Rose, will be visiting schoolies tomorrow night.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Environmental Protection Agency

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 a.m.): The Environmental Protection Agency will trial seven lightweight multipurpose firefighting units which have been developed with the assistance of Q-Fleet. They are a smart way of widening Queensland's bush firefighting capabilities, particularly in difficult terrain or isolated locations. Further, in time of drought, we are facing a very high fire risk in Queensland. I have spoken to the Minister for Emergency Services, Mike Reynolds, and he has confirmed that because of drought

and other conditions we are facing a very high fire risk. The minister responsible for Q-Fleet, the Minister for Public Works, Robert Swarten, and I will be showcasing these vehicles at 12.30 today at the Parliament House portico, and members are invited to come.

The prototype vehicles are designed to give the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service more flexibility in responding to fires. The Environmental Protection Agency specified that the vehicles should be capable of being used as a firefighting appliance during times of high fire danger, accessing more remote areas such as small fire trails with greater manoeuvrability than the larger units, and general purpose duties during low fire danger periods to make the best use of the vehicle as a resource. I know the Minister for Environment, Dean Wells, is delighted with these vehicles. I table a news release that Minister Robert Swarten and I will be releasing later and seek leave to incorporate it in *Hansard*. I also seek leave to incorporate the rest of my ministerial statement in *Hansard* for the information of all members.

Leave granted.

They will undergo an extensive six month trial in national parks in the Cairns, Rockhampton and South East Queensland regions.

The trials will take place in a range of conditions to assess their fire fighting capabilities and performance.

At the end of the trial the EPA will identify one or more designs for which tenders will be invited.

The Queensland Government, through QFleet, has provided \$376,000 in development funding for the units, this is an invaluable investment in the future of Queensland's bush fire fighting capability.

QFleet expects to invest another \$37,000 in in-service development.

Three body-building firms have developed the prototypes:

AAA Engineering (Crows Nest)

Superior Industries (Brendale)

Yamba Welding (Yamba, NSW)

The Queensland Government also sought design input from Nissan and Toyota..

This reaffirms our commitment to the environment by ensuring a greater response to bush fire threats, minimising the impact on our valuable national parks and wildlife.

QLD COMES UP WITH SMART RESPONSE TO BUSH FIRE-FIGHTING CHALLENGES

Premier Peter Beattie and Public Works and Housing Minister, Robert Swarten, today unveiled a smart solution to the challenges of fighting bush-fires in Queensland's national parks.

Mr Beattie and Mr Swarten inspected seven prototype vehicles, worth a total of \$400,000 outside Parliament House in Brisbane.

"These vehicles were commissioned and paid for by QFleet, and were developed in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Nissan, Toyota and regional engineering firms," Mr Beattie said.

"They are designed to be adaptable to a range of conditions and terrain, providing a smart solution to the need to widen Queensland's bush fire-fighting capabilities.

"They will undergo a rigorous six-month trial in national parks in the Cairns, Rockhampton and south-east regions and will be put through their paces in a variety of circumstances.

"The beauty of these vehicles is that they can be used as versatile fire-fighting units during times of high fire-danger and can be put into service for general duties at other times.

"They can be easily converted from a fire fighting appliance to a general duties utility vehicle, with the capacity to carry up to 460 litres of water and are more manoeuvrable than larger fire fighting units.

The trial involves five different concepts on seven vehicles, with two of the designs using a flat tank system with the tank forming the flatbed of the tray and being a permanent fixture on the vehicle.

The other three designs rely on the removal of the fire appliance body and its replacement with a conventional tray body. These units feature a variety of mechanical, locking and loading devices to enable rapid replacement by Parks and Wildlife staff.

Mr Swarten said the prototypes were developed in partnership between government agencies and industry.

"These vehicles exemplify the benefits of government and industry working together to achieve smart outcomes for Queensland, with solutions from this trial having the potential to be applied elsewhere in Australia" he said.

"Motor vehicle body-building firms Superior Industries from Brendale in Queensland, AAA Engineering from Crows Nest near Toowoomba and Yamba Welding from New South Wales, have used lightweight metals and innovative designs in line with the chassis manufacturers' gross vehicle mass, to meet the unique needs of our Parks and Wildlife workers.

"Collaboration with government agencies and Nissan's engineers has successfully produced a range of vehicles that will be tested and further developed on-the-job to assess their fire-fighting capabilities."

"The exhaustive trial will maximise the range of operational conditions and will seek input from the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority and the Department of Primary Industries," they said.

"At the end of the six month trial, QFleet and the EPA will identify one or more designs, for which tenders will be invited."

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Growing the Smart State Funding Program

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.44 a.m.): Later today the Minister for Innovation and Information Economy, Paul Lucas, will make presentations on my behalf to the PhD students who have been awarded grants under our Growing the Smart State funding program. This year 22 students from the Queensland University of Technology, Griffith University, the University of Queensland and James Cook University have been selected to take part in the program. Growing the Smart State: A PhD Research Funding Program is designed to further strengthen the partnership between the Queensland government and our universities. It is about fostering innovation and thinking smarter. It is about implementing the Smart State. The program also gives the government access to some of the cutting-edge research being undertaken in Smart State universities to use in the formulation of policies. The students will share in a total of \$200,000 over three years for social, economic and environmental research. I table the releases that Minister Paul Lucas and I have put out and seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* further details about the students and the program.

Leave granted.

Last year was the program's inaugural year; 14 students were selected for the program and received \$100,000 in total funding.

By assisting students at Queensland universities financially and matching their research with the Government's priorities, we're tapping into the great talent of our tertiary sector to build good policies.

In return for their research, students are mentored through relevant Government departments and receive enhanced access to Government data.

The program has already enabled one of last year's recipients to undertake field work in the remote Aboriginal community of Kowanyama, on Cape York Peninsula.

Another recipient was able to complete the final experimental stage of research into fish habitats.

The names of this year's recipients and details of their research projects follow.

2003 Recipients

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

Naomi Doak for research into population structure, genetics and historical distribution of the frog genus *Mixophyes fleayi*, throughout southeast Queensland. School of Environmental and Applied Sciences, Gold Coast

Akihiro Nakamura for research into how the recovery of invertebrate animal diversity in soil and litter of rainforest restoration projects be facilitated. School of Australian Environmental Studies

Joanne Oakes for research into developing a chemical tracer to evaluate the importance of different coastal habitats in sustaining marine fisheries. School of Environmental and Applied Sciences, Gold Coast

Douglas Whitehead for research into renewable and sustainable energy and the conditions for success in the design and implementation of renewable and sustainable energy projects for small to medium size enterprises. Faculty of Engineering and IT.

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

Elizabeth Dinsdale for research into the development of environmental and perceptual indicators for evaluating natural resource management strategies using coral reefs as a case study. School of Tropical Environment Studies and Geography, Townsville.

Nicole Flint for research to identify the capacity of tropical fish to tolerate low levels of dissolved oxygen saturation, induced by agricultural run-off. Sublethal effects being examined will include organ damage, growth, reproduction and egg viability, and behaviour. School of Tropical Biology, Townsville

Samantha Fox for research into providing basic biological and ecological information on the spectacled flying-fox to inform future management policy. School of Tropical Biology, Townsville

Jeff Middleton for research into the effects of increasing climate variability on ground feeding vertebrates in North Queensland rainforest. School of Tropical Biology, Townsville

Sandra Robb for research into Chinese Families in Regional Queensland: their history and heritage. School of Humanities, Townsville

Sarah Levy Sheehan for research into Cattle grazing in wetlands: Does it control weedy grasses and how does it impact on vegetation regeneration? School of Tropical Biology, Townsville

Zoe Richards for research into whether rare corals are more at risk from environmental threats to the Great Barrier Reef than common ones. Centre for Coral Reef Biodiversity, School of Marine Biology, Cairns

QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Elizabeth Dunlop for research into mapping and modelling the invasion dynamics of *Senna obtusifolia* (Sicklepod) at different levels of scale in Australia. School of Natural Resource Sciences

Gregory Wilson for research into visible light sensitisation for hydrogen fuel generation from waste effluent. School of Physical and Chemical Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Peter Cook for research into whether transmission of mosquito-borne diseases can be reduced by selective removal of older mosquitoes. School of Life Sciences

Wendy Foley for research into negotiating lifestyle for the management and prevention of Type 2 diabetes: exploring the impact of socio-cultural factors on healthy lifestyle adoption among urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous Health Division

Tami Howe for research into environmental factors that influence the community participation of adults with Aphasia, a language disorder usually caused by stroke. Communication Disability in Ageing Research Centre, Department of Speech Pathology

Craig Jones for research into agreement-making about land use and access between pastoralists and Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal Environments Research Centre

Jacqueline Liddle for research into giving up driving: Helping people to adjust. Department of Occupational Therapy

Peter Moyle for research into the development of vaccines, coupled to fats and other molecules, in order to address difficulties associated with vaccine administration, through increasing oral absorption, stability to intestinal contents, and immune system response to vaccines. School of Pharmacy

Christopher Shaw for evaluation of herbicide levels and their effects on corals and seagrass in Queensland. Centre for Marine Studies

Katherine Taylor for research into rights and responsibilities in land ownership and natural resource management. School of Natural Rural Systems Management

Peter Young for research into the effects of public housing on non-shelter outcomes. School of Social Work and Social Policy

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Sunshine Coast Cane Lands**

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.45 a.m.): My government will stand shoulder to shoulder with local councils to protect Sunshine Coast cane lands from inappropriate and ad hoc urban development. Last week the Natural Resources Minister, Stephen Robertson, and I, after he brought a submission to cabinet supported by the Minister for Local Government and Planning, Nita Cunningham, detailed this at the Sunshine Coast with the support of the member for Noosa. State cabinet has agreed to a strategy for protecting Sunshine Coast cane lands in accordance with existing and longstanding state, regional and local planning strategies. The expected closure of Nambour's Moreton mill at the end of the current 2003 crushing season has raised speculation about the future use of approximately 14,000 hectares of land currently growing sugarcane on the Sunshine Coast. I should say that the future of this mill and the future of the Mossman mill would have been a lot more secure had the federal government gone ahead with the reform package supported by the state government. The future of both of these mills has been put at risk by the refusal of the federal government to support our reform package. It stands condemned. It is collecting the money but not bringing in reform. I say to the farmers around Mossman and Nambour: they have the federal government to blame for this, and they need to pursue the federal government vigorously.

But let us get back to the land. There has been considerable interest from some landowners and developers wanting to develop these cane lands for urban purposes. However, development of these cane lands for urban purposes is contrary to existing state, regional and local government planning schemes and policies under the Integrated Planning Act 1997. It would also undermine the responsible approach taken by the three Sunshine Coast councils to plan for and manage development in their respective areas in a sustainable and orderly way. We are not antiurban development. We are just emphasising that future residential and commercial development in this area needs to be carefully considered within the context of local, state and regional planning strategies.

There is a lot of community concern about the future use of the cane lands because of their importance to the Sunshine Coast's open space and landscape values and to the region's general character. The state government wants to end this speculation and give clear directions to the Sunshine Coast cane community, local government, canefarmers and developers that they can make business and investment decisions in the full knowledge of the government's position. I

thank both the ministers, Stephen Robertson in particular, and seek leave to incorporate the rest of my ministerial statement in *Hansard* for the information of the House.

Leave granted.

We intend to maintain an orderly and efficient approach to land use and development planning on the Sunshine Coast.

Ad hoc development outside of existing designated urban areas will increase major infrastructure and servicing costs for the State and local governments and, if allowed to occur, would undermine the planned settlement patterns, development sequences, and future infrastructure plans in these local government areas.

These cane lands have considerable economic value to the community for rural production, and much of the land is highly constrained for urban development by flood and acid sulphate soil risks.

There are strong grounds for protecting the existing Sunshine Coast cane land from urban development in accordance with existing State, regional and local policies and plans.

Under the Integrated Planning Act 1997 (IPA) there are a variety of existing mechanisms available to plan for and manage the impact of development.

The principal means for managing land use and protecting existing cane lands from urban development are the local government planning schemes.

There is also a range of other statutory instruments and reserve powers under the IPA to protect the State's economic and environmental interests through the planning and development assessment system.

The State Planning Policy 1/92: Development and Conservation of Agricultural Land would be reviewed by the State Government.

The status of cane lands both on the Sunshine Coast and throughout the State will form part of that review.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Violence Against Women

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.47 a.m.): I expect that every one of us believes women deserve unqualified respect. But there is clear evidence that respect is not universally granted to women. Violence or the fear of violence diminishes the lives of many women in Queensland, Australia and around the globe. We should rail against this abomination every day of the year. But today in particular is the United Nations's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Today many of us are wearing a white ribbon out of respect for women and girls who have experienced or are experiencing violence. Wearing this ribbon is a pledge never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women. I urge all members to support this program and seek leave to incorporate the rest of my ministerial statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

There are some societies where violence against women and girls is widely condoned.

In Queensland we take pride in being a civilised society—but the facts about violence against women stain that reputation.

There is no doubting Queensland women and girls experience higher rates of domestic and sexual violence than men and boys.

The violence is most likely to occur in the home, and be perpetrated by a family member, or by a current or former partner.

Twenty-three per cent of women who've been married or in a de facto relationship have experienced violence from their male partners.

In Queensland last year, 90.5 per cent of women who were murdered knew their killers.

71.4 per cent of murdered women were killed by a family member.

More than 70% of female assault victims, and almost 60% of sexual assault victims, know their assailant.

Indigenous women—particularly those living in rural and remote areas—are 45 times more likely to be abused than non-Indigenous women.

Women with a disability are also at higher than average risk of sexual violence.

It is a sickening fact that one third of the victims of sexual assault are girls and young women aged between 10 and 19.

And, as we know from shocking reports, even babies and toddlers can be the targets of sexual violence.

The Government has an ongoing commitment to improving the safety of women and girls in Queensland.

This year we've seen changes to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989, to extend formal protection from abuse and violence to people in intimate personal, family and informal care relationships

Along with other initiatives, we've allocated more than \$10.4 million over three years for new and better counselling and support services to back up the new legislation.

Three Queensland initiatives recently received Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards for addressing violence against women.

They are:

a joint project between the Department of Families and Griffith University, involving young sexual offenders; Gold Coast Sexual Assault Support Service, which educates 12 to 18 year olds about violence-free relationships; and

Sisters Inside, which works with young women prisoners who are victims of violence.

The Government accepts we have a great responsibility to prevent violence against women.

But speaking out about violence against women is a job for the whole community.

The Queensland Government sponsors White Ribbon Day in partnership with Lifeline, GHD, WearHouse, Minter Ellison, Boystown, Clayton Utz, Save the Children, Brisbane City Council, Brisbane Water, Baxter, Bunnings Warehouse and Tamawood Homes.

Observing "white ribbon day" is one way for Queenslanders to stand together to support victims of violence, and show our disgust at the perpetrators.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Kelvin Grove Urban Village

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.48 a.m.): Yesterday, along with the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, Robert Schwarten, I officially opened the infrastructure at Kelvin Grove Urban Village, including new roads, footpaths, parks and public open spaces worth \$38 million. The Department of Housing invested \$24 million and Queensland University of Technology \$14 million in this exciting Smart State venture. There will be a high-tech hub for students, businesses and the public in QUT's \$60 million Creative Industries Precinct, which will open in February 2004. The next major facility will be the \$50 million Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, scheduled for completion in late 2005. The Kelvin Grove Urban Village will be a world-class inner urban development incorporating a range of residential, educational, health, retail and recreational facilities into one high-tech, environmentally sustainable village.

I table details of the launch for the information of the House. I thank the minister for the visionary role that he has played in ensuring that this is developed in one of the best electorates in the state. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my ministerial statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The design and layout of the Village promotes walking, cycling and access to public transport, including the Inner Northern Busway, due to open in February 2004.

This project is setting new benchmarks for urban design and ecologically sustainable development along with energy efficiency, recycling, the environment and Information Technology.

Kelvin Grove Urban Village has received numerous awards, including the Planning Institute of Australia's 2003 State Award for Environmental Planning.

There will be about 800 homes for students through to seniors with high-quality affordable accommodation as well as premium apartments.

Housing will be delivered primarily by the private sector and there has already been keen interest from developers, with Indigo working on a \$120 million residential/retail Village Centre.

Three new prime development sites in the village are now available for purchase by developers by expression of interest.

These sites have been earmarked for student accommodation, managed seniors' accommodation and a tavern with a boutique hotel or serviced apartments.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Australian of the Year

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 a.m.): Last week I was honoured to announce Queensland's nominees for the 2004 Australian of the Year Awards. 'Crocodile Hunter' Steve Irwin is our Queensland Australian of the Year for 2004. Senior Australian of the Year 2004 for Queensland is Pearl Duncan. Our Young Australian of the Year 2004 for Queensland is Alice Chang. Earlier this year I announced that Alice had been selected as the Young Queenslander of the Year. Eddie Liu OBE is the Local Hero Metropolitan for Queensland and Cherbourg State School Principal, Chris Sarra, is the Local Hero for Regional Queensland.

The one thing all of them have in common is their commitment to improving the community. The 2004 nominees are inspirational and outstanding Queenslanders. Most of them would say that they do not need to be thanked for doing what they do because they enjoy it. However, I am proud to recognise their achievements. They are helping to make the Smart State great. I congratulate all of our nominees and I wish them further success at the national awards which will be announced in Canberra in January.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Health Report 2003

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.52 a.m.): On Sunday I released a health report which showed that Queensland doctors, nurses and health professionals had made our health system one of the best in the world.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I hear the Leader of the Opposition talking about self-assessment. The Leader of the Opposition could not do much self-assessment or do a report card, because what would it be? When he talks about his commitment to positive policies, what would it be? It would be a fail. What about his other failures, such as his ability to get the federal government to fund health services? What is that? Fail! What about his view on defending Telstra? Remember he was going to defend Telstra? What would that be? A fail! He said he was going to get rid of anyone who gave their preferences to One Nation. Did he get rid of Graham Elmes? What is that?

Government members: Fail!

Mr BEATTIE: Fail! What about his ability to get his team heading in the one direction? What is that? Another fail! If the Leader of the Opposition were to do a self-assessment, he would get an F. What about some positive policies?

I table the health report for the information of all members. I want to congratulate the health professionals. Last year they enabled more than 97,000 patients—

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BEATTIE: Isn't it typical? I am praising our doctors and nurses and they are being undermined by the Leader of the Opposition. I will stand by our doctors and nurses. Last year they enabled more than 97,000 patients to receive elective surgery operations in our public hospitals. That is 7,000 more than the last year when Mr Springborg and Mr Quinn were ministers. Despite thousands of extra public patients, the number of people on the waiting lists is 2,232 less now than it was when Mr Springborg and Mr Quinn were ministers. No wonder the opposition has criticised the report. But importantly, not one of the facts and figures has been shown to be inaccurate. That is the test of this report. I table a copy for all members and seek to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Health Report is not a collection of opinions, beliefs and half-truths.

It is a collection of checkable facts, each one of them sourced.

There are well over 100 facts and figures from independent, official and reliable sources which show that our doctors, nurses and health professionals have made huge advances over the past five and a half years.

Queensland's health system has been judged by the independent Productivity Commission to be the most efficient in Australia and to have the shortest waiting lists.

Anyone seeking to discredit this Report will have to discredit organisations such as the federal Productivity Commission, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development whose findings are used in this report.

But the Health Report doesn't just collect positive facts and figures.

It also examines some of the problems—problems which have also been identified by the AMA in the Official Communique of the Australian Health Care Summit from August this year.

In August the AMA backed the finding that the Federal Government's funding offer to the states, in which Queensland had \$160 million in health funding taken by the Coalition Government, was 'seriously flawed'.

And the Report makes it plain that while one patient has to wait too long for an operation, that is one patient too many.

It might be one of the best health systems in the world but it is not perfect.

There is much more work to be done.

My Government is playing its part by spending about 50 per cent more on health than when Mr Springborg and Mr Quinn were Ministers.

I want to work with Canberra to fix problems.

Three times I have asked Mr Springborg to stop playing politics and join me in fighting Canberra for a better health deal for Queensland.

And three times he has refused.

My commitment is that if we are re-elected, we will continue to provide record funding for Queensland Health.

And we will continue to outperform the low standards set when Mr Springborg was a Minister.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Polly Miller

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.55 a.m.): Yesterday I met a real hero. Health Minister Wendy Edmond and I were on hand yesterday at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital to meet British Bali bomb survivor Polly Miller. So good was the treatment she got at our hospital that she flew half way around the world to say thank you to those people who saved her life.

Not only was her fight and will to prevail so heartening, so too is her thoughtfulness and good manners by coming back to say thank you and, what is more, to chip in \$60,000 to say thank you. Polly lost her husband in the Bali tragedy and sustained burns to 40 per cent of her body. Polly spent six weeks in the hospital. She spent three days in intensive care, and had five operations to repair her damaged skin. She still wears pressure bandages, but is getting stronger every day.

Our Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital Burns Unit is world renowned, and named after one of the world's most respected surgeons, Emeritus Professor Stuart Pegg, who recently received the prestigious Whitaker Award in Italy, the first Australian to ever do so. Professor Pegg and his team were instrumental in setting up the unit in 1970 when individual burns units were unheard of. The unit, with Dr Michael Rudd now at the helm, is working miracles, and people once thought unsavable with 70 per cent to 80 per cent burns are now surviving and going on to live normal lives. The unit has treated thousands of patients, including most recently seven Bali patients, three Papua New Guinea kerosene patients, and those injured in the Movieworld and Surat explosions.

Not only are we delighted with Polly's gift; but yesterday also allowed us to express our pride in Queensland Health and the unit. Just like all who work in our hospitals, we are proud of the people who work in the burns unit here. They are all so inspiring. Their enthusiasm is infectious and it is something we all admire and respect. I say to the burns unit: well done.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Education and Training Reforms for the Future

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (9.57 a.m.): Today marks the first anniversary of the release of our government's education and training reform blueprint. On 25 November last year, along with the Premier and my colleague the Minister for Employment and Training, I launched Education and Training Reforms for the Future: A White Paper. In this paper our government committed to far-reaching changes across all levels of schooling, from the early years right through to the senior years and beyond. One year on, I am happy to report that we are already delivering.

We committed to giving Queensland children a better start to formal schooling, and we are on track. From the start of this year, 39 state and non-state schools across Queensland made history when they commenced trials of a full-time preparatory year of education before year 1.

I recently received the first progress report from the external team evaluating the trial. I have already circulated a copy of the executive summary of the report to members. That report shows that early feedback from the first half of the year indicates largely positive attitudes among principals and early education teachers to the prep year. Not surprisingly, concerns already raised with me by stakeholders about issues such as teacher aide time and the impact of breaking new ground on prep teachers were also raised. We are not waiting until the end of the trial to respond to issues raised. In response to concerns about teacher aide time, from next year individual trial

schools will be able to supplement their prep year teacher aide time from their whole school allocation.

From next year a further 27 schools will join the prep trial, bringing the total number of schools to 66. The expanded trial will give us a much better understanding of how this extra year of schooling can be delivered in Queensland communities and how it is being received by students and parents.

Our reforms do not stop with these sweeping changes in the early years. We are also committed to strengthening the middle years of schooling, and we have. In August this year the Premier and I released the Middle Phase of Learning State School Action Plan. This 13-point action plan aims to inspire young people to keep learning and to provide a smoother transition to the senior phases of learning. The centrepiece of the plan is a commitment to reduce class sizes from 30 to 28 in years 4 to 10 by 2007, giving Queensland children in these critical middle years the smallest class sizes in the country. From next year more than 300 extra teachers will be employed to cut the number of students per class and to give teachers more time for curriculum development.

That brings us to the senior years of learning. We said we would reshape the education and training system to make it more flexible to meet the changing needs of young people in their senior phase of learning, and we are already on track.

This government is the first in Australia to enshrine in legislation our commitment to see young people aged 15 to 17 years either learning or earning. Last month members unanimously passed the Youth Participation in Education and Training Act and the Training Reform Act which detail new obligations on young people to be in education, training or work until they are 17. While these new laws do not take effect until 2006, it is important that communities start preparing for these changes. That is why we are spending \$40.3 million over the next three years to expand senior schooling pathways and give more support to young people at risk of falling through the education and training net.

From start to finish this is a bold and ambitious reform agenda. We know there are and will be teething problems and issues to work through and iron out. It will take time to get it right. But we are determined to continue the momentum of the past year to keep the reform juggernaut moving forward. Queensland children deserve no less.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (9.59 a.m.): The Queensland government remains committed to providing training to help people find jobs, and to addressing the state's critical skills shortages. We are also committed to remedying the scandal of having 10,000 young Queenslanders aged 15 to 17 out of school, out of work and out of training through the education and training reform package just referred to by the education minister.

This commitment by Queensland has produced a significant breakthrough in the attitude of the federal government towards funding for training. At the Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council meeting on the Gold Coast on Friday, the federal government acknowledged that the growth states, like Queensland and Western Australia, were being disadvantaged by the current funding formula. The federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson, formally included in the proceedings a resolution in which 'The Australian government noted the difficulties faced by the states and territories with high growth in their working age populations and its support for a review to address this issue in the funding allocations in the 2007-2009 ANTA agreement', and I seek leave to table that resolution.

Leave granted.

Mr MATT FOLEY: I thank Dr Nelson for his support, particularly in view of the opposition from all other states and territories, apart from Western Australia. The current funding formula punishes economic growth and is a collusion against the public interest. I welcome Dr Nelson's willingness to end it. We have refused to sign the agreement with Canberra under the old formula because it short changes the state by \$60 million over the next three years and robs the state of 18,500 training opportunities. The Queensland government is committing all-time record levels of funding to vocational education and training. This financial year, we are investing \$781 million in training while the Commonwealth contribution in 2003 is less than \$184 million.

Trade unions and industry leaders have also publicly urged that the Commonwealth should increase its offer. I pay tribute to the Queensland Council of Unions, the Australian Industry Group, the Queensland Master Builders Association and other peak industry associations that have written to the federal government asking for a reconsideration of funding inequities. I table that letter.

Dr Brendan Nelson says he wants to reform the funding injustice to Queensland but not just yet. His current position resembles the famous prayer of St Augustine 'Lord make me pure, but not just yet.' Queensland will continue to negotiate in good faith with the Commonwealth to find a funding formula that will meet the state's training needs into the future.

The quality of the training provided in Queensland has again been put beyond question during the Australian Training Awards announced on Friday night. For the fourth year in a row, Queenslanders have blitzed the field, this time taking out seven awards, including three of the 10 major awards.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Prince Charles Hospital, Cryoablation

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (10.01 a.m.): Over the past few days, Queenslanders have seen yet again how their public health system is committed to delivering the best possible care in innovative ways. On Friday, two young patients—one a 7-year-old boy and the other a 17-year-old youth—underwent procedures that will, hopefully, change their lives for the better forever. Both patients required a procedure called cryoablation to correct abnormally fast heartbeats.

In cryoablation, a thin catheter or tube is inserted into the heart. The tip of the catheter freezes a small area of the heart muscle enabling cardiologists to destroy the abnormal electrical connection in the heart that leads to fast heartbeats. My department advised me that the experience of Australian clinicians in performing this procedure on children is very limited as it has only once before been carried out on a child in Australia. It is an extremely delicate and complex procedure with serious consequences if not successful.

While some observers, including some of those sitting opposite, were critical of Queensland Health for not just doing the operation, Queensland Health sought out the world's most experienced doctor in this technique to give these young patients the best chance we could of a good outcome. So efforts were made successfully to bring Dr Joel Kirsh from Toronto's renowned Hospital for Sick Children to Queensland to not only perform the procedures on these two youngsters but also to provide training to our own health professionals, at the government's cost.

I understand cryoablation procedures have been carried out on children only about 60 times worldwide and 30 of those procedures were carried out at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. I am pleased to report that I have been advised both procedures were a success and both patients have been discharged from hospital. I send my best wishes to both patients and their families.

I would also like to thank and congratulate Dr Kirsh and the team involved in providing care to both patients. These procedures come just months after a successful triple organ transplant on a young cystic fibrosis patient at the same hospital.

Mr Terry Sullivan: A fantastic hospital, the Prince Charles.

Mrs EDMOND: A fantastic hospital. Members may have seen on television the other night a news item highlighting the great, innovative work being carried out to develop new treatments for burns patients at the Royal Children's Hospital. This is ample evidence of a public health system committed to, and delivering, world class health care for Queenslanders.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mining Exploration Permits

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (10.04 a.m.): On my appointment as Minister for Mines and Minister for Natural Resources in 2001, I gave the Queensland mining industry an assurance that eliminating the backlog of mining exploration permit applications would be my top priority. This backlog was a legacy of the Borbidge government, which froze all mining exploration permit applications following the High Court's Wik native title decision in December 1996.

The coalition backlog reached 1,200 permit applications at its height, seriously eroded confidence in the mining industry and contributed to the significant fall in exploration investment in Queensland. It took the Beattie government, in partnership with the mining industry and indigenous native title groups, to rectify this mess left by the previous coalition government.

In November 2002, we reverted to the Commonwealth's right to negotiate process for mining and exploration, and this has since been formalised in legislation. We also developed a statewide model indigenous land use agreement for native title parties to negotiate mining tenure and exploration agreements. These new streamlined native title processes are helping to expedite mining exploration tenure applications towards grant.

The exploration industry will be heartened to learn that 202 exploration applications have been granted in the past six months, compared with 106 in the half year before that. I am pleased to report today that decisive action by this government has seen the coalition backlog of permits lodged prior to 18 September 2000 reduced from the original 1,200 frozen permits to zero. All 344 remaining applications from the backlog are now being processed normally under a variety of native title arrangements. Some are being processed under the provisions of Queensland's alternative state procedures, which have now been replaced by the Commonwealth processing regime.

A further 230 applications are within areas where Queensland's statewide model ILUAs and small scale mining ILUAs have been authorised and are awaiting registration. Five more ILUAs covering mineralised areas of Queensland have been registered in the national native title tribunal over the past month. These registrations will further reduce the current uncompleted applications by at least another 32 applications. A further 71 applications are being processed under the expedited procedures using the Commonwealth regime.

Since all permit applications are no longer frozen and are being processed in an appropriate manner, it is fitting today that we consign the Borbidge backlog to history where it belongs. The Beattie government is proud of its achievement in eliminating the coalition backlog. Having delivered on my commitment to the industry and in light of the new level of communication and cooperation between the Queensland Indigenous Working Group and the Queensland Mining Council the future is indeed promising for the exploration industry in Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Business Confidence

Hon. T. A. BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for State Development) (10.07 a.m.): Just this morning, the respected Sensis group reported that business confidence among Queensland's SMEs continues to rise, outpacing the national average by 10 percentage points. It is yet another bright economic indicator, following other recent ones such as our lowest official unemployment level in 21 years. Despite the huge challenges of SARS, drought and a weak global economy, the Department of State Development has achieved commendable results in driving this state's economy forward in 2003.

I mentioned employment—over 6,000 jobs have been created since February 2001. This is a period which has seen capital expenditure of \$599 million and some major new projects, which I would like to list, as well as big new manufacturing operations attracted from other states. Currently, we have a number of significant major projects under way. Both the \$1.5 billion Comalco alumina refinery and the \$200 million-plus Burnett water infrastructure projects are under construction.

Let us not be too modest about our ability to attract new manufacturers despite the tough economic climate. This year seemed to get better and better. More global aviation giants came to the Australia TradeCoast and we convinced some really outstanding companies to relocate to Queensland from New South Wales. In August, my department did some sums and found that in just six weeks new companies had brought around \$80 million in investment to Queensland, creating 260 jobs in the process.

The rollcall for the past year includes EADS Australian Aerospace, Raytheon Logistics, Smorgon, IBM and MBF to name just a few. Regional Queensland shared in this growth through companies such as Greenhalgh Refrigeration on the Sunshine Coast, Namoi Cotton in Toowoomba and the Salmat company's move to Bundaberg.

The department offered incentives to companies where necessary, but equally importantly it continued to promote Queensland's advantages of low taxes, a can-do attitude, a pro-business government and a good base of highly skilled employees. During the year, of course, we

launched an exciting new manufacturing blueprint—a comprehensive agenda for small business—and other sector-related initiatives including a major infrastructure conference and a forum on growing sports industries. I have not the time today to report on these initiatives at length, other than to say that the next 12 months will see the benefits flowing through to this state.

The Department of State Development is not only about maximising the potential of our existing economic base but also identifying and promoting industries of the future. One final promising economic indicator is that recently IBM Business Consulting named Australia among its top 10 countries for inward investment in the world. Among the top 10 regions in the world was Queensland, the only state in Australia to break into this ranking.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Police Service

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (10.10 a.m.): I have good news for the House and for the people of Queensland. Recently, members will recall that I tabled the annual crime statistics, which revealed significant drops in unlawful entry and property offences as well as decreases in robberies, homicides and sexual offences during 2003. In the longer term, it is pleasing to note that there are now fewer murders, robberies and premises broken into in Queensland today compared with five years ago. These trends are certainly good news, but there is no room for complacency. Let me tell the House that we will keep up the fight to create a safer community.

Ensuring the safety of Queenslanders is a key priority for this government and we are achieving this goal in a number of ways. Since this government came to office we have put an extra 1,693 police officers on the beat. We will continue our commitment to employ about 300 extra officers every year. Compare this to the former coalition government, which promised Queensland an extra 695 police but delivered only 437 officers. Earlier this year we delivered our sixth consecutive record Police budget, which represented a 9.2 per cent increase, or an \$84 million boost, taking the Police budget to over the \$1 billion mark for the first time ever.

This record funding has enabled many crime-fighting initiatives, a major one being the tactical crime squads. Eleven of these 14-officer squads, which focus on drug and property crime, are now in place, with the other five to be established by early next year. Incidentally, Cairns has 21 and Mount Isa has seven. By the end of 2003 the implementation of the 20-officer State Flying Squad will also be complete. This squad is available to respond at short notice to any serious crime or surge in crime across the state and has already provided a valuable policing resource for many communities across the state.

There is one measure that I am incredibly proud of in my time as Minister for Police and that is the introduction of the new antihooning laws, which have been warmly welcomed by the community. In the first year of operations, police confiscated 876 cars for 48 hours after a first offence. There have been just seven second offences and one alleged third offence, proving beyond a doubt that our laws are working to deter hooners. We also recognise that all these new police mean that we need new buildings and resources. That is why we are building new stations across the state, including providing nearly \$20 million at Toowoomba, \$7 million for a new facility at Mundubberra and \$2.5 million for the new Loganholme Police Station, and the list goes on.

Mr Johnson: You never mentioned Longreach.

Mr McGRADY: As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted by the member for Gregory, that is not to mention the 20 police beats and police beat shopfronts we will have established right across the state by February 2004.

Not only are we employing more police; we are investing in technology so that the police can be more efficient and have more time out on the streets fighting crime. In 2003-04 we are spending \$15 million to improve information technology for the Police Service. Our push toward greater use of new technology is aimed at giving police the tools they need to do their work so that they will not be tied up doing paperwork back at the office.

Coming back to Longreach, we had \$200,000 in this budget to draw up the plans. I am sure that in the not-too-distant future I will be out there with Joan Moloney and other people—I do not know about the member for Gregory, but certainly with Joan—after the next election and we will be opening the new police station.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**Report**

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.15 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest No. 13 of 2003*.

MEMBERS' ETHICS AND PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE**Report**

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Lib) (10.16 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 62 of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee titled *Report on a citizen's right of reply No. 15*. I commend the report and the committee's recommendation to the House.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMITTEE**Reports**

Mr WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (10.16 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House a report on the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee. The report attaches a report by the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner, Mr Robert Needham, on his investigation into the actions of the Crime and Misconduct Commission regarding allegations against Mr Chris Murphy. The committee requested the Parliamentary Commissioner to investigate and report to the committee in relation to whether there was any political interference or political bias in the CMC's handling of allegations against Mr Murphy and the appropriateness of the CMC's decision to investigate the matter itself rather than to refer the matter to another agency for investigation.

In summary, the Parliamentary Commissioner has found that there was no political interference or political bias in the commission's handling of allegations against Mr Murphy and that the CMC's decision to investigate the matter itself rather than to refer the matter to another agency for investigation was appropriate in all the circumstances.

I lay upon the table of the House a report on activities of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee. The role of the committee is to oversee the performance of the Crime and Misconduct Commission. The committee is the principal vehicle through which the commission is accountable to the parliament and, in turn, the people of Queensland. It is therefore important that the committee report on its oversight function wherever possible.

There are, however, some constraints of confidentiality imposed by the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001. Given the nature of its functions, the committee must consider a large range of issues that arise and affect the CMC. It is neither practical nor desirable, for reasons both of confidentiality and volume, for the committee to report publicly and comprehensively in relation to every one or even the majority of such issues. However, the committee regards it as appropriate that it inform the parliament and, in turn, the people of Queensland at this time regarding some of the more significant issues that have been considered by the committee since its appointment in May 2001. I commend the report to the House.

I lay upon the table of the House a Crime and Misconduct Commission publication titled *Public perceptions of the Queensland Public Service and local government—findings from the 2002 public attitudes survey*. The survey presents the findings of the CMC's 2002 public attitudes survey. The survey measured public attitudes towards the Queensland Public Service and local government, as well as public knowledge, confidence and experiences regarding the complaints process.

This publication is not a report of the CMC for the purposes of section 69 of the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001. The Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee stresses that it has not conducted any inquiry into the matters which are the subject of the publication. However, the committee is tabling the document as it believes that it is in the spirit of the Crime and Misconduct Act that it be tabled in the parliament.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Health Report 2003**

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.19 a.m.): Phineas T. Barnum, famously of Barnum and Bailey Circus, once said there is a sucker born every day.

The Premier believes that three and a half million Queenslanders are suckers if they believe his document the *Health Report 2003*, a self-assessment of the state's health system.

It is appalling that we have a Premier in this state who is prepared to treat three and a half million Queenslanders like suckers. Those people who are on waiting lists and those people who have had trouble getting into the emergency departments around Queensland know the real state of the health system in Queensland. They are not relying on the Premier's chief spin doctor to put out a glowing self-appraisal of the Premier and his performance. This report makes very interesting reading. No doubt it will be much talked about in this place during the course of the day. The last four pages contain sources. The equivalent of about a page reads 'Ditto'.

It is very unfortunate in this state that every time we have a health crisis this Premier and this government reach for the spin doctors instead of for the real doctors. If an extra 140 people were employed as doctors or nurses instead of in the Premier's propaganda unit, then something might be done to fix the crisis situation of Queensland Health. This is again a demonstration of the triumph of propaganda over performance. Every time this government is in crisis, which is over and over again, it reaches for the spin doctors. Every time it is in crisis it puts another several hundred thousand dollars worth of ads in the newspaper.

Time expired.

Australian Primary Schools Film Festival

Ms KEECH (Albert—ALP) (10.21 a.m.): It may not have been quite the AFI awards, but the 2003 Australian Primary Schools Film Festival, held at Dreamworld on Sunday night, certainly had the same pizzazz and excitement. This was the third festival I have had the pleasure of attending, representing Minister Anna Bligh. It gets bigger and better each year.

The theme of the festival this year was 'Dream a better world'. Primary school children from around Australia were invited to submit short films on their dreams for a better world. Each year the festival is held to recognise United Nations Universal Children's Day—a day which actively promotes the welfare of the world's children. What do the children of Australia dream? Simply, they want a world where people are kinder to children and recognise and respect their rights. They dream of a world where protecting our fragile environment is seen as everyone's responsibility. Bullying, youth suicide and waste recycling programs were key themes. Of course, the annual fest would not have been the success it was without the help of Coomera State School. Thanks go to teachers Kerri Underwood and Graeme Johnston and principal Chris McMillan. Well done.

Unlike past years, this year Queensland schools dominated the awards, which shows that our government's ICT reforms in primary schools are delivering a winning formula. The encouragement award for first-time entry went to Pacific Pines State School, and the award for best film with an environmental theme was received by Redland Bay State School. The winning entry from a school with greater than 400 students went to Surfers Paradise State School. Just like at the recent AFI awards, the students' winning film sent a powerful and strong message to all Australians: the imprisonment of children in our detention centres is cruel, unfair and totally un-Australian. I say a big thank you to Queensland children for sharing their hopes for a better world. May we as adults live up to their dreams.

Agricultural Planning System

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (10.23 a.m.): The latest volley to be fired against rural industries is known as the agricultural planning system, a draft proposal of which is being circulated, albeit apparently in restricted circles. A small article buried in the numerous pages of the major city newspaper compared to the front-page lead story of a rural newspaper could not have more clearly defined the difference in the degree of importance this APS proposal has to city and rural populations.

Two components make up this proposal—material change of use and works—which seeks to develop ways to better manage land. In other words, people can be told what they can grow, how many cattle they can run and in what areas. Although it is said that this will be advisory only, there is a real concern that this agricultural planning system will become more substantial, as have many other proposals in the past, and become state planning policy.

From conversing with several councils in my electorate I have found that the general belief is that, if introduced, this proposal, which is yet to reach the ears of most of them, whether it be for guidance only or outlined in some legislative form, would impact significantly on land-holders in

agricultural areas. It would be an impact they can ill afford at any time, let alone at the moment, while the drought continues. As well, history has shown that, should this matter be progressed and endorsed in any form by the state government, it is more likely that local government would end up administering any new policy. The resources of most small, rural based local governments simply are not available and probably never will be.

Rosalie Shire Council stated, 'Council is strongly of the opinion that there is sufficient regulation in the agriculture area and rejects outright the introduction of any further controls.' All other councils I have spoken with, who have heard nothing about this APS, agree with the comments from Rosalie Shire Council and ask, 'Whatever happened to community consultation?' Put simply, governments now believe that we have learnt nothing on the land. They do not understand that a grazier, a farmer or a crop grower has learnt through trial and error over generations of farming that if you abuse your land you will starve, but if you look after the land it will look after you and sustain you and your family for generations to come.

Gold Coast Schoolies Week 2003

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (10.25 a.m.): Ask any school leaver what schoolies is about and they will tell you that they want to celebrate the end of the school year by getting together with mates and having fun. This year's year 12 students in Logan East are well prepared for schoolies celebrations. Along with the Liquor Industry Action Group and Logan Corridor Vice-President Patty White of Logan Diggers, I informed students of the Liquor Licensing Act in relation to the serving of alcohol to minors and the supply of alcohol to minors. We also gave some great tips on how to make sure they do not fall victim to drink spiking. We explained how responsible drinking is a two-way street, with pubs and clubs ensuring they practise responsible service of alcohol while it is important for the young people to remember that they need to be responsible when drinking. I was able to inform year 12 students of the work and resources that the state government has put into Gold Coast Schoolies Week 2003 to make it as safe and enjoyable as possible for them.

Local police officers informed students of their rights and responsibilities under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. These police officers gave good examples of how one mistake at schoolies could mean a criminal conviction and therefore a huge reduction in career choices and reduced choices in overseas travelling destinations, especially if they receive a criminal conviction for a drug offence. They showed pictures of a watch-house and what to expect if arrested. In other words, Springwood State High, Shailer Park State High and Calvary Christian College year 12 students were all informed that young people have to take responsibility for their actions.

Students spent the day going to classes that included the school nurse speaking on sexual health issues, women's and men's health and contraception. Logan's community group YFS spoke about sexual assault, drugs, chill-out areas and where to seek assistance in almost any situation. Relationships Australia spoke on responsible gambling and the negative impacts that gambling addiction can have on a young person's life. Surf lifesavers gave CPR demonstrations and practical tips on swimming safely. Speakers from the spinal unit spoke about spinal injuries and safety. There were many speakers who gave practical advice to students relevant not only to schoolies. It is practical advice they can use throughout their lives. I thoroughly enjoyed sitting in on the classes and listening to the views and concerns of our young adults.

Time expired.

Health Report 2003

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (10.27 a.m.): On Sunday we saw the ultimate act of political desperation by the Premier when he released his so-called *Health Report 2003*. A Premier writing his own report certainly is bordering on the ridiculous. What is the status of this report? Is it an official government report? Where do we find it? Do we find it on the Queensland Health web site? No! We find it under teambeattie.com, the official re-election site of the Premier.

This report is not an official health document portraying the status of health in Queensland; it is the world's longest press release. It goes to 17 pages and makes numerous mentions of different reports throughout Queensland and Australia. It is resplendent with the tired old excuses of 'it's all the coalition's fault' or 'it's the federal government's fault'. It is everyone else's fault.

Mr Springborg: What about the man on the moon?

Mr QUINN: He probably gets a mention, too. This is just another stunt in the re-election campaign of the Premier and the ALP in Queensland over the next couple of months. It is a tired old campaign technique: write a glowing report about yourself, stand up on TV and praise yourself using a report which you wrote yourself. We cannot get any more ridiculous than that. We cannot get any more self-serving than that. The big question is: who was the expert who wrote it? Which person is falsely using the title 'Dr' to write this report? Who is it? Is it Dr Beattie or is it someone else in the minister's spin department?

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: The time for private members' statements has expired.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Public Housing

Mr SPRINGBORG (10.30 a.m.): My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. Can the minister explain why his department would pay two separate companies to paint roofs of the same eight Housing Commission houses twice in three days?

Mr SCHWARTEN: First of all, I might point out to the honourable member that he should get a dictionary. The word is not 'rooves', it is 'roofs'. Horses have hooves; houses have roofs.

Mr Springborg: One of those pointed things going across the top of houses.

Mr SCHWARTEN: That is the first thing. After the embarrassing effort he made of explaining to the building industry what he knew about building last night, I am surprised that he even knows what a roof is.

I am not aware of the incident that the honourable member talks about, but I will find out about it. I do not busy myself following contractors around the state seeing who is painting what roofs around the 55,000 sets of accommodation that we have in Queensland, but I will find out and let the honourable member know.

Public Housing

Mr SPRINGBORG: I have a further question to the honourable Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. Is it a fact that a Brisbane company has been paid more than \$3,000 for painting the front fences of five Housing Commission homes that do not actually have any front fences? Is the minister presiding over corruption, incompetence, or both?

Mr SCHWARTEN: No. I thank the gentleman at the back for holding up the photos there. It is probably the closest he has ever been to a Housing Commission house.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The same applies to the member for Southern Downs.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You have asked the question.

Mr SCHWARTEN: We know that the Leader of the Opposition set himself low standards when he came in here, and he is yet to meet those low standards. The reality is that by continuing—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You have asked the question. The minister will have the opportunity to answer it.

Mr SCHWARTEN: As I said before, it is not my responsibility, even though I am quite capable and a bit more adept with a hammer than anybody over there. That is not part of my core business. It is not my responsibility to actually go out there and check every fence and check every contractor and all the rest of it. We have spent about \$200 million upgrading houses throughout Queensland. That is something about which I am very proud. I notice the member for Bundamba, who could attest to some of the quality work that we have produced.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Palaszczyk interjected.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition!

Mr SCHWARTEN: The community and urban housing program that we have completed in Queensland is the best thing that has ever happened to the Housing Department in 50 years. There is no doubt about that whatsoever. I know that members opposite have been trying for a long period of time to undermine the progress that we have made, but I will have a look at the stuff that he is talking about.

I will not resile from the fact that we have made a terrific commitment to upgrade the standard of housing that is available throughout Queensland. We have done things such as screen every single seniors unit in this state to protect the elderly; we have screened thousands of homes north of Townsville to protect kids against dengue fever; we have air cooled every house west of the Great Divide—something that was knocked every inch of the way by this lot over there. If the Leader of the Opposition was fair dinkum about it, he would have brought that problem to me rather than standing up here trying to big-note himself at the expense of people in public housing.

Smart State Exports

Ms MOLLOY: I direct my question to the Premier and I ask: how successful have the Queensland government's trade strategies been in increasing Smart State exports?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for Noosa for that question because my government's export strategies are having a growing effect on Queensland's economic bottom line. The Export Solutions strategy, which I unveiled just over two years ago, has already seen 162 new exporters enter the marketplace. The strategy aims to increase new exporters by 20 per cent over five years.

In the 2001-02 financial year we aimed to encourage 40 exporters into the market and actually ended up with 43 new exporters. In 2001-03 we aimed for 120 exporters and got 123. By the end of this financial year we are aiming for 240 exporters and have already put 162 into the global marketplace.

The new exporters come from a range of industries including agribusiness, information and communications technology, professional and business services, food, health and aged care, and biotechnology. The Export Solutions strategy also aims to increase the value of the Smart State's knowledge intensive exports by 50 per cent over five years. Knowledge intensive exports rely on intensive inputs of technology and human skills.

The industries represented include aviation, communications, finance and health and education services. In the 2002-03 financial year the strategy aimed for a 12 per cent increase in the value of knowledge-intensive exports but the actual increase was almost 17 per cent. This outcome highlights the significance of my government's Trade Strategy, particularly in a period of depressed global commodity prices, restrained international demand, an appreciating Australian dollar and reduced domestic rural production due to drought.

By diversifying Queensland's export base to include knowledge-intensive goods, we are reducing the Smart State's vulnerability to such external factors. Clearly, our export strategies are working and I want to congratulate all our new exporters who take up the challenge and move into global markets.

Exports have been a priority of my government. Those results, as the member for Noosa knows, are evident. They demonstrate that our strategies are working. Smart State covers a range of things. It covers innovation, a range of opportunities in education, training, new industries and new skills. We need to do it in an embracing way—in a tolerant way—which is why I think there are some lessons that the Liberal Party could learn.

On another issue, I was concerned to see that the former vice-president of the Liberal Party, Graham Young, on his web site said—

It's a pity that the Liberal Party would choose this moment to launch this action given that all of its resources should be devoted to fighting three elections due next year. Queensland voters could be forgiven for believing that the Liberals are only interested in internal matters. They might also ask what the Liberal Party's commitment is to free speech.

What has happened, Mr Speaker: you have the Liberal Party trying to expel Graham Young. They are also trying to expel a candidate, Marion Feros. Where is the freedom? Where is the 'liberal party' in the Liberal Party? I will stand by these people and their right for free speech.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Darling Downs, could I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers of Elanora State School in the electorate of Currumbin. Welcome. I call the honourable member for Darling Downs.

Public Housing

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. Minister, in addition to the five houses that had their non-existent fences painted, can he explain why the same company was also paid more than \$3,000 to paint the non-existent battens, decks, pergolas and balustrades of another eight houses? Is it not a fact that under the minister's mismanagement his department paid for the painting of four carports one day before it actually received quotes for their construction? Does he have the foggiest notion of what is going on in his department?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I will give the member a tip—I know a bit more about it than he does. We are still waiting for his policy. I can assure the member that this and other matters—as soon as he gives me the addresses of all of them—I will have looked at immediately and get back—

Mr Horan: It's a bit late!

Mr SCHWARTEN: 'It is a bit late,' he said. Isn't that original? Isn't that original! The reality is that when he was a minister, Eventide in Rockhampton was pulled down without any approval on asbestos, and he has the hide to sit there and criticise me! That is what happened under his government. There was no asbestos plan or workplace health and safety plan under his government. That is what happened. So don't lead with your chin here!

The reality is that this matter will be fully investigated. If there has been any corruption or corrupt behaviour, then people will pay the price for it. At the end of the day, hundreds of millions of dollars has been spent. There has been \$500 million spent in new construction for a start and something like \$300 million in upgrades—that is, close on a billion dollars. If there is somebody out there who is misusing their position, they will pay the price for it. But I will tell the House this much: I will not be deterred from doing the right thing by the people in our Department of Housing. That is what I will not be deterred from doing.

The fact is that there is a policy-free zone that this hypocrite over there operates in. I noticed that just last week he was at it again talking about the opposition's non-existent policy. Where is it? Where is its policy? It is not on their web site! Those opposite should bring their policy forward. They have a couple more days of parliament to do it. Where is it? Where is the policy? Out with all of their other policies—out there in the bushes. There is something big out there. Does the member remember what he said when he made a fool of himself at the CMC? The only thing that I might suggest the member opposite do is learn how to spell my name for a start.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toowoomba South will cease interjecting.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Learn how to spell my name for a start. Also, he should brush up on what the subbies laws are in this state. He made a complete goose of himself with this—a complete goose—with regard to his knowledge of the Subcontractors' Charges Act. He should have heard what those builders were saying about him. As I say, he could start by learning how to spell my name. The reality is that those opposite should keep up these attacks, because I will not leave any stone unturned to prove to this parliament that we are pointing the money in the right direction—money that we put into airconditioning people's houses west of the Great Divide—and we have upgraded places such as Inala and Riverview when there was no waiting list five years ago.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I welcome to the public gallery the former federal member for Cowan, Caroline Jacobson.

Queensland Events Regional Development Program

Mr McNAMARA: I refer the Premier to the fact that the Rugby World Cup has meant a huge boom for Queensland and Australia. It has shown that events offer much more than just entertainment; they offer huge economic and social opportunities as well. What and how much has this state done in recent times to continue the phenomenal success of the Beattie government's Regional Events Program?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Hervey Bay for his question. Another 25 regional events have been included in our hugely successful Queensland Events Regional Development Program. This means another injection of almost half a million dollars into events in regional Queensland. Since the inception of the Queensland Events Regional Development Program in 2001, which was an election commitment, almost \$2 million has been invested in more than 100 regional celebrations and the results are being witnessed through increased attendances and economic benefits in regional areas. The true benefits of events cannot just be measured in numbers. Events bring an immeasurable sense of identity and a spirit of celebration to our regions, and this is a vital part of building stronger communities.

To highlight this, a recent success has been this year's Leyburn Sprints. It was funded under the program this year and experienced a 20 per cent year-on-year growth in attendances, which is a pretty good outcome. This year 18,000 people, about 120 times the resident population of 150, flocked to this two-day motor sport event held in Leyburn—and the Minister for State Development, Tom Barton, knows all about this sort of detail as he is the petrol head in the cabinet—3,000 people up on last year. This percentage is on a par with the 22 per cent increase in the Toowoomba Gospel Music Festival gained from our support or the \$1.4 million of economic benefit Warwick got from this year's inaugural Polocrosse World Cup which we supported. These are the best possible endorsements for our Regional Events Program. For example, benefits beyond the crowd numbers are shown in communities like Leyburn where there was not just a great community event but, as a result, profits are flowing back into community groups including Leyburn's fire service, playgroup, church groups and even the local scout associations. I also want to thank Telstra Country Wide for its ongoing commitment through investment in the past three rounds, enabling support for additional events across the state.

I have here with me the full successful program that I announced the other day at Noosa with the member for Noosa, but I want to highlight that successful applicants in round 5 of the program include sporting carnivals, cultural festivals and uniquely Australian celebrations. As I said, the 25 events were announced last week while I was at Noosa with the local MP, Cate Molloy. Three Sunshine Coast events received support. The Mooloolaba Etchells Fleet will host 300 sailors at the Etchells World Championship in July/August 2004. From Chainsaw to Fine Furniture at Maleny is a three-day event in May celebrating Australian timbers with displays and entertainment. The Noosa Longweekend is a 10-day celebration of cultural entertainment and food and wine showcased in the Noosa shire in June. David Williamson was on hand for this, and it was again good to meet up with him. He is a strong supporter of the Noosa Longweekend. I actually think that the Noosa Longweekend would have all sorts of benefits for members of this parliament, particularly the Liberal Party. It could go up and have a love-in and try to get together to work out who it is going to expel—

Time expired.

Department of Housing, Auditor-General's Report

Mr COPELAND: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. How is it that the minister's department has a draft copy of an Auditor-General's report into mismanagement and possible corruption yet he knows nothing about it?

Mr SCHWARTEN: Let me make this clear: if anybody has done the wrong thing in that department, I assure the House that this is a government that will deal with it. We are not like the old Tories of the past that cover this sort of thing up. We will ensure that no stone is unturned to make sure that these people are brought to justice. The fact of the matter is that if that lot opposite were really fair dinkum, what would they have done with this? I will tell the House what they would have done with it: sent it over to the CMC. Have they done that? No, they have not obviously. The reality is that I just happen to have a document here that talks about some of the wonderful things that we as a government have done in this regard. Let me talk about a couple of them.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Toowoomba South! This is my final warning. The member will cease interjecting.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The member asked the question. He is so interested in what we are doing at the moment. Let us talk about it, shall we?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cunningham! This is my final warning.

Mr SCHWARTEN: What have we done since July 1998 to the year 2003? We have done \$156 million worth of upgrades. What have we done in the area of responsive and planned maintenance? We have spent \$381 million. What have we done in general upgrades? We have spent \$190.77 million.

Mr Copeland interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cunningham, this is my final warning.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The fact is that that is an awful lot of money. But, of course, this lot over there wants me to run around and check on every single individual one of them to make sure that no-one is doing the wrong thing. If there is anybody out there who has done the wrong thing, they will be caught and they will be brought to justice as a result of it. That is what will happen. Let me tell members this: we are going to continue with the fine work that we have been doing. I suggest those opposite go out to some of these suburbs where we have spent this money, like most Labor members have done on this side of the House. For example, go to the electorate of the member for Bundamba and tell the people there that we are wasting money. Go out to Inala and Manoora in Cairns and tell the people there that we are wasting money. Go out to Logan or up to Garbutt in Townsville or to Vincent or to Rasmussen or any of those places. There are 15 of those community renewal areas in this state and we have spent \$85 million on programs there, but we have also spent part of that \$190-odd million doing it. We will continue to do it, because I am very proud and this government is very proud of its record in this regard. We have page after page listing our achievements. We have not seen one bit of paper in terms of a policy from that lot yet—not one.

Gold Coast Schoolies Week 2003

Mr REEVES: My question is to the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading. This evening I am attending the Gold Coast for a tour of the schoolies precinct with the coordinator of the Hotel Chaplaincy, Andy Gourley, who is a Mansfield resident. Gold Coast Schoolies Week 2003 is the best resourced and best coordinated, with the broadest range of diversionary and entertainment activities. Can the minister advise the House of the role of the more than 1,200 volunteers who are helping out schoolies?

Ms ROSE: I thank the member for the question. He can report back to me in the morning after he has been down there tonight as to his experiences. School leavers from across Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria arrived over the weekend in their thousands for what has become a rite of passage for them—the transition from school days to adulthood. They are here to have a good time, and they deserve it.

Schoolies Week 2003 is in full swing. As the member for Mansfield said, it is the best coordinated, best managed and best resourced ever. It also offers the broadest range of diversionary activities and entertainment options, thanks to events coordinator Michael Cowdroy and his company Follow Me. The company has set out to make Gold Coast Schoolies Week 2003 as safe and enjoyable as we can. We want the estimated 50,000 teens here now to take home great memories of their end of school celebrations.

The unsung heroes of schoolies are the army of volunteers—the hundreds of people from all walks of life who have made their own sacrifices to help others. They have offered their time during schoolies because they care. They care for the wellbeing of schoolies and they want to do their bit to help. Some of them have been volunteering for several years—volunteers such as Brisbane Lions hero Shaun Hart, a veteran of four schoolies festivals with the hotel chaplains; like Broncos winger Scott Minto and Queensland Reds star centre Steve Kefu; and like the almost 1,200 others who just want to help and give something back to their communities. Volunteers are working in groups patrolling the streets, providing support and advice to schoolies, registering schoolies and working in a range of other roles from administration to cooking meals. Some have taken their holidays so that they can be here. Others have shut up shop so that they can be on hand to offer support and assistance to schoolies.

The volunteers are easily identifiable by vests, T-shirts and orange wrist bands. It is hard to miss them in a crowd. Organisations whose volunteers are helping at schoolies include Hotel Chaplaincy, 600 volunteers, including 200 full-time volunteers who will mainly work in accommodation houses and help oversee daytime activities; Schoolies Support Team, 275 volunteers, which started as a mums and dads group. Its main role is conducting night street and

beach patrols and being on the lookout for any schoolies in distress. Rosies has 70 volunteers. Rosies is running one of the Telstra Recharge Zones. The Scripture Union, with 160 volunteers, is running a Telstra Recharge Zone, operating a sausage sizzle and helping with beach activities during the day. Drug Arm, with 20 volunteers, is operating a Telstra Recharge Zone, and has provided venues for training of volunteers. Follow Me has 20 volunteers. Follow Me, the events coordinator, has volunteers including DJs and others. There are also 70 SES volunteers.

Health Report 2003

Mr SEENEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the government's health report written by the Premier's chief adviser—chief spin doctor—'Dr' Bishop, I presume, and is being touted by the Premier as a record of this government's achievement. I note in the 13 pages of this report the Leader of the Opposition is mentioned 35 times. He is mentioned six times on page 1, five times on page 2 and seven times on page 4. But in comparison, the minister is mentioned just once.

Mr Springborg: Once?

Mr SEENEY: Once—in the fourth paragraph on page 5! The Minister for Health is mentioned just once.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is the member going to ask the question?

Mr SEENEY: The only other mention is in footnote 34.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is not a statement on the report. The member will ask the question.

Mr SEENEY: Can the minister advise the parliament what role she had in advising the Premier's chief spin doctor in the compilation of this report and are Queenslanders not justified in asking 'Where's Wendy' in Queensland Health?

Mrs EDMOND: I thank the member for his question and also for his support the other day when I was in his electorate opening wonderful new health facilities for the people of rural Queensland. The advice I have given the Premier is to look to history and at what the opposition was prepared to accept as good enough for Queenslanders and then tell us that we are not going to accept it.

He went to this wonderful glossy, gold covered document produced by the coalition when it was in government. That is where they looked. That is why I was not mentioned. I would have been outraged at the fact that the coalition was prepared to accept that 40 per cent of category 2 patients could wait too long. We have now got that down to five per cent waiting too long. Ninety-five per cent of category 2 patients are getting their surgery on time. I have to say that the time that I was mentioned was in the comment, 'I thank Health Minister Wendy Edmond for her reforms which have helped make this possible.' I will not trade my one mention for all of theirs.

Construction Industry Apprenticeships

Mr PURCELL: I have a positive question for the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, Robert Schwarten. As school has now come to a close, many young Queenslanders are considering their job options for the future. Can the minister please advise what opportunities there are for school leavers with the Department of Public Works, and what expo at Walter Constructions did the minister attend last Friday?

Mr SCHWARTEN: We have already talked about some of the great achievements in Housing, but one of the greatest achievements this government has put on the table is that 650 young people have, as a result of intervention by this government, become qualified or are in the process of being qualified as tradespeople. We are the only government in the world that has trained over the past five and a bit years 650 apprentices—in the areas of carpentry, painting, electrical, glazing and stone masonry. Mr Speaker, you are very familiar with the great work done by the stonies here. This year, we are going to do it again. Provided they get their applications in by 5 December this year, there will be 100 more of them—seven in our schools. I thank the Education and Training Ministers for their support in this regard, because both of them are as committed as I am to ensuring that we deliver some smart alternatives to kids in years 11 and 12.

They do a day at TAFE, a day with Q-Build and three days at school. They do paid work in their school holidays for Q-Build. It is part of a learning and earning environment. In terms of what happened at Walters last Friday, I wish every company in Queensland took seriously its role in

training. On Friday it closed down the \$135 million Magistrates Court site—another project of this government.

Mr Springborg: Any fence painting jobs?

Mr SCHWARTEN: The member is ridiculing a company like Walters, which has a very proud record in this state. He should have come along and seen how the building industry works; he would not have made a fool of himself like he did at the Master Builders last night. Walters is a classic example of a company that values training. What came out of that training day on Friday was that we need to do it again next year and involve the wider industry. And we will, and this government is committed to being part of it. In terms of the 100 extra apprentices we will put on next year, I will bet over 2,000 young people put their names down. So there is plenty of demand. As I said down there on Friday, the reality is that, as every person in the industry knows, there is not enough training happening in the industry. We need more firms like Walters out there who are training people for a future in the industry.

As I said, the government's record is something we should all be proud of. Certainly on this side of the House, we value training and apprenticeships; 650 young people as a result of this government today have a trade or are in the process of getting it. That is an achievement of which I am very proud, as should be every other honourable member on this side of the House.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mrs PRATT: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Constituents in my electorate, and no doubt in the electorates of many other members, would have been approached with concerns that, although being booked to undergo major surgery, they would not be placed on the actual surgery waiting list immediately but instead their names would be put on a pre-waiting list. Were these people who are waiting on the pre-waiting list included in the figures published in the report that the Premier is so proudly pushing in his advertising campaign? If not, just how long is the list of people waiting on the pre-waiting list?

Mrs EDMOND: I am not quite sure what the member is referring to. There are two issues. The first is that people are put on the waiting list when they are seen and they are determined to need surgery. They are not always given an appointment for that surgery until closer to the time. One of the ways we have improved throughput is by removing a lot of people who have either forgotten or did not show. They may be on the list and counted from that point in time, but their appointment may not be given to them until closer to the time.

There was a letter in the paper today from someone making the claim that his wife had not gone on the waiting list. Clearly she had gone on the waiting list because she has received notification of her surgery. They wait until five or six weeks out from the date of the surgery before they tell people of the date.

There has been a lot of talk from the member for Maroochydore and others about the waiting list to get on the waiting list, which was something I exposed when I was in opposition. This relates to outpatient waiting times. Members will remember that I made several speeches on that issue. Mr Horan has his head down because he knows that I highlighted that at the time. We have done a lot to reform that process.

I was actually quite intrigued to hear people say that we should be doing what they do in New South Wales. There has been a lot of hot air about this. Let us have a look at the facts. Queensland offers the most comprehensive public specialist outpatient services in Australia. These services are for medical services as well as surgery. They include pre-assessment, ongoing care and follow-up care. Not everybody on those lists is going to be needing surgery. Not everybody on those lists is appropriate to have surgery.

What happens is that if they are seen and they need surgery they are placed on the elective surgery waiting list immediately. Until they are seen we do not know whether they need elective surgery. We cannot put people on a waiting list for surgery in case they need it. That is nonsensical.

The members opposite have said that we should do what they do in New South Wales. In New South Wales and Victoria the majority of patients have to go to the private consulting rooms of individual specialists. In other words, they have to save up and have enough money to afford to go to a private specialist before they can be seen, assessed and go on the waiting list.

Mrs PRATT: Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. This woman was actually told she required surgery and it would be arranged.

Mrs EDMOND: And, as I have said, if that is the case and she has been seen and told she needs surgery she would have gone on the waiting list and been counted. We have to explain things several times for these people to understand. Part of the reason is that they have no comprehension of what happens in other states. When they are calling for us to do as they do in New South Wales and count them the same, do they mean we close down the \$300 million of specialist outpatient services we provide now and make people wait until they can afford to go to a specialist?

Dakabin State High School

Mr HAYWARD: My question is directed to the Minister for Education. Given the recent negative media report about the condition of Dakabin State High School, would the minister provide members with the facts?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for his question and for his well-known support not only of the schools in his electorate but also of the Dakabin State High School in particular. I am very pleased to have the opportunity this morning to put on record that Dakabin State High School is one of Queensland's great state high schools. I will record some of its very recent achievements.

It has recently celebrated its 25th anniversary and it has had much to celebrate. In this 12-month period alone it has seen seven distinctions in the Australian Schools English Competition; a semi-finalist in the International Open Poetry Contest; a student winner in the Education Minister's Awards for Excellence in Art; the school's stage band last year was a state finalist in the prestigious Fanfare Competition; the agriculture department consistently wins awards and prizes at the Brisbane Exhibition; seven traineeships and 18 young people are already in full-time work following their senior certificates; and they have a student in the cross country world titles in France in 2004, a student in the state baseball team and a student in the under 18 touch football Australian team.

But we would not know anything about those achievements and the reputation of this school in the local area if we paid any attention to the local councillor. The local councillor, Chris Monsour, took it upon herself on the weekend to use the *Sunday Mail* to defame this school community with scurrilous allegations that are false from beginning to end. Ms Monsour claimed that the school is dangerous, run down and dilapidated. These allegations are simply untrue. She claimed there were dangerous cracks in walls. Untrue. The truth is that all walls are structurally safe and regularly monitored. She claimed there was untreated termite damage in classrooms. That is untrue. Termites were treated in a classroom in July. The damage cannot be repaired until the treatment is effective and the ants are dead. Funds have been put aside for that purpose. She claimed that there were supporting beams in the play area near collapse. An inspection yesterday found no such beams in any part of the school. That is untrue.

She claimed that guttering fell from a performing arts building. There is some truth in that allegation. An accident did occur earlier this year and all guttering was checked and all dangerous guttering was removed months ago. The picture in the paper was of an old demountable which is dilapidated. It is not used as a classroom. It has not been used as a classroom for a number of years. It is a storage room for old furniture and is awaiting removal from the school. She claimed to be a member of the P&C. That is untrue. Like some councillors she does turn up to meetings every now and then but has never joined and does not have voting rights. I wonder how welcome she will be at the next meeting.

The letters that have come into my office yesterday speak of a school community that is proud of its school. Ms Monsour has done untold damage to the morale of staff and the morale of students. I do not have time to read all of the letters into *Hansard*, but I will table them. I conclude with the words of one of the students, Daniel Davison, who says—

As a student, the level of teaching I receive at Dakabin is outstanding ... It deeply saddens our community when we are targeted by those who do not have confidence in our school.

Beautesert Hospital

Mr FLYNN: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. In a question without notice to the minister two weeks ago I asked if she would comment on a survey into the Beautesert Hospital and its possible impact on the community. I also asked whether the issues being addressed were medical or industrial in nature. The minister essentially suggested that I await the

report. Given that the Beaudesert shire community and surrounding districts serviced by the Beaudesert Hospital are seriously concerned at the possibility of the hospital's accreditation being withdrawn, this government has the responsibility to allay some public concerns without having to await the report particularly when one of the concerns is that the hospital may be reduced to a nursing home. I ask: in the last 10 years, have there been any significant, serious infections or outbreaks of disease at Beaudesert Hospital that may be ascribed to present management of infection control? Further, in the last 10 years has the hospital been significantly affected by any perceived lack of quality or risk management processes and what evidence is there of poor morale due to rostering practices given that the nurses passed a vote of confidence in the director of nursing?

Mrs EDMOND: I do not always carry round with me 10-year historical reports into each individual hospital in Queensland. The member just made a statement. There are two things that need to be understood. Personnel at the hospital has changed several times in the last 10 years. Secondly, the hospital has changed. It used to be an old hospital. It is a very new, modern hospital with all the modern facilities of a top class rural hospital.

Mr FLYNN: Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. If the hospital is under examination for poor management control of infection, surely the minister would be aware of any cases of it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I call the minister.

Mrs EDMOND: The member does not understand. We accredit hospitals on a regular basis. Each and every hospital in Queensland, health facility, community health facility, aged care facility, et cetera, goes through a regular process of getting accreditation for a couple years at a time. That is what Beaudesert has gone through. As part of that process, the accreditation team, which is independent—members are drawn from a number of places and Queensland Health staff also play their role in accreditation teams of other state hospitals—makes a number of recommendations.

In this case we are following up on those recommendations for Beaudesert Hospital. I have been assured that it was not anything to do with clinical capabilities. This is a normal part of the accreditation process. We take it very seriously. We try to get every facility that we can accredited in a timely way.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Aspley, could I welcome to the public gallery a second group of students and teachers from the Elanora State School in the electorate of Currumbin.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Ms BARRY: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. I am very interested in how Queensland manages its waiting lists. I have read with some concern a critical media article on an audit into the management of waiting lists in New South Wales. I ask: what is the situation in Queensland?

Mrs EDMOND: I thank the member for the question. I would like to assure the member, who would know more than most—in fact, more than any member sitting opposite—about health. In Queensland we manage our waiting lists openly and fairly. They are not open to manipulation.

The *Guidelines for the management of waiting lists*, which were published by Queensland Health in 1998, are based directly on national data definitions specified by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The guidelines were developed through consultation with senior clinicians and representatives of the various colleges of surgeons. Only expert clinicians can place a person on a waiting list. It is hard for members opposite to realise, but politicians certainly cannot.

There are important distinctions between the management of waiting lists in Queensland and the issues identified by the Auditor-General's report in New South Wales. The Auditor-General reported that New South Wales was found to be excluding not-ready-for-care patients in published waiting list figures. In contrast, while a patient might not be ready for surgery because of a pre-existing condition—including such things as obesity and smoking—that might increase their risk, Queensland Health has always included not-ready-for-care patients in the publication of waiting list figures.

In Queensland, those patients assessed by a specialist as requiring surgery are placed on the elective surgery waiting list immediately. The New South Wales Auditor-General's report

recommends that funding be more directly and transparently aligned with levels of activity and outcomes to be achieved. Queensland Health provides hospitals with clear business rules relating to the funding of elective surgery with funding directly linked to the level of surgery performed. The Beattie government openly publishes quarterly waiting list reports, hospital by hospital, across the state. Of course, this was something that the coalition government refused to do.

The New South Wales report also identified different protocols and procedures and computer applications between hospitals. In contrast, Queensland has a uniform information system across the state that aligns with the national data standards. The Productivity Commission's *Report on government services 2003* identified Queensland independently as having the lowest waiting times for admission for elective surgery in Australia.

Surfers Paradise State School; Asbestos

Mr BELL: My question is directed to the Hon. the Minister for Education. As the minister well knows from correspondence passing between us, the presence of asbestos at Surfers Paradise State School has caused concern. In that case, to the minister's credit, a one-off grant was made to deal with about one-third of the asbestos problem. It seems that further removal will be left to the maintenance budget of the school and the P&F committee. P&F committees should be raising funds for additional facilities, not for the removal of asbestos. I ask: would the minister consider the establishment of a departmental fund to assist state schools throughout Queensland to remove asbestos without having to commit their limited local budgets to this expensive problem?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question and for his interest in this issue at Surfers Paradise State School. As all members would be aware, many of Queensland's older buildings, both schools and others in public and private areas, had asbestos-containing materials used in their construction. Given what we now know about asbestos, I can understand the concern of parents and community members when they know that this material is contained in schools.

I will just give the member some background. Firstly, can I say that there are no state schools in Queensland that contain asbestos that currently poses a health risk to students, staff, parents or others. The National Health and Safety Commission guidelines do not require the complete removal of asbestos-containing material.

In 1993-94 an asbestos management strategy was initiated by the then Goss government. The Department of Public Works, which is the asbestos management authority for the government, undertook an inspection of all state schools. That was completed in 1999. At that time all asbestos-containing material that posed any immediate health risk was removed from schools and all schools that have remaining material are monitored by Q-Build for health risks that might arise on a regular basis. Asbestos-containing material has not been used in any school facility since 1990.

In regard to Surfers Paradise State School, the asbestos is part of the underlay of the vinyl floors. As the member would expect, over time when holes appear in that vinyl as it gets older it decomposes and, as the air gets into it, it can become unsafe. That was the case in one of the school's blocks earlier this year. The Minister for Public Works, through the Asbestos Management Program, made funds available to have that vinyl removed in one of those school blocks. Unless there is any further disturbance to vinyl in other school blocks, the advice that I have and the technical reports indicate that there is no risk to either students or staff. But obviously we need to monitor it. I can appreciate that the school wants to gradually replace that vinyl over time.

I have had a number of pieces of correspondence with the school. I have assured the P&C that I am advised that the school has adopted a program to progressively replace the flooring—so it will not all be done at once—through their annual maintenance budget. That is what their annual maintenance budget is for—those sorts of activities. Today, I would like to reassure the P&C, through the member for Surfers Paradise, that P&C funds are not needed for this project and should not be used to replace the vinyl flooring. Should there be any further disturbances in other blocks that make this material dangerous, then that would be managed, as it was in the case this year, through the Asbestos Management Program administered by my colleague the Minister for Public Works, who works very closely with the Education Department to make sure that our schools are safe.

Hand Guns

Ms STONE: My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. Can the minister report to the House on the results of the hand gun buyback which commenced earlier this year?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for the question. As most members would know, the hand gun buyback was a national initiative that was instigated by the federal government and supported by the state and territory governments. The decision to implement stricter measures on gun control came in the wake of the tragic shootings at Monash University last year.

As we discussed during the debate on this legislation, the Queensland government did not agree 100 per cent with everything that the federal government suggested, but we went along for two reasons. First of all, as a government, we did not want to see Queensland being the dumping ground for all illegal weapons. Secondly, if we did not participate in this scheme, for any buyback that occurred we would not have received any financial assistance from the federal government. So we went along and we were quite happy to do so.

Members would also be aware that the first legislation relevant to this matter was introduced by the coalition back in 1997. This legislation is building on that original legislation. Since the hand gun buyback began in early July, I am advised that some 6,669 hand guns have been surrendered and nearly 37,000 parts and accessories have been surrendered. Just over \$9 million has been paid in compensation. As members would know from the debate, two-thirds of this money comes from the Commonwealth and one-third from the state.

Currently, the mobile gun buyback centres are working their way right across the state to make it as easy as possible for weapon owners to hand in their firearms and also to receive their compensation at the same time. So far, centres visited include the far north, parts of western Queensland, and soon we will be in the southern parts of the state. Of course, these new laws do not apply to sporting shooters, primary producers and people who have a hand gun for occupational purposes, such as security officers.

This buyback is in the name of community safety. It is about removing dangerous weapons from our community. The uniform national laws are taking easily concealable hand guns out of circulation, unless they are being used by legitimate sporting shooters. This will go a long way towards preventing concealable weapons ending up in the wrong hands.

I want to thank the public for the cooperation that they have given to the police when they come along, hand in their weapons and receive the compensation. I have attended some of these centres and I have to say that I have been very, very impressed with the administrative arrangements that the Queensland Police Service has instituted.

Health Report 2003

Mr QUINN: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. I refer to the latest Productivity Commission report on government services 2003 that shows for the year 2000-01 Queensland spent less per person on public hospitals than every other state and territory and therefore significantly less than the national average. I ask: since other parts of this document were quoted in the *Health Report*, why did her in-house medical expert, a 'Dr' Steve Bishop, fail to include this relevant fact that clearly shows how she has deliberately underfunded public hospitals in Queensland?

Mrs EDMOND: I am very proud of the fact that we have a very efficient health system in Queensland. This is continually reported in the national studies, which show that the casemix funding in Queensland is always either the lowest or the second lowest of all the states, which shows that we have a more efficient system and shows that we do more work for less money than the other states. I am also proud of the fact that this government has increased funding considerably over the last five years.

Mr Quinn: Still the lowest per capita in Australia.

Mrs EDMOND: That is in direct contrast to those who sit opposite when they were in government—indeed, even in that two-year interregnum that they had. The 1998 budget that I inherited from Mr Horan had an increase into public hospitals of \$2 million. The last increase in the Health budget in Queensland was over \$300 million.

National Party Preferences

Mr RODGERS: My question is addressed to the Premier. Has the Leader of the Opposition shown any genuine leadership on One Nation?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The tactic of those opposite in this parliament is to try to make as much noise as possible in order to disrupt any answers that I or any of my ministers give. Let us have a bit of courtesy for one day this week.

The answer to that question is no. Even the former Premier, Rob Borbidge, has given him away. I table a copy of the *Bayside Star*, a local newspaper from Sandgate, which carries a photograph entitled 'Former premier comes to campaign aid'. Who is he campaigning for? The local Liberal candidate! Even the National Party former leader has given up on the National Party. He is out there campaigning for the Liberal Party. Mr Flynn has got the best line in this argument within the National Party. Get a load of this. The *Courier-Mail* states in relation to Mr Flynn—

... he indicated much of the pressure would come from north Queensland seats which had led the revolt against Mr Borbidge.

This is within the National Party to give preferences to One Nation. Mr Flynn states—

I've had, to be precise, three members—

This is Bill Flynn, a member of this House and clearly an honourable man—

tell me that if they were allowed to they would quite clearly preference us and that they regard Lawrence Springborg essentially as simply a Liberal in an Akubra.

I have to say to the honourable member: none of my spin doctors could have written a line like that. But isn't it true—'a Liberal in an Akubra'? No wonder the National Party rank and file want to give their preferences to One Nation. But that is not all. There is more. I refer to an article in the *Australian*. Do honourable members remember this young gentleman called Elmes whom he will not discipline because he has got no ticker?

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The member for Callide should not try his tactics here. He will not be the deputy leader after the election, so he should not get too excited. They tell me that Mike is making a comeback and that he is on his way out. Let us not worry about that. The *Australian* of 19 November states—

However, the National candidate for the far north Queensland seat of Cook, Graham Elmes, said he could give a commitment only 'at this stage' to support Mr Springborg's stand.

It is a view held by the whole front bench. They will give him support 'at this stage'. Mr Elmes, the National Party candidate, goes on—

We don't know what's going to happen within the next six months.

He also said—

I know things can change, and you have to look at the situation when it becomes available...

If the Leader of the Opposition had any ticker he would expel him. He has no ticker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Maroochydore I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers of Hercules Road State School in the electorate of Murrumba and give a very special welcome to my grandson Rogan Hollis, who is a student of that school.

Emergency Departments, Waiting Times

Miss SIMPSON: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. I refer to the 'Where's Wendy?' research report by the Premier's press secretary which tries to tell everyone concerned about our health system that they are wrong. I refer in particular to the section dealing with accident and emergency department problems, which fails to mention that 19 of 21 reporting hospitals are not meeting the national treatment times for seeing urgent emergency patients. I ask: so that Queenslanders can test the validity of this dodgy Bishop report, will the minister advise whether all of the emergency figures are published publicly, as inferred, or whether they are only available to spin doctor Bishop?

Mrs EDMOND: Having had a look at this document, I can understand why the coalition does not want parts of it reported in the media, because they were the people who produced this extremely expensive, glossy publication which said, 'We are hoping to get about 60 per cent of

category 2 patients done in time. We will draw the line at that. We will not try any harder than that.' That is one of the problems.

In relation to emergency departments, what the member for Maroochydore fails to say is that, quite clearly, all of the hype plus two and a half billion dollars per year of Commonwealth funding into private health insurance has not taken any pressure off the public system. We acknowledge that. We say up front that there are real problems with the private health insurance funding of two and a half billion dollars. Queensland's share of that would be \$500 million per year that could come to the public system and provide services in rural areas, where there are not many private providers, and other places. I am delighted that since this government implemented a strategy of publishing emergency department outcomes in the Ministerial Program Statement we have consistently improved.

Miss SIMPSON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The emergency department benchmarking reports are not publicly published for each of the quarters. I challenge the Health Minister to start publishing the documents.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mrs EDMOND: The performance is published in the MPS. We look at it and each year strive to improve—and we have. Waiting times for the most urgent patients, which are those in categories 1 and 2, have improved steadily since this strategy was implemented and the statewide collection of waiting times data was introduced. Not only was it not published by the coalition; this information was not even collected. What she objects to is that we have systematically improved the system with better systems, better staffing and better funding since 1998, and it sticks in her craw.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions has expired.

PRIVILEGE

Public Housing

Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing) (11.30 a.m.): This morning I was asked several questions about payment for painting maintenance on Department of Housing properties.

I am advised by the Director-General of Public Works that this matter has been identified as part of an audit of inspections and has been the subject of discussions between the department's internal audit unit, the Queensland Auditor-General, and the CMC. Further detailed investigations by the department's internal audit division indicate that this matter may involve false invoicing to the value of several thousand dollars. As the accountable officer, the director-general has rightly referred this matter to the CMC for their action. I will await the outcome of their investigation.

Let me say this: I can assure this House that if there has been a public servant out there robbing money from the needy people in public housing, the best thing they can do right now is hand in their resignation and report themselves to the police. I will not tolerate it. This government will not tolerate it. If a person has done this, that person should put themselves in to the police today.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Health Report 2003

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 a.m.): Since its release on Sunday, we have seen this document, *Health Report 2003: Queensland, the state of our state's health*, prepared by the spin doctors in the Premier's own office, systematically lampooned, destroyed and disregarded by the people of Queensland because they have treated it with the contempt which it deserves.

Has anybody ever heard something so ridiculous as the Premier asking his chief spin doctor to prepare a report to say that he is a great bloke, that he is doing a great job and that the health system has never been so good in Queensland? How absolutely ridiculous! Is this the sort of approach that the Premier adopted when he was at school? Did he demand the opportunity to write his own report card at school? That is something that we all would have loved—the opportunity to write our own report card—because many of us would have got a far different result than trying to achieve to the best of his or her ability. That is what we have got with this government. That is the very best thing that they have been able to achieve to the best of their

ability, and their ability has not been very good. Instead of an A plus with distinction, as the Premier has managed to crown himself with, he deserves an E minus. This report makes extremely interesting reading. I must admit, with a great degree of modesty, that I am mentioned some 35 times, including six times on the front page. It peters out after that but it comes back again with elements of strength throughout. I am very pleased that the government has felt it necessary to mention my contribution to the health system so copiously through the State of our Health report.

How many times was this modest, self-proclaimed media tart prepared to mention himself in this report? He was prepared to mention himself only 19 times. Where was the Minister for Health? The Minister for Health was mentioned twice, but one of those was in footnote No. 34. The other one was in a paragraph that should have been signed 'swan song paragraph', because all the Premier could do was to thank her for her contribution. We know what that means. It does not matter how much of a failure someone has been. When it comes to saying ta-ta, somebody will always find something nice to say about them at the end of the day. The Premier had to mention her at least once to indicate that she had at least tried hard.

I pay tribute to the honourable member for Robina and the deputy leader of the coalition who was mentioned on 50 per cent more occasions than the Health Minister. He was mentioned on three occasions. The Health Minister was mentioned on two occasions, but the honourable member for Robina was mentioned on three occasions. If one takes out the footnotes, if one takes out the four pages of references on the back which include things such as ditto page 4, ditto page 5, ditto page 5, ditto page 5, ditto page 3, ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto and more dittos, then the 17-page report is cut back to 13 pages. If references to myself are taken out, then it starts coming back to about half that number of pages. Really they did not have much to talk about.

I would encourage the citizens of Queensland to tap into www.teambeattie.com to have a look at this document because it is worth while looking at. There has never been such a display of self-aggrandisement and self-praise in all of one's life. It is a lot of political rubbish which says absolutely nothing. There is nothing new injected into it.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: As the honourable member for Toowoomba South said—and I would like to pay tribute to the honourable member for Toowoomba South; he was one of the best health ministers that this state has ever seen—when he was Health Minister there was no category 1 surgical waiting list in this state. Nobody had gone over. They were all being seen in their time by the time the honourable member had finished with it. Category 2 patients are now short 28 months.

Mr Terry Sullivan interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: It was largely in control and in another few months the honourable member would have been able to ensure that no-one would have exceeded the recommended waiting time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McNamara): Member for Stafford, order!

Mr SPRINGBORG: How does that contrast with this government? Once again we have got self-assessment. When we have a health crisis in Queensland, we engage more spin doctors and less real doctors. The patients of Queensland, those people who are on the waiting lists and those people who are on the pre-waiting lists—I will come to that in a moment—are wanting real doctors, not spin doctors. Quite frankly, they shake their heads when they look around and see what the Premier has in his propaganda department and how that would be able to transform into doctors, nurses and clinicians right across Queensland.

All we see from this government is a triumph of propaganda over performance. It would make Joseph Goebbels blush. I do not know why we do not have an information ministry when it comes to managing information in this state because we probably have one behind the scenes. One might as well come out and call it the information ministry. There is one area in which I will give the government an A plus with distinction and in which it has tried very hard to achieve: the propaganda stakes. But it has not achieved in any other area. We have a spin state, not a Smart State.

We saw this Premier going in to 'Dr' Bishop. Maybe he has one of those Geoffrey Eddleston qualifications where somebody rings up a bogus university in the United States or you click in on the Internet and they send you a doctorate. If the person is not happy with that, they will make

you a professor, too. Maybe next week you will be a professor—a doctor this week and a professor of spin next week. It is quite extraordinary. Ten out of ten; he has got the silkworm of the year award. So there is a contract in one hand for 'Dr' Bishop. The Premier has gone in and said, 'Steve, mate, I know I'm really great and you know I'm really great because I've got your contract here and the people of Queensland need to know that. Can you do me up a quick compilation of my press releases that I've issued telling how great I really am and say how we are achieving in the health system in Queensland, keeping in mind that, of all the mainland Premiers, until June this year I have issued more press releases than all of the other Premiers around Australia combined, so it should not be too hard to find things where I am heaping self-praise on myself.' And he has come up with this document.

As I said this morning, Phineas T. Barnum from the Barnum and Bailey Circus said that there is a sucker born every day, and unfortunately that is how this Premier of Queensland is trying to treat three and a half million Queenslanders. They are not going to be suckered. They know the real truth. They know that this is spin. They know that the government has created this in an effort to then launch some bodgie ads where they have various Labor Party backbenchers walking through hospital wards. They do not go to the closed beds and they do not go to the closed wards.

The honourable member for Maroochydore, the shadow Health Minister, gave me something a moment ago which was interesting. It contradicts once again the Health Minister. It says—

Australasian College of Emergency Medicine President Dr Ian Knox yesterday said overcrowding had nothing to do with GP type patients and everything to do with a lack of beds.

That was said on 15 August 2003 by an actual doctor, an actual person who is credible—not a spin doctor, a real doctor. This is somebody who deals with this situation on a day-to-day basis. I simply say that it is about time that we have some performance and outcomes from this government and stop the spin, because it is treating the people with contempt.

I refer to a letter, which I will table, from a constituent of mine. It was sent to this person on 7 June 2003. I have blacked out the name, but it states—

Because the waiting list to see a gastroenterologist is so long (up to five years) our patient department is undertaking an audit of all patients on the gastroenterology waiting list to participate in the audit. Please complete the following. Indicate whether or not you still wish for your referral to remain on the waiting list by ticking one of the boxes below.

Place the whole letter in the enclosed reply paid envelope and return it by 7 July 2003. If we have not received a reply from you by the above date, your name will be removed from the gastroenterology waiting list.

1. I wish for my referral to remain on the waiting list for an appointment to see the gastroenterologist in the outpatient department.
2. I do not wish for my name to remain on the waiting list for an appointment to see a gastroenterologist in the outpatient department.

This is proof of what the shadow minister for health said this morning and what the member for Nanango said this morning. The pre-waiting lists in Queensland are absolutely appalling. These are people who have waited five years to be seen by a specialist, let alone getting on the waiting list in Queensland. So five years prior to getting on the waiting list they are still waiting! It is absolutely appalling.

Growth, Far-North Queensland

Dr LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (11.41 a.m.): It is estimated that there will be some 3.6 million people living in the corridor between the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast by the year 2027. The Premier has indicated that he is considering creating a ministry devoted entirely to managing growth if the government is returned. But far-north Queensland is also growing fast with a population of 320,000 anticipated by 2026, which represents an additional 96,000 people, and all the evidence suggests that Cairns is entering another particularly rapid growth period. When far-north Queensland last experienced a population boom in the late 1980s and early 1990s, I successfully lobbied the then Local Government Minister, Tom Burns, to develop FNQ 2010, a regional plan which has provided a vision and strategic plan to manage growth. But now is the time in my opinion to review the FNQ 2010 regional plan and begin work on FNQ 2025 to meet the needs of our growing population over the next 20 or so years, with a regional water supply strategy at the top of the list of my planning priorities.

The current drought in far-north Queensland with Lake Tinaroo and Copperlode Dam at near-record levels has focused the minds of the community on the question of future water supplies and there have been persistent calls by mayors Kevin Byrne and Mick Borzi, the Cairns Chamber of Commerce and irrigators for the government to commit now to detailed planning to construct another dam for the agricultural industries on the tableland. The Cairns City Council has lent its support for another dam for irrigators because it is planning an \$80 million water infrastructure program to extract and treat water from the Barron River at Kamerunga. The council would ultimately like to take approximately 55,000 megalitres of water a year, which is 150 million litres a day, from the Barron, the equivalent of one and a half times the water available from Copperlode Dam which can yield some 31,000 megalitres and more than double its current water use from Copperlode Dam and Behana Creek combined, which currently stands at 24,500 megalitres.

According to the council, this would provide for the city's needs for at least the next 50 years. However, this would clearly have implications for water supply for the irrigators who rely on the Barron River water stored in Lake Tinaroo. The Barron River water resource plan has a 10-year planning horizon to 2012, and as well as providing for irrigators it has made provision for an additional 4,000 million litres of water a year for Cairns City Council as requested by it during consultation. This represents an additional 15 per cent more water available for ratepayers, some of which may be required within the next six to eight years according to Cairns Water. The water resource plan also requires that council makes best use of its existing water supply, and Cairns Water has just commissioned a \$75,000 least cost planning study to determine the most cost-effective means of providing the water services that people need considering demand and supply options through to the year 2040. This was an outcome of a water forum that I organised earlier this year and the EPA, which has provided a \$25,000 subsidy towards the study, will work closely with council and consultant, and I look forward to its completion by mid-next year.

While the water resource plan did not recommend construction of Nullinga dam, it did provide a trigger so that planning could be brought forward if demand for water significantly increases beyond expected levels. However, it is clear to me that the debate about Nullinga dam will not go away until a long-term major detailed regional water supply strategy is developed for far-north Queensland, and I have written to the Premier seeking his support. The Cairns Water least cost planning study is an important step in developing such a regional strategy. The communities of Cairns and the tablelands need to have greater certainty about how their long-term water needs will be met.

While I have confidence in the government's water resource planning capabilities and neither Cairns residents nor the irrigators will ever be allowed to run out of water, I recognise that the current 10-year planning horizon of the Barron River water resource plan cannot deliver the long-term reassurances about water that the community is seeking. A 50-year regional water supply strategy modelled on those currently under way in south-east Queensland and central Queensland will indicate when Nullinga dam or other bulk water supply options will be required after all demand management strategies have been implemented to conserve and recycle water. It is time for a truce in the war of words about water. The development of such a strategy will, I hope, build community consensus about the way forward and resolve the current debate about the future of Nullinga dam.

In the little time I have available to me, I want to briefly outline what is happening in my electorate to address future growth predictions in the areas of education, power, transport and health. A discussion paper entitled 'Cairns 2010: Prep to Pathways' will be released shortly by the Education Minister, Anna Bligh, for consultation with school communities and other stakeholders that sets out a future strategy to deal with increasing student enrolments. The plan includes recommendations to extend Redlynch State School to create a middle school to year 9, redevelop the Smithfield precinct to include additional primary facilities and an expanded senior campus sited on the James Cook University campus to foster a stronger working relationship with the university. Planning for the \$350 million four-lane road linking Cairns to Kuranda is well under way. Construction will be carried out over a 10- to 15-year period and will be the biggest transport project ever undertaken in the Cairns region. The Cairns integrated transport study was released for consultation in May this year and provided strategies out to the year 2036 and included a bus based mass transit technology with dedicated bus lanes on key corridors such as the Captain Cook Highway. The power supply to the Marlin Coast will be upgraded—

Time expired.

Health Portfolio

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (11.46 a.m.): I am very proud to have been associated with the Health portfolio during this term of government. It has been an education, to say the least, and the many challenges facing health today confirm for me the absolute importance of a national free health system—not one for only those who can afford it. We live in such a complex and diverse society, which means complex and diverse health needs. Our Queensland doctors, nurses and health professionals are some of the finest in the world, but we do have to improve the way we pay for new cures and new treatments, and cope with an ageing population which will put more pressure on our health services.

To do this successfully, we need the federal government to play its part in the process, and so far this seems unlikely. The tinkering around the edges has done nothing to increase funding to our hospitals. The erosion of bulk-billing by GPs has meant longer waiting times in emergency departments for patients with non-urgent complaints, and what makes it worse is that so many would-be doctors miss out because of a lack of federally funded university places. This equates to a shortage of doctors and a shortage of nurses, and it is even worse in allied health. The Commonwealth is also responsible for funding aged care but there is a tragic shortage of nursing home places. The means the elderly are forced to live in hospital wards, causing bed blockage and longer waiting times. With this in mind, it is heartening to hear of trials and pilots occurring across our state with the specific aim of improving health services and outcomes. There have been a number of successful trials of providing general practitioners in or near hospitals on weekends and after hours. These have reduced pressure on emergency departments, ensuring patients get the services they need.

Yesterday I met with a wonderful group of dedicated doctors and health professionals who have established the Queensland Integrated Refugee Community Health Program. The founder, Ian Mannion, and his team are to be congratulated on their commitment and dedication to making the world a better place in which to live. When people get sick they need help, reassurance and understanding. Imagine a refugee or asylum seeker suffering ill health in our country. It has been extensively documented that the health needs of these people are often more complex and numerous than those of migrants and the Australian born population. Queensland receives the fourth largest intake of new arrivals, just behind WA, Victoria and New South Wales. The composition of the intake has also changed over the past five years with now much greater emphasis on the Sudanese. The prolonged stay in crowded refugee camps, limited access to health services, if any, and exposure to torture and trauma will impact on how these new arrivals will deal with their primary health needs.

In 2000 and 2001 a consumer driven process identified issues for refugee communities in regard to accessing primary health care services, quality of services and suggestions for improving current systems. A diverse group of services, departments and consumer representatives joined forces to form a very unique and successful partnership and this is what they developed. The Sisters of Mercy who manage the hospital are highly committed to serving these most marginalised in our community. Anecdotal reports from doctors and staff in emergency departments in two major hospitals in Brisbane have indicated growing numbers of inappropriate presentations. The issue became more acute as a direct result of larger numbers of TPV holders initially settling in the vicinity of two particular hospitals, PA and the Mater. Due to growing numbers of GP practices closing their books, not able to afford bulk billing, and not able to organise interpreters, there are serious problems.

QPASTT in partnership with the Brisbane Inner South Division of GPs and QE II Community Health had previously worked to build the skills and capacity of GPs in the community. At this stage Queensland Health funds the clinic and this pays for some of the running of the costs and a part-time coordinator. The clinic relies on support from services within the Mater Hospital and gives refugee claimants without Medicare a safety net. This clinic is an innovative and unique approach to meeting the health needs of refugees. I would hope that Queensland Health continues to assist with funding and support. I will certainly be urging our government to do so.

Why is the federal government not taking a more active role, with its abysmal record on border protection and its shocking treatment of refugee families and children? One would think that those who are living in this country should be granted appropriate health care. Many have come from situations of conflict and persecution with high rates of physical and psychological problems. Many have experienced torture and severe human rights violations and the loss and separation of family members. Some have spent long periods in detention and suffer from anxiety and distrust of authority figures. There should be a federal scheme which allows for

speedy diagnoses of acute illnesses like malaria, TB, hep B, HIV, renal failure, et cetera, followed by immunisations. Once these are addressed, those who need counselling for their underlying issues giving rise to poor health should receive it. The end result needs to be timely and comprehensive, reducing the long-term health risks and, of course, minimising inappropriate admissions to emergency departments.

I commend this clinic, the Mater Hospital and the team of dedicated professionals, particularly Ian. He was aptly awarded the Premier's Multicultural Services Award this year—how very appropriate. Good luck to you all and may you continue to make Queensland a great place to live for all people.

Capital Works Budget

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (11.52 a.m.): On a number of occasions in this House I have indicated that there has been a drought in terms of the increase in capital allocated to capital works in Queensland. For the past five years or so it has been frozen at about \$5 billion per year. If we want to talk about a capital works freeze, just look in the government's budget documents. The proportion of the budget spent on capital works has fallen over that period of time from about 23 per cent of the budget down to less than 20 per cent. That is no more evident than the amount of money being spent on roads as a proportion of the capital works budget, which has fallen quite dramatically over that period also and, of course, we are seeing it these days in terms of a lack of investment in our road infrastructure around Queensland. We have only to go to the regions or talk to any mayors in the local government area to find that.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr QUINN: That is exactly right. There has been a real drought in terms of amounts of money being spent on roads in Queensland. The real reason for that is the amount of money raised by the government in terms of its revenue and where that money has been spent over the past five budgets. I can highlight that by looking at the figures for the budget at the end of 1998 where the total revenue raised in the general government sector was some \$16.6 billion and five budgets later that amount is now \$20.45 billion. That is an increase over that period of time of about \$3.8 billion in terms of revenue collected in the general government sector.

When you go to the employment entitlements over that same period of time, you will see exactly where the money is being spent, because employee entitlements in the 1997-98 budget stood at \$6.8 billion; five budgets later it is \$10.6 billion, an increase of some \$3.8 billion—almost exactly the same amount of money in terms of the revenue increase over that period. What is happening is that the government is raising additional funds through various means. There has been an increase in the Commonwealth grants over that period of time, charges for goods and services have remained just about static, taxes, fees and fines have gone up by about \$2 billion, investment income varies because of fluctuations on the stock market, royalties and other payments are about static and other revenues are about static over that period. The biggest increases have been through the GST but all of that money has been allocated to paying increased entitlements for employees. The government would argue, of course, that they are all teachers, nurses and police officers—front-line service personnel in Queensland—but when you look at Public Service documents that clearly is not the case. More than half of the increases have been in those particular portfolio areas, and the rest scattered throughout the government.

What is happening is a failure by the government to adequately control the Public Service in this state. The employee entitlements are just matching the growth in revenues and that is why there is no spare cash, no spare funds to increase the capital works programs in this state. That is why it has been frozen at about \$5 billion for the last five budgets. That is why we cannot get improvements in terms of hospital rebuilding programs, or schools or roads or rail or buses. A whole range of other infrastructure needs in Queensland has gone begging over this period of time because of the government's inability to control its own budget processes. That has prompted the government to come out now and promise to borrow \$1.4 billion over the next three years. Because of the drought, it is ruling a line across the level of capital expenditure over the past five years. They are now forced to borrow to try and play catch up for the amount of money they failed to invest over the past five years. It comes as no surprise to us on this side that all of a sudden in an election campaign the government understands what has happened in the past and is now borrowing for social infrastructure. No other previous government or previous treasurers went out and borrowed for schools, hospitals, roads; it never borrowed for things that could not generate an income. Anything that was borrowed for capital works always generated an

income, always paid itself off over a period of time. But this government has broken one of the cardinal rules underpinning our financial strength, because of its failure to understand the importance of capital works in Queensland over the past five years. That is the reality here. They should look at the budget documents and find out for themselves—

Time expired.

Private Enterprise, Clayfield Electorate

Ms LIDDY CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (11.57 a.m.): I would like to highlight a number of businesses based in the electorate of Clayfield that are maintaining excellence in their respective industries. BP Bulwer Island Refinery is one of two refineries in Brisbane and has the capacity of 88,000 barrels of oil a day. Originally built by Amoco in 1965, it was acquired by BP in 1984 and has undergone several expansions and technology upgrades that enables the facility to produce transportation fuels that are more environmentally friendly than fuels available in most other parts of the world. The refinery is located near the mouth of the Brisbane River on an area of reclaimed land referred to as Bulwer Island. One of the key issues that BP are vigilant with is the company's operational impact on the environment. This includes rigorous policies and processes to monitor air quality, emission sources and controlling emissions. The emissions from the refinery are regularly reported to the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency and also submitted to the National Pollutant Inventory Database. I commend George Nicolaides and his staff for their ongoing commitment to the environment.

From a large company to a thriving family business, John Thurlow and Sons have produced quality blinds since 1903. The original venetian blinds did not last very long so John Thurlow invented a more durable type and hung them at the rear of his Albion home. Celebrating their wonderful 100th birthday earlier this year, the company commenced its operations in a tin shed in the back yard of the Albion family home. In 1945 the company introduced the aluminium venetian blind to Queensland. The aluminium strip was imported from America and was available in only three colours. A crippling fire in 1972 destroyed the original 1915 factory and since then the company has been contained in a smaller factory in Frodsham Street. A reproduction of John Thurlow's first chain machine is still working. I congratulate Mark and Paul Thurlow on the fantastic success of their family business.

Another Albion success story is Genetic Solutions, a genetic information company that offers Australian and international food producers, processors and retailers a range of innovative testing systems required to improve predicability and control in the food production chain. Established by Gerard Davis and Jay Hetzel in 1998, Genetic Solutions provides the food industry with the best and most cost effective technologies available for product identification, validation traceability and quality enhancement.

Genetic Solutions uses proven reliable and adaptable genetic testing products and systems, and established state-of-the-art practices with controlled environment storage facilities. The company's products and services are based around a core technology platform of DNA and genetic information analysis and are being targeted at selected livestock and aquaculture industries. Clients include major pastoral companies, food processors and biotechnology companies.

Genetic Solutions also conducts research and development and is developing systems for implementation of DNA based technologies for the industry it serves. Its intellectual property portfolio includes a low cost tissue sample collection system, which has a patent pending, proprietary fingerprinting systems and worldwide exclusive licenses for unique gene maker diagnostic tests are being finalised. With the Beattie government positioning Queensland as one of the leading states for biotechnology, Genetic Solutions is placed in a fantastic position for growth and opportunities.

Finally, I wish to highlight Union Switch and Signal, a world leader in the design, engineering and manufacture of signalling, control and automation systems for rail transportation. Based in the fast growing Australia TradeCoast precinct in the electorate of Clayfield, US&S Pty Ltd serves freight, passenger and metropolitan mass transit based primarily in Australia, south-east Asia and the Indian subcontinent. The company also maintains engineering and sales offices in the Sydney, Perth, Karratha, Bangalore and Kuala Lumpur.

US&S Pty Ltd designs and supplies railway signalling, automation, control and operation management systems and products to increase the safety, capacity, reliability and efficiency of their customer's rail operations. They also provide system and product maintenance services and

consulting services such as feasibility studies, engineering services, capacity modelling and simulation and railway safety management audits.

I want to acknowledge the fantastic work by the company and its Managing Director and Chairman, Lyle Jackson and Roberto Gagliardi, respectively at being at the vanguard of technology and productivity innovations in the global railroad and mass transit industry for over a century.

All four companies in the electorate of Clayfield are some of the state's leaders in their respective fields. It is wonderful to recognise their significant contributions to this state's economy.

Vegetation Management

Mr FLYNN (Lockyer—ONP) (12.02 p.m.): Recent publicity about the rise in property prices in south-east Queensland has given an edge to what I say today. Whilst many home owners are celebrating the paper windfall that the recent rise in property values have given them, I point out that many property owners have not experienced a rise but a drop in real value. Many, at the very least, are seeing their property values stalling or not keeping up with their neighbours.

I am talking mainly about rural property owners—typically, the sort of people who settle on the land and run small cattle or crop properties as a retirement or small business. They still have to pay their mortgage and their bills just like everyone else. At least they have their life savings tied in their home and land and should look forward to the day when they can realise that value in their retirement and move to a smaller home on the land or indeed carry on farming.

I do know people who cannot do either. A case in point: around three weeks ago a constituent in Gatton was enraged to find that his clean, green farm had been made an environmentalist target. That was the way he saw it. He only found this out when he put his property on the market. One of the first people to see the farm decided to buy it, but the following day changed his mind. The reason was that he became wise to what certain Department of Natural Resources nasties had in mind for people buying rural properties. He checked the matter with the DNR office in Ipswich.

What he found made him sit. He looked at the department's vegetation management plan map of the property he wanted to buy and found that about 40 per cent of it was apparently out of bounds. Forty per cent of that property was subject to the Vegetation Management Act. What the owner thought was lantana scrub was officially an endangered ecosystem. Lantana and a bit of scrub was endangered.

For honourable members unfamiliar with such issues, that means that the owner of the properties cannot do anything with them. They cannot cut it, plough it, bulldoze it or do anything with it. All they can do is sit back and watch the bush reclaim their land. For some environmentalist or greenies unfamiliar with real life vegetation, that means that what trees there are not only grow and thicken but also spread and choke what grass is left for cattle to graze on.

It is no surprise the would-be purchaser of this Gatton property changed his mind on the spot. But this came as a shock to the would-be vendor. He had no idea 40 per cent of his property was effectively a national park and he was now the de facto park ranger—unpaid and uncompensated for his property.

One Nation has often warned about the possible abuse of environmental process by government. The issue is a huge talking point in the bush but many small property owners thought it could not happen to them, but it did. Many block owners, full of dreams and hopes for their retirement properties, are just beginning to find out the hard way what these laws mean and how they impact on their bank balance. How can one calculate the loss of value and the loss of amenity for these people?

Those who think it targets only large scale, broadacre clearing should consider the case of the Maroochy sire landowner recently fined for clearing 0.125 hectares, or the Coominya grazier handed a \$1,500 infringement notice for pulling 10 hectares of trees, or the Inglewood farmer ordered to pay costs of more than \$4,000 for clearing 22 hectares of vegetation listed as 'of concern' in the regional ecosystem—in fact he thought it was just regrowth.

If one reads *Country Life* one will know about the Surat grazier who has given up fighting the DNR and paid his fine for clearing land he had prior permission to clear. That is the problem. One cannot fight the department because it will keep dragging one to court at one's expense, and they have more money than one does.

So now instead of managing one's property in a sustainable manner one has to go cap in hand to the DNR, pay them to look at the plans one has had paid to have done in the first place and ask them if one can continue to farm or go broke. The Landholders Institute has a web site showing a photograph of 3,000 acres of land which was cleared in 1985. Some 15 years later the regrowth is seven metres tall, about 70 per cent of the original tree height. A 1999 satellite image showed it to be remnant forest. So the land cannot be cleared again. This has nothing to do with vegetation management.

Eighty-five per cent of tree pulling in Queensland is to maintain pasture. Constant spreading and thickening of vegetation will destroy properties. The New South Wales Farmers Association has calculated clearing land laws cost agriculture \$100 million a year in lost production through land degradation. Queensland's laws will do even worse.

What we cannot yet calculate is the loss experienced by the likes of the constituent I mentioned earlier—the loss of relative values of their homes and properties because this government and the federal government refuse to countenance realistic compensation. These governments will pay the price for their perfidy.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Toowoomba North, I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from a second group from Hercules Road State School in the electorate of Murrumbidgee.

Highfields

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (12.07 p.m.): Highfields is a community just north of Toowoomba with a population of just over 4,000 people. During my term in office, there have been important government and community initiatives responding to an explosion in population occurring now and undoubtedly into the future. The Queensland government takes seriously the needs of Highfields—a fact demonstrated by the community cabinet being held there in June 2001 and many visits to the area by ministers, including the Premier.

Energy Minister Paul Lucas has visited Highfields on several occasions during the past year to speak to local people about energy problems and ensure the situation is improved. Highfields' energy problems over the past few years have been unacceptable, but the government has fast-tracked plans to improve the situation for residents.

Ergon Energy will be spending \$20 million over the next five years on capital improvements and maintenance at Highfields, with time frames for works being brought forward considerably. These capital improvements include a 33 kV line at a cost of \$5 million from Torrington to Meringandan to be completed by January and an 11kV feeder out of the Meringandan substation that has already been completed.

Maintenance has been improved through urgent works on vegetation, inspection of the main supply substation with thermovision cameras and the provision of easier access for crews to powerlines in difficult terrain. I know that there has been an immense improvement because the number of reports to my office have declined to be almost negligible at the moment.

Educational standards have been lifted in the area with a number of new facilities increasing opportunities for the students. Premier Peter Beattie travelled to Highfields in August to officially open the Mary MacKillop Catholic School. The school is the first Catholic school to be built in the Toowoomba diocese in 38 years and is the first Catholic school in the Highfields area, with the state government contributing \$1.2 million to the \$2.2 million project.

Principal Donagh Shirley and former head of Catholic education Bill Sultmann deserve special mention for making the school the outstanding success that it has become. Highfields State School has been allocated \$800,000 for a number of new facilities, including new classrooms and toilet facilities. Recently, Education Minister Anna Bligh visited the Highfields State School to congratulate student Liam Scanlan on his outstanding performance in the 2003 Australasian Schools Computer Skills Competition. Congratulations must go to the Highfields State School principal, Paul Williamson; the deputy, Greg Tucker; and the teachers and staff of this school for similarly attaining outstanding results.

However, Highfields has experienced some negative outcomes as a result of its rapid development, including an increase in crime. Constable Adrian Zorzi works hard to ensure that citizens are aware of the situation through organising the neighbourhood watch in the area and putting out an informative report every couple of weeks. The Police Minister, Tony McGrady, has assured me that the government will meet its commitment to provide a permanent police

presence in Highfields in 2004. With such a massive growth rate, it is imperative that we ensure that the area remains a safe environment for all citizens. The distance between Toowoomba and Highfields can hamper police work in the area. If we had a police presence, especially a 24-hour, two-man police beat available, I am advised that that would solve the problem.

Last year, Mr McGrady was on hand to inspect the O'Briens Road site, which was purchased by the state government for a new police presence. This land that the QPS has just bought, along with an adjacent parcel of land to be provided by the Crows Nest Shire Council, will form the site for the future development of the police beat. The joining of the two blocks will create an area of 4,000 square metres for the construction of the facility. I would like to thank the Crows Nest Shire Council Mayor, Geoff Patch, and Councillors Carol Lyons, Ross Glass, Craig Stibbard and Tina Marks, and Chief Executive Officer David McEvoy for making the decision to donate the land for a police presence.

Emergency services have also been highlighted through the purchase of land and equipment for fire services in Highfields. The state government has provided over \$600,000 for equipment and land for fire services. Over \$48,000 of this money was for land at Kratze Road in Highfields for a fire station. Members of the Highfields fire auxiliary, David Lethbridge, Ashley Oliver, Michael Solomon, Peter Thornton, Craig Stibbard, Evan Mackay, Lyle Tonscheck, Chris Hatch, Mark Ashford and Simon Till, have given their time and effort to make sure that the area is protected from the dangers of fire.

Developments in sport and recreation in Highfields have been a major highlight for the town. The Crows Nest Shire Council has worked hard to ensure that the area has ample facilities available to cater for the sporting and recreational needs of the community. Highfields will have in January next year a first-class indoor sports complex to which the state government has contributed \$500,000. The Highfields Cultural Centre Manager, Rod Neucom, his wife, Fiona, and employee Narelle, as well as the Crows Nest Shire Council engineer, Jack Pijpers, and architect Lester Erlich have been instrumental in making the complex such a success. I understand that the Deputy Premier, Terry Mackenroth, is set to open the complex on the Australia Day weekend.

Time expired.

Caboolture-Landsborough Rail Line

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (12.12 p.m.): I wish to bring to the attention of the House the draft findings of the Caboolture-Landsborough rail corridor study. It looks to me like the Labor zealots who tried to ram the koala tunnel through the eastern suburbs of Brisbane, the homes of the people of the Redlands, and prime agricultural land are at it again. Option 2, which has been identified as part of the upgrade study, impacts directly upon 48 rural properties, three rural residential properties, two commercial business properties, nine open spaces, nine special purpose lots and two unzoned lots. The duplication of the existing track using the existing corridor impacts on only one open space block.

Option 2 proposes sending the main rail line in Queensland right through the homes of Queenslanders and right through some of the best agricultural land in Queensland. This proposal is all about saving eight minutes on the trip to Cairns. If the minister was fair dinkum about saving eight minutes, he might like to actually get the trains to run to schedule. In a report tabled the other day in this House, the minister admitted that the Traveltrain on-time running declined significantly in the past 12 months—down from an already dismal 76.95 per cent to 72.45 per cent.

This proposal is also contrary to the principles outlined by the Premier in this House this morning when he spoke about the need to protect the cane lands on the Sunshine Coast. I have to tell the people of Elimbah, Beerburum, the Glass House Mountains, Beerwah and Landsborough that they are not important to the Labor government because the Premier and the Labor representatives have not been capable of protecting them from the Beattie bulldozers. I also ask those people to look at the proposed site for the relocation of the Beerburum railway station. The options document shows the station moving south to a position without any access, but the traffic access impact is shown as the same as the impact for option 1, which keeps the station just where it is.

Let me make it quite clear: a coalition government is in favour of option 1. It would more than make up for the eight minutes that are apparently so important to those opposite who are part of a visionless government. For a start, the government could look at removing some of the dangerous level crossings on major roads that still exist. Many of those roads now warrant

overpasses that would permit faster operations and would be safer for all concerned. I urge the residents along the Caboolture-Landsborough corridor to respond to the working paper. Submissions close at 5 p.m. on Friday, 12 December 2003.

We must utilise existing corridors, as the coalition did responsibly with the Pacific Motorway. The prime agricultural land in question is not made anymore. Modern engineering technologies must be implemented to address this contentious issue. The Labor government has placed this issue in the too-difficult tray. Again, it is too difficult for this government. People's assets and businesses do not rate a mention with this government. People's homes, assets and businesses must be the first and foremost priority. A coalition government will progress the responsible option and that responsible option is option 1.

Sunshine Coast Roadworks

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (12.16 p.m.): Sunshine Coast residents deserve praise for showing patience during the ongoing roadworks that we are experiencing on the Sunshine Motorway. Just a few kilometres west of Mountain Creek-Mooloolaba, extensive roadworks are under way constructing an interchange that will service the new Kawana arterial way that will border the northern side of the Mooloolah River National Park. The new Kawana arterial way will be delivered on time and funded by the Beattie state government and Lensworth Kawana Waters, the local developer.

The installation of bridge girders above the motorway was undertaken late on week nights to minimise the disruption to motorway traffic flow. The Maroochy Shire Council has also been active in constructing the Maroochydhore southern access road. This is a local government road that will link into the key regional centre of Maroochydhore, easing the traffic congestion that is being experienced on the present road network.

Sunshine Coast residents hold improvements to road infrastructure as a high priority. Prior to the last state election, negative conservative critics claimed that a Beattie Labor government would not fund and deliver on time the Kawana arterial road. They were wrong on both counts. Premier Peter Beattie and the Main Roads Minister have acknowledged that further funding for much-needed road infrastructure improvements can be accessed while the Sunshine Motorway SM2032 study is under way. The SM2032 study covers a 17-kilometre section of the Sunshine Coast Motorway from the Bruce Highway at Sippy Downs to the Maroochy River. To deliver the greatest benefits to the community, we must plan the Sunshine Motorway in line with the coast's rate of growth and address issues including congestion, access, the environment and safety. The study is looking at how we can effectively integrate the motorway with the existing road network, future roads and other transport modes.

A key part of the study is to determine what upgrades to the motorway are needed and suggest how best they can be done. Community input to the SM2032 study is very important and proper planning is necessary, because, as it is said, failing to plan is planning to fail. The SM2032 study is close to completion and, sadly, has not been assisted by misleading comments by some local council solicitors. The Sunshine Coast community does not appreciate being lied to by Liberal councillors in both the Maroochy Council and the Caloundra City Council, who muddy the waters by giving ongoing misinformation.

Prior to being elected to state government I was an elected councillor in Caloundra City Council. I believed then, as I believe now, that residents deserve the truth. In the lead-up to the March 2004 elections local government councillors should stand on what they have delivered, not state government issues. If councillors have failed to deliver to their constituents, we will obviously see them commenting on state issues. Sadly, it is impossible to see elected government councillors who have failed in Liberal Party preselection in the same room with the truth. The saying 'you can't fool all the people all the time' is very apt.

In closing, I outline the disarray in which the Liberal-National state opposition finds itself on road funding issues. I note the presence in the House of the member for Gregory. In a media release of 4 August 2003 the member for Gregory is quoted as saying that a National-Liberal coalition would reprioritise the Roads Implementation Program to give higher priority to the Sunshine Coast. Yet the Leader of the Opposition said in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* of 31 March 2003 that the second range crossing was a must, that the National Party supported it absolutely and that he would not want to see any road upgrade at the expense of another.

Sadly, prior to the last state election we heard promises from the opposition that it would fund the Maroochy access road. We also heard that if the Beattie government was elected it

would reintroduce toll roads on the Sunshine Coast. Both of those statements are wrong. I hope that in the lead-up to both council and state elections conservative candidates can eventually find how to tell the truth.

Nicklin Electorate

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (12.21 p.m.): I rise to speak on a number of matters of public interest in my electorate on the Sunshine Coast. First, I report to parliament the outcome of a public meeting held last night at Woombye. Members of the community were invited to comment on the Department of Main Roads's proposed solution to improving the safety of the intersection of McKenzie Road and Nambour Connection Road.

Over 150 people, who were all locals, attended the meeting and made it very clear that they do not support the consultant's proposed solutions for improving safety of the intersection of McKenzie Road and Nambour Connection Road. During the meeting many people made constructive suggestions on how they believe the safety of this intersection could be improved while maintaining the amenity of their neighbourhood.

As a result of last night's overwhelming rejection of the consultant's proposed solutions for improving the safety of this intersection, I use this opportunity to call on the minister to authorise the consultants to prepare an alternative plan which is more in line with the sentiments of the locals who are directly affected by the proposed changes to car and truck movements in this area. I believe that this request is reasonable. There certainly is a lot of community interest in improving the safety of this intersection. I believe that, with goodwill from all involved, a better plan can be prepared which will have a greater level of community support than the present proposal.

Another matter I raise is the continuing need for more toilet facilities on all passenger train services travelling between Brisbane and Nambour. I believe that this request is reasonable. I call on the Minister for Transport to allocate the necessary resources to enable toilet facilities to be provided to all these passenger train services.

Another matter I raise is a petition of 1,058 people. I delivered the petition to the Clerk of the Parliament this morning, and he will tomorrow officially table that petition in this parliament. The petition I refer to has been signed by 1,058 residents of Queensland and draws to the attention of parliament that they are opposed to the mining of gold and other minerals undertaken above and below the surface of land as designated by the present mining lease No. 50124 and the mining lease application No. 50203 taken out by Papillon Mining and Exploration Pty Ltd.

The petitioners are also opposed to the future mining activities taking place in the North Arm area. They call on the House to give due diligence to the detrimental effects of mining above or below this freehold rural residential area of the Sunshine Coast and request the House to stop all present mining activities and reject mining lease application No. 50203 and further stop any future mining of minerals in the North Arm district. I urge members to study this petition, as they will quickly find that the petitioners have come from right across the Sunshine Coast area, including the North Arm, Nambour, Yandina, Valdora, Cooloolabin, Eumundi, Coolum and Mudjimba.

I use this opportunity to call on the Minister for Health to allocate new resources to help respond to the juvenile mental health needs of the region of the Sunshine Coast. Simply and frankly, our current health funding resources are not able to cope with the great need we have at the moment. Last week I had the privilege of meeting the new acting district manager for health, Kevin Hegarty. I take this opportunity to convey my appreciation to the minister for the way Martin Jarman, who is the former district manager for health, has acted. I thank him for his frankness at our regular meetings, where we discussed on regular occasions the difficult issues of health on the Sunshine Coast. I wish him well in his new endeavours. I appreciate the difficult task he had in trying to balance the competing interests of health with the funding allocated to him.

Finally, I say to the Minister for Health that we certainly look forward to her attendance on the Sunshine Coast, at the Nambour Hospital, when we officially open the new Nambour Hospital chapel. This was one of the first matters I raised with Martin Jarman when he took on the role of district manager. He gave me a commitment then that he would ensure the hospital chapel actually happened and was allocated an appropriate spot at the emergency section of the redeveloped hospital. I say publicly to Martin Jarman: thank you for your support. I thank the minister for her support for Martin Jarman. I wish Martin all the best in his future.

We certainly look forward to the Minister for Health attending and officially opening the chapel, for which over \$26,000 was raised from the community to assist in the furnishing of that

chapel. I also put on record our appreciation to Pastor Frank van Ophen for his tireless works in lobbying for support from the community. I congratulate Pastor Frank. We wish him well in relation to his recent operation.

Tourism

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (12.26 p.m.): Tourism is a vital industry in the far north. It is vital to the prosperity of Cairns and far-north Queensland. In the year ended June 2003 the number of overnight domestic visitors to tropical north Queensland was 1,307,000. The number of domestic visitor nights spent in tropical north Queensland was 7,279,000, with an average length of stay of 5.57 nights.

On the international scene, the numbers of international visitors to TNQ in the year ending June 2003 was 760,000. This represented, I have to say, a decline of 2.6 per cent compared with the year ended June 2001. Clearly, that has been a decline due to world events, including tourism, the Bali bombing and SARS. We are in fact very pleased that the reduction in international visitors was as small as that. That is a compliment to all of those associated with TTNQ and the fine work they have done in keeping Cairns and far-north Queensland high as an international destination. International visitors spent over five million visitor nights in the region, with the average length of stay being 7.1 nights.

Tourism is a very competitive industry. Tourism is always changing and always on the edge. Based around people on holidays, tourism is sometimes underestimated in its importance and not always taken as seriously as it should be by all kinds of people—those in communities such as Cairns as well as those in government, whether members of parliament or bureaucrats. Sometimes it seems not as important an industry as, for example, manufacturing or construction, but this is a misperception. I indicate, as a recent report did, that each international backpacker spends the equivalent of the export earnings of 127 tonnes of coal or 27 tonnes of wheat. The *Backpackers in Australia 2002, niche market report No. 2* showed backpackers touring in Australia in 2002 spent \$2.8 billion, with \$2.5 billion spent by the 88 per cent of backpackers visiting from overseas.

Backpackers are worth \$200 million annually to tropical north Queensland, and they make up about 25 per cent of the region's international market and 10 per cent of the total market. The point I wish to make is that tourism is as serious—in fact more serious—an industry as some others. It is a very important industry. Tourism leaders are right, therefore, to call on governments at all levels to provide funding towards ensuring the future of the industry.

I was pleased to hear last week of the federal government's tourism white paper and of their 4.5 year budgetary commitment of some \$235 million for key initiatives. It is essential that far-north Queensland gets its fair share. Particularly so far as international marketing is concerned, I welcome their announcement of \$120 million over four and a half years, with \$14.5 million immediately allocated in the first quarter of next year. Our eyes in far-north Queensland will be on those figures as they translate at a regional level.

There has been other good news in the last few weeks, including the opening of the Gateway Discovery Centre jointly funded by the federal and state governments, the opening of Gilligan's Backpackers Resort in Cairns, a magnificent new standard-setting venue which I have no doubt will become internationally famous, and the announcement of the Tropical Rush Campaign promoted by Tourism Queensland and Tourism Tropical North Queensland to bring domestic visitors to Cairns during the slow period.

There are so many things that the Beattie government contributes to other than simply direct tourism promotion, whether it is the upgrade of the CBD revitalisation program in Cairns, the esplanade lagoon, the Australian Airlines subsidy and the bringing of other airline services to Cairns, the airports works, the seaport works, cruise shipping, the Cairns tilt train, the health and safety standards programs from irukandji and dengue to dive standards and backpacker hostel standards, tourism-oriented policing or the work we do in the Environment portfolio on the crown-of-thorns and run-off onto the reef. In all of those instances the Beattie government is there. It is also important that the industry pays its way. I call on all the people of Cairns—in the industry and locals in general—to support this vital industry.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! The time for matters of public interest has expired.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (12.31 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend legislation about natural resources, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr Robertson, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (12.32 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In this House two years ago the Beattie government moved to recognise and clarify the legal ownership rights of landowners to the natural resource products on their properties, including the carbon absorbed or stored by trees or other vegetation on their land. That legislation, known as the Forestry and Land Title Amendment Bill, applied only to freehold land. The time has come to extend those provisions to leasehold land.

When I introduced that earlier bill, I said—

Instituting a legislative framework to recognise carbon rights remains justified in the uncertain international policy environment arising from the pronouncement of President Bush of the United States of America, revoking commitment to the Kyoto protocol.

Nearly two and a half years have passed since I spoke those words, and little has changed on the global policy front. However, the legal recognition of carbon commodities seeks to provide some legal certainty to land-holders in any future carbon trading scheme. I made a commitment to the House in 2001 that we would resolve the outstanding issues that were preventing a similar regime on leasehold land. Those issues have been resolved.

Like its predecessor, this bill is simple in its intent and operation. It extends to leaseholders and other interested parties the ability to enter into contracts about the ownership, use and economic benefits of natural resource products, such as timber and carbon commodities. These contracts may include a common law mechanism known as an instrument of profit a prendre. This enables tenure over the land and the contractual rights over natural resource products to be separated and registered on the lease and land title. It permits a lessee to enter contracts with other interested parties about the ownership, use and economic benefits of the natural resource products of plantations in line with the conditions of the lease.

In order for a lessee to enter into such an agreement, the lessee must be the owner of the trees or other vegetation. Under the Land Act 1994, any improvements to the land—including plantations—are the property of the lessee, not the state. There is one major exception to this. If trees have been planted to remediate illegal clearing, those trees cannot—and should not—be a commercial commodity. Honourable members will all join with me in agreeing that trees planted to try to make amends for the vandalism of illegal clearing must not be subverted by any creative application of this law. Those trees must be protected, and no person should be able to profit from their illegal acts. This bill, therefore, will amend the Land Act to ensure that any trees planted as a requirement of a compliance notice are not recognised as an improvement owned by the lessee.

Many people on leasehold land have, for some time now, indicated a desire to move into the forestry sector, which would include establishing plantations. This bill paves the way to enable those land-holders to diversify into potentially profitable industries and to establish commercial dealings in the natural resource products of plantations, like timber and, importantly, carbon.

Giving lessees the ability to maximise their returns from planting trees will provide an important incentive to manage the land sustainably. As well, it will provide opportunities for diversification into land use activities that will help underpin their long-term economic viability and sustainability, particularly where the property is no longer suitable for traditional rural production. The bill will also deliver the legislative changes required to support the implementation of the Draft

Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, which seeks to create mechanisms for trading natural resource products like timber and carbon.

An important benefit of this legislation is that it will prevent two separate carbon trading regimes from evolving—one for freehold and one for leasehold. It will simplify the process for lessees wishing to enter the emerging market for carbon.

In extending these mechanisms to leasehold land, this bill will pave the way for future carbon regimes, and promote diversification and sustainability on Queensland's leasehold estate. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 13 November (see p. 4996).

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.36 p.m.): I am pleased to make a short contribution to the debate on the consideration in this House of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It deals with a number of issues, as the minister outlined in his second reading speech. It makes a number of minor amendments to a wide range of issues. I wanted to make some comment about a couple of those issues and to comment about policing issues within my electorate.

The first issue that this bill seeks to address is to make further amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to strengthen the legislation that allows for people considered to be road hooners to have their vehicles forfeited. I would repeat the support that the opposition gave to this legislation when it was passed by the House. I would endorse the remarks that the minister has made on a number of occasions in the parliament about how successful this particular piece of legislation has been. To a great extent it has allowed police in local communities to address what was a longstanding problem.

The amendments before the House today simply tidy up that legislation and clarify when a vehicle may be impounded and make that legislation even more watertight and able to be used by police officers, and continue to be used by police officers, to address that problem. I certainly agree with the minister's comments this morning in the House that it has been particularly effective. A lot of communities are better places for it, because we have been able to address that issue of that small element of people who were misusing vehicles to the detriment of the lifestyle of everybody else in the community.

The bill before the House also deals with what has been known as chroming, or the inhaling of volatile substances. That is a particular problem for young people in communities throughout the state. Unfortunately, I have a couple of communities in my electorate where this is a problem. It is a particularly difficult problem to address because of the everyday nature of some of the substances that unfortunately can be used in this way.

It is an issue that has to be addressed on a number of levels to have any chance of achieving any sort of a satisfactory response to it, but it is a sad thing. It is a particularly sad thing to see the lives of young people destroyed by the misuse of substances that are not on their own particularly dangerous but which used in this way represent a very grave danger to the future of those young children. Obviously the best solution is to address the underlying problems that lead to this activity, and that certainly is the responsibility of a range of other people. But more often than not it is the police who come into contact with these young people in public places who are unfortunately using these volatile substances in what is undoubtedly a dangerous activity. This bill before the House seeks to give the police more options in dealing with that problem and therefore it can only be applauded and supported by every member of the House.

The next issue that the minister spoke about which the bill addresses is the situation with watch-houses and police stations and the requirement for officers in charge to be responsible for the release of people from watch-houses. As the minister said in his second reading speech, that is something that is particularly pertinent to police stations in small rural communities where the officer in charge is not always able to be present to carry out this responsibility. Once again, as the shadow minister has indicated, we certainly support that initiative.

But it is opportune in indicating that support to again bring to the minister's attention a couple of situations where the whole issue of watch-houses and police stations needs to be addressed

and the adequacy of those facilities needs to be addressed. In particular, I have spoken in this House before about the situation with the watch-house and police station in Murgon in the southern part of my electorate. That watch-house serves the entire South Burnett and therefore it is an unfortunately frequently used facility. The facilities that are currently present for the police officers who have to work at Murgon are by anybody's standards not suitable and not appropriate. While I understand that there is always going to be a continual demand for new public facilities and it is always a matter of addressing priorities, this is one situation that really has to be considered to be a priority simply because of the use that the facility gets as the regional watch-house for the South Burnett area. The accommodation and office facilities for the police at Murgon are certainly substandard and certainly need to be addressed. I know that the minister has to compete in a budget situation with a range of other departments for money for facilities for police officers, but right throughout regional Queensland there is a need for capital investment into facilities such as that to make the role of our police officers in those communities a whole lot better.

Murgon is not the only place in my electorate where there needs to be some capital investment in the facilities that police officers have to work in. I had occasion a couple of days ago to visit the police station in Biloela, not as a member of parliament but just as a community member. I had to go and get my licence renewed.

Mr Terry Sullivan: You weren't arrested, were you?

Mr SEENEY: No, I was not arrested. I had to go, as any other member of the community would have to go, to the Biloela Police Station to have my licence renewed. I was struck as I stood in the waiting room of the Biloela Police Station at just how outdated and how run down that facility is.

Mr Shine: It's the first time you've been there.

Mr SEENEY: No, it is not the first time I have been there. It is certainly not the first time I have been there, but it is the first time that I have probably been there as a member of the public and stood in line and saw it from that perspective, and it is a very different perspective than we all get as members of parliament when we are sometimes given official guided tours. It is a very different perspective when one goes there as a member of the public and stands in line at the front counter.

As I stood there to wait my turn to be served, it certainly struck me that that, too, is a facility that really needs to be updated. Biloela is a major regional community and that police station serves a number of other smaller communities. The Biloela Police Station is a busy station and quite a number of police officers work there to service the whole region. It is those types of regional centres that really have to be a priority with regard to the provision of better facilities so that we can attract and keep competent police officers who want to be part of those communities and who can serve those communities and serve them well. I draw the minister's attention to not just those two situations but a whole range of communities throughout Queensland that need a massive injection of capital into their police facilities.

There are other issues that the bill addresses. It deals with the Corrective Services Act and makes changes to provide for a more efficient method of arranging for prisoners to appear before a court. Once again from a point of view of police officers who work in small communities, that is certainly something that will make their life easier, because they unfortunately do spend an inordinate amount of time arranging those activities. The bill also addresses the Police Service Administration Act with regard to background checks of people employed by the Police Service. It makes some changes to the Prostitution Act and also deals with changes to the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act with regard to the piercing of minors. That, too, is an issue that unfortunately has arisen. A few years ago I do not think this parliament would have considered it necessary or even imagined that it would be necessary to legislate to control such an activity, but it is something that is emerging.

Mr McGrady interjected.

Mr SEENEY: Yes. A few years ago I do not think people imagined that they would put these things where they put them now. That is the changing nature of the issues that we as legislators have had to deal with. Every member of the House would agree that the approach that has been taken in this bill is a sensible one and certainly would be supported by the general community.

The bill also amends the Liquor Act to increase the penalty for the sale of alcohol to intoxicated people, and that is an area that I know causes a great deal of concern to people in the hospitality industry and people who own licensed premises not only from a point of view of

complying with the law but complying with their obligations with regard to liability and third-party liability. There have been some unfortunate cases that have brought home or emphasised or put the focus on the potential for liability actions against owners of licensed premises and people who sell alcohol. Unfortunately, that has put those people under pressure that they certainly do not really deserve to be under. But, regrettably, that seems to be the case. This legislation only deals with the penalties and as such increases the penalties to a more appropriate level.

The last issue that the bill deals with is the regulations to require the licensing of crossbows. This mirrors the firearms legislation. I certainly do not have any real problem with the licensing provisions that have been put in place in regard to the licensing of crossbows, but I think it is an opportune time once again to remind the parliament that the licensing of firearms and the changes that were put in place following the Port Arthur massacre certainly had a major impact on a whole range of people right across all of our communities. I have said before in this place—and I think it is opportune to say this every time we debate one of these pieces of legislation—that in my opinion it was not the licensing provisions themselves that caused so much angst and so much frustration and misgiving, it was the way in which that whole debate was carried out publicly, it was the way that so many honest and responsible gun owners were made to feel as though they were somehow potential mass murderers or public criminals.

It is most regrettable that a lot of the anger and frustration that was caused by the way that that debate was held still exists. It still exists and it is something that I think we as a community need to be conscious of and try to redress however we can, even though the options to redress that are limited. It is unfortunate that that anger and resentment still exists. It certainly has soured the attitude of a whole range of people towards any sort of regulatory system to control firearms or weapons such as crossbows, as in this legislation. It has certainly soured the public attitude towards what should be responsible regulations and responsible legislation to put in place controls that responsible people can live with. Regrettably there are always those on the fringe of politics who will seek to take advantage of that anger and resentment rather than seeking to redress the problem and recognise the issues that cause that anger.

I certainly agree that crossbows are every bit as potentially dangerous as some of the firearms that were licensed, and I think this is a sensible inclusion in that licensing system. It is sensible to include crossbows because some of them are fairly sophisticated weapons. The minister, in his second reading speech, listed a number of instances where they had been used just as a firearm could be used. I would urge everyone who is affected by this licensing system, as I would urge people who are affected by the firearms licensing system, to recognise the necessity to have a responsible licensing system and to cooperate with that system. Even though at times it is a burdensome regime, it guarantees that those of us who have the need or the desire to own and use weapons such as this are able to do so and are able to do so responsibly within a regulated environment.

I would certainly endorse the remarks that were made by the shadow minister and the member for Gregory in lending the opposition's support to this bill, and I commend it to the House.

Mr MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (12.53 p.m.): I want to support this bill, and in so doing I want to thank the minister for giving me the opportunity to chair the overview of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, and having the pleasure of working with his senior advisers, Neal White and Greg Thomas. I think so often when great legislation like this is being put up we should acknowledge both the minister's contribution and also that of the senior advisers. I want to place that on record.

The part of the legislation I want to deal with firstly is the issue of chroming. I know that the member for Woodridge has been working very hard on this issue in conjunction with her community groups and so I will leave my comments at this: that the work done by those community groups, and now with this legislation, aims at addressing what is a real social issue for some young people in some parts of Logan City. Whatever measures we can adopt—and I know this legislation attempts to attack that—should have the full support of all members of this House. I commend the member for Woodridge and her community groups on the excellent work that they are doing, because it will benefit not just her electorate but people throughout Logan City.

One other aspect of the legislation that I wanted to speak about was the legislation to tighten up the practice called hooning. At the moment the first offence attracts a confiscation of 48 hours. A second offence attracts a confiscation for up to three months. As the minister advised this morning in this House, there has been one allegation where there would be a permanent confiscation of vehicles. This legislation has the widespread support of the community in Logan

City. The Premier came down to Logan City in August to address what was our Seniors Day, and he spoke to the people there about the legislation. There were about 1,000 people in that hall that day and every person supported the legislation, supported what this minister and the government are doing, to make the streets safer. In terms of that legislation, Neighbourhood Watch groups are aware of people in the past who have transgressed, who have made the streets unsafe, and this minister and this legislation has changed entirely the culture where formerly hoons felt that they had a God-given right to the streets.

On the occasion that this bill was discussed last year, I also mentioned trail bikes and the menace that they were creating for people in outer metropolitan areas. I remember on that occasion the members for Nanango and Gladstone were wondering whether we were legislating away the rights of children. I had a look at their comments in the earlier debate where I think the member for Gladstone said she would hate to see kids constrained, and the member for Nanango said she was wondering if we were legislating away childhood. I must say I could not resist taking those comments down to the Neighbourhood Watch groups in parts of the Beaudesert shire where they were aghast that anybody would hold such views, because trail bikes and trail bike noise in those areas is a massive problem, and I know it is on the north side of Brisbane. But I am pleased to say that this minister, taking up the concerns we expressed in the hooning legislation, has actually done something about it in the Beaudesert and Logan areas. For example, what he did was put extra police on trail bikes working with the local authorities. That is not an easy task. The cheap bit is the bikes; what they then have to do is train the officers and equip them suitably. The minister has done all of the above in conjunction with the Police Commissioner, who came to Jimboomba and launched this very, very good project.

In the 12 months since we first raised this issue, when I had one of my Neighbourhood Watch meetings, this was the main issue. When I went back to the same area a couple of weeks ago and held a mobile office there, it was not raised as an issue. Rather, the police were being complimented for acting upon a complaint almost immediately. That measure is an important one, it is not a childhood issue at all, because that assumes that only kids ride trail bikes. What we have found is that it runs across all age groups, but the noise annoys everybody, and so it is a lifestyle issue. It causes gross aggravation to people on weekends. I commend the minister for that work.

I also want to praise the efforts that I know the minister and departmental officers have put in to ensuring that extra police have now been assigned to the Marsden-Crestmead police beat. The minister opened it a couple of years ago. It had two officers assigned to it who have the respect of the community. The member for Woodridge and I implored the minister on that occasion to make sure that we had extra officers, and that has happened. That police presence has made a huge difference to the morale in that area. Again, the minister should be applauded for that, as should the people who advised on that.

Unlike the member for Callide, I do not need a special tour to take me around to the police stations in my electorate. I find that I drop in from time to time when the Neighbour Watch meetings are on.

Mr Johnson: You have only got about one or two police stations.

Mr MICKEL: Yes, but I say that the officers are all outstanding young officers—every single one of them. The other point is this—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr MICKEL: I know the member cannot stand this. Being young officers, regrettably they see more of life in three months in my electorate than they would see in Longreach or any part of the member for Gregory's electorate in three years. I commend their dedication.

Mr JOHNSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Neither the member for Callide nor I said anything derogatory about police officers. I think the member for Callide made a statement that is common to his electorate. I think the member for Logan should be brought to heel on it.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Liddy Clark): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MICKEL: The member for Gregory has been here far longer than I, but, unlike me, he does not understand the standing orders. I commend the two community liaison officers Anita Roland and Ted Dale. I have not had the opportunity in the past to praise the work that they do, but I do that today. Rather than delay the House any longer, I simply point out that I support this bill.

Sitting suspended from 1.02 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Mrs DESLEY SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (2.30 p.m.): The Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill encompasses 13 amendments to 11 separate acts and is therefore quite diverse. Today I want to speak on just one of the aspects of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, but before I refer to that matter I want to congratulate our Police Service in Logan. As with the rest of Queensland, our crime statistics are trending down. Clearly, this government's commitment to increasing police numbers by 300 additional graduates each year and ensuring our police officers are well trained and have adequate resources is making a difference. I congratulate Minister McGrady and his policy team on their leadership and a raft of good legislation. Also to be commended are our Police Commissioner and his team for the implementation of that policy, which is clearly making a real difference. I should also congratulate our community on the part it plays through our fantastic Neighbourhood Watch network and Safety House programs, all designed to help our community be aware of what is happening in the neighbourhood and to report matters of concern.

Additional programs in Logan include our Opening Doors program where police officers welcome migrant and refugee groups by informing them of the services offered by police. It also gives the police an opportunity to learn of the culture of many ethnic groups, thus enabling them to deal in a sensitive way with issues which may arise in that community. Our PCYC runs many great programs, including after school care, and an officer has also been designated to work with at-risk young people. Logan's domestic violence initiative Fax-Back is recognised for its effectiveness nationally. With an active police beat at Marsden/Crestmead and the present police shopfront at Logan Central, which will in the new year be converted to a police beat, our police are very visible in the area.

Logan City has been one of the very successful community renewal areas of our state. One of the really important outcomes of community renewal is that it empowers a community to recognise issues and to then set about finding solutions. It should, therefore, be no surprise to this House that my community has embarked on a plan to help youngsters who are involved in substance abuse. Some two years ago a group met to discuss substance abuse and to investigate ways to reach these young people and help them. Those participating included our Youth Justice Service, Indigenous Health, BoysTown Link-Up, Youth and Family Services, Centre Education, Family and Kids Care, police officers, community liaison officers, Logan City Council officers and elected representatives including Mayor John Freeman, Drug Arm, the departments of Education and Health, Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre, Access Inc. and many individuals representing their community groups, such as the Booran Park Neighbourhood Centre. Also born out of these meetings was our RALY group, which is Retailers Assisting Logan Youth. This group includes many of our retail managers who have agreed to take spray cans off the shelves. It meets regularly to look at initiatives and is planning a training session for retail staff to give them skills to deal with any difficult issues in their store.

Out of these meetings on substance abuse came a plan to establish a safe house, or time-out house as we have now called it. Plans were laid and Logan City Council located land close to Logan Hospital. At that time the Commonwealth government announced the availability of funding for drug initiatives. Unfortunately, the application lodged by Logan City Council was unsuccessful. I should congratulate Melissa McKeering on the incredible amount of work she has put into this application and project. Undeterred by the rejection of our application, our steering committee has now set about to establish plan B. Some months ago I was able to make representation to Councillor John Freeman, Mayor of Logan City, who has now made a house available close to our police station. The expertise, resilience and goodwill of our community in Logan never ceases to amaze me. A meeting at the house identified those with the ability to renovate it to maximise its use. We now have plans well advanced and will be seeking funding from a number of sources. Where we have their consent, we can now intervene when we find a young person affected by substance abuse. However, this legislation goes a step further to empower police and youth workers to take a more proactive approach.

I now want to outline some of the network of organisations and programs which I believe will play a role in diverting these young people into more worthwhile pursuits. Kingston College Community Access School has now given hundreds of people, mainly young people, a second chance at gaining an education. Similarly, Centre Education has a dedicated band of teachers who work with marginalised young people. Tass Augustakis from Family and Kids Care offers effective counselling and rehabilitation to youngsters involved in substance abuse. BoysTown Link-Up has many services available to help youngsters, including Glugor House for young mothers and BoysTown Enterprises to teach skills which lead to employment.

In recent weeks community leaders in Logan have been in negotiation with Michelle Venables from the YMCA who is seeking an industrial shed where skilled instructors will teach aluminium boat building, automotive skills as well as life skills to at-risk young people. Help Enterprises of Eagle Farm is looking at expanding its outreach program to Logan with courses such as certificate 1 in engineering and horticulture as well as intensive support in preparation for work, job applications and interview techniques. Kingston's Make and Do Shed is also interested in joining the YMCA to teach woodworking.

Last week I hosted a meeting of all of these groups at my office, and the commitment to mentor our young people and the desire to see them re-engaged in education and training was very inspiring. These are but a few of our services. They fit well with the education and training reforms and will complement the initiatives already planned by our Logan team for the trial period. Ms Kerry Holst, CEO of our regional education office, is brimming with enthusiasm and very keen to see all of our services networked together. Logan City is now a strong, proud community which has overcome much of our perceived earlier disadvantage. Our people are proud to live in our community and we will continue to improve our amenities, service and lifestyle.

The initiatives outlined in this bill today will provide a trial in four areas of the state to establish guidelines as to the best way to deal with the issues of chroming. It is a matter of great distress to parents, youth workers and indeed the whole community that youngsters are involved in what is such a tragically dangerous behaviour that can do such damage to the brain and, indeed, lead to death. The legislation will enable trained police to remove an implement suspected of being used for substance abuse and then to take the young person to a safe place. Retailers will have a duty of care not to sell substances to young people which they suspect may be used to get a high. This government is serious about assisting young people to kick their drug habits. The drug court and drug diversion initiatives are showing great promise. I applaud these additional measures which will give police greater powers in their quest to help our youngsters. I thank the minister and his staff and commend the bill to the House.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (2.39 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I wish to raise a small number of matters that relate to the issues that are dealt with by this legislation. Like the electorates represented by many members of this House, on a number of occasions over time chroming has been a major concern in the electorate of Gladstone. There were several peak periods when police were expressing concern about the number of young people who were congregating, particularly in parks and other public places, and evidently doing damage to themselves. At that time, the police lacked the ability to intervene. That issue was dealt with by the Police Minister at the time whereby legislation was introduced to allow for action to be taken to intervene, on behalf of those young people, when that substance and the implements used to inhale the substance were evident. I think that that move addressed in great measure a lot of the problems in my area.

At the moment, there is a lot of literature available to young people and to their families about the damage that is done by chroming. Perhaps in the early stages of this type of substance abuse the impacts of it on people's health were not evident. But more and more information was gathered and was able to be put in a leaflet form to inform young people that this activity had very specific repercussions. I commend the police officers in my electorate for their concern and their actions in relation to this abusive behaviour, particularly by young people.

I would also like to place on the record my thanks to many of the retailers in my area who several years ago were prepared to restrict the availability of spray cans, particularly the metallic type spray cans, that were the cause of much of the problem. Those shops took it on themselves to either restrict access by putting the material out the back of the shop or by putting it into a locked container. Very early in the piece Solly's took that action. Even the young people who were working at the checkouts were saying that they could see young people almost accosting older people in a threatening manner demanding that those older people go in the store and purchase the spray cans. Solly's was very vigilant in responding to the concerns of police and of the community. I can only praise those stores that were prepared to take that action because, in some measure, it would have meant a loss of retail turnover for them because, if people just rushed in and tried to find what they were looking for without asking and the product was not evident on the shelves, they would leave. So I give my commendation to those shopkeepers who were prepared to accept that loss.

The extended powers that are contained in this legislation give police the ability to search people who they believe or reasonably suspect have in their possession potentially harmful things. Because of the incidents that have occurred in my electorate, I know that there are

indicators of the type of places where young people congregate to abuse these substances and the type of young people who are doing it. I also have to place on the record my thanks to the Minister for Police for his team's briefing to the Independents and the One Nation members on this bill. During that briefing, the search provisions were clarified. During my time in parliament when search provisions were initially introduced, there were very strict guidelines as to who was an appropriate person to search males and females. At the time of the briefing, the advice that I received was that male or female officers could search their opposite gender only in emergency situations where no other recourse was available. I certainly hope—and I believe most police officers would—that they avoid searching the opposite gender just for their own protection in terms of possible future litigation or allegations being made.

I believe that many parents will be thankful for these new provisions. Previously, if young people were found by police officers not actually ingesting or inhaling the spray substance but it was evident that they were about to or had been but had hidden the implements or the actual paint, the police were powerless to act. The new power contained in this legislation gives the police the ability, where there is reasonable suspicion, to be able to intervene. If we can assist any young people, particularly from engaging in this type of abuse or to have the opportunity to do so removed from them, then I think that is welcome.

The legislation also contains a new power for police in relation to the prevention of particular offences relating to liquor. Again, in the briefing it was clarified that people in possession of liquor who police believe could be considering committing an offence can have that liquor taken from them. During that briefing, one of the questions that was asked was what protections are in place for people who might be just commuting to a party and who have six-packs in their hands—their behaviour is really quite innocent; they are just going off to meet friends and have a good, healthy time. It was clarified that one of the containers must have been opened or must be open. At that point, all of the alcohol can be taken by police.

I want the minister to clarify if he is intending to review this power in, say, 12 months time just to see how the power is being exercised—whether further guidelines have to be put in place to clarify the reasonable suspicion that the person who has alcohol within their possession is likely to be involved in an offence. I understand that the alcohol has to be deemed to be a contributing factor. Could the minister give an undertaking to review the use of that power in 12 months or 18 months time—just to review the situations in which the power was exercised, whether the type of crimes that were usually committed by people under the influence of alcohol were reduced, and to ensure that the power is not used inappropriately by police in such circumstances that may not have led to the commission of an offence but action was taken by the police. I am just looking for a review date.

The obligations that are being placed on police in relation to detaining a person potentially affected by harmful things are significant. Under the powers that are being conferred by this bill, the officer who detains a person must, at the earliest reasonable opportunity, take the person to a place of safety and release the person at that place of safety. If it is a hospital or a detoxification centre, obviously it is evident that that is a safe place. Rural and regional Queensland does not have much in the way of detoxification centres. The safe place is usually the local hospital. Certainly, the detoxification and the longer-stay facilities for people who are addicted to substances are few and far between in rural and regional Queensland. They are something that we need desperately. However, I want to raise with the minister a concern that has been expressed. The strength of the obligation on the police officer—and I am not advocating that this obligation be removed in any way, shape or form—to release a person in an appropriate place could leave the police officer exposed in that, if having released a person in what the police officer deemed to be a safe place, an incident occurred that indicated that the police officer's assessment was wrong. That officer could then be held legally or in other ways liable for that person's damage or treatment subsequent to release to that deemed safe place.

I just wonder what thought was given to a clear definition of 'appropriate place'. It was clarified in the briefing that, if the person was taken to, say, a relative's or parent's home and the person in that home was prepared to accept the person the police had detained, then that obviously would be determined as an appropriate place or a safe place. I just wonder what consideration was given in terms of the exposure of police officers in having to decide what a safe place might be.

I will quickly touch on the issue of new criminal history checks being carried out on all employees at police stations. I believe that will be welcomed by the community. I am not expecting that too many people will actually be shown to be inappropriate persons. Most people

working in a police station are aware of the importance of their prior activities—they need to be above reproach—and therefore I certainly am not expecting that there will be a great deal of difficulty. I think the community will welcome the equity that is being applied, because we now have criminal history checks appropriately being carried out on people in a wide variety of occupations. I believe that people in Queensland have welcomed those criminal history checks, particularly in areas where the applicant may have unfettered access to children or vulnerable people. Therefore, I think this will be very well accepted.

The intention is that if the information the commissioner gains leads to criminal charges there is no protection given in this legislation to prevent the offence being investigated and any action proceeding after that if it is proven. Again, I believe that people will welcome that equity in terms of the intention of government to be transparent and accountable within the police force. They are a group of people that generally are held in very high regard, and some people make little differentiation between a person who wears a uniform and a person who works behind the desk as an administrative officer. They have access to very personal information and very private activities of individuals, and it is important that all of those people are beyond reproach. I welcome that situation.

There has been an amendment to the Prostitution Act. I have opposed prostitution bills in the past and will in the future. However, the amendments proposed in this bill include an obligation on female prostitutes to require the wearing of a prophylactic and for male prostitutes to wear a prophylactic. The intention is that this will apply to both legally and illegally operating prostitutes. I believe this will be fairly difficult to enforce at times, but it is something that is essential in terms of the protection of the community from sexually transmitted diseases.

I commend the minister on this provision, because one of the issues raised in the briefing related to the application of the offence provisions to the prostitute as well as the client. It has been confirmed—the minister may be prepared to reconfirm—that the offence provisions apply to both the prostitute and the client. I believe that is the only way there will be any effectiveness to this clause in this piece of legislation, because while it applies only to the prostitute supplying the service there is no pressure on the client to do the right thing. It is quite the opposite. Often times it is the client who demands that no protection be worn. Therefore, the application of this part of the legislation is very much appreciated, I believe, in terms of its effectiveness.

I have a question that perhaps the minister will not be able to answer in his reply to the second reading debate. There are changes to the functions of the authorities that actually administer prostitution in Queensland. The Prostitution Advisory Committee is being wound up. Its responsibilities will move to the Prostitution Licensing Authority. The reasons behind that were explained to us.

The responsibilities charged to the Prostitution Advisory Committee included promoting and coordinating programs that help prostitutes to leave prostitution. I believe that was the case. These responsibilities are being transferred to the PLA. I wonder how many people have actually been assisted—whether a great deal of effort has been put into actually attempting to help prostitutes who may be marginal in their desire to be involved in that type of lifestyle or whether there have been any active attempts to try to reach out to prostitutes to offer them an alternative lifestyle and income stream. The committee was also charged with administering programs to divert minors and other vulnerable persons from even accessing and starting in the prostitution game. I would be interested to know what sort of work has been done in the last couple of years in relation to those two directions.

A hotly contested issue in the discussion with the minister's advisers—not on their part but on the part of some of the members—related to some of the issues that this legislation is proposing to bring in. Some of the changes relate to a person who commits a public nuisance offence. The term 'obscene language' has been removed. I know that we started off having some discussion about what constituted obscene language. It is a fairly subjective debate, I think, because what I would regard as obscene language a bullocky probably would not even blink an eye at.

I think there is a standard we have to maintain within the community. We have to maintain a standard of appropriate language. What comes out of the mouths of many young people we walk past would be enough to turn the air blue. Unfortunately, if we are not very careful we will be telegraphing, by changes just in terminology, that language that has been historically inappropriate and unacceptable as far as the general public is concerned is now acceptable.

If people put themselves in a position where they are in a community building, a hotel, a bar or something like that and the language there deteriorates, they can effectively withdraw and

remove themselves from that language. I would hope, though, that we continue to send clear messages to all in our community, but particularly to our young people, that communication need not necessarily be interspersed with foul language to get a point across. I would hope that we can teach our kids to communicate in good and clear English without having to swear all the time.

I understand that the term 'obscene language' has been removed, but my understanding also, according to the briefing, is that there still will be an offence where a person, in their manner of behaviour, is creating a public nuisance, and that will include the language that is used. I seek the minister's confirmation. In the clauses that actually change that piece of legislation—

Mr McGrady: You only want to hear me swear.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: No, I do not want to hear you swear, Minister—not at all.

The bill talks about a person who 'behaves in an offensive way' or who 'uses offensive, obscene, indecent or abusive language'. I guess that covers it. It is my understanding that, according to this legislation, the terminology that will be deemed to be indecent, abusive or obscene language is now reduced to only one or two words. I think that is an indictment on us and on the community rather than being a recognition of changing community standards. I acknowledge that for decision makers or for people briefing us that was the explanation, and that is not a criticism of them in any way, shape or form, but I do think it is an indictment on us if we say that language—

Time expired.

Dr LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (3.00 p.m.): I am very pleased to rise to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill because it contains some very significant reforms which will assist police to deal with a number of problems that we have experienced in Cairns, particularly in the CBD, which have been the subject of quite extensive adverse public comment. I am referring here to public drunkenness, harassment of retailers and theft of glue, solvents and methylated spirits, verbal abuse of outdoor diners and demands by passing drunks for money from tourists.

I think all members in this House recognise that these problems are just as much social community problems as they are policing problems requiring a comprehensive range of strategies. However, the proposals in this legislation came largely from a summit in Townsville that was convened by the Police Minister, Tony McGrady, in recognition of the fact that we did need additional police powers and other new laws and penalties because they are an integral and essential part of solving a range of public offences, many of which have regrettably been committed by homeless alcoholics.

This legislation will give police the ability to seize and dispose of unopened as well as open liquor from people drinking in public places. It will also create an offence of public nuisance under a new section in the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act entitled 'Quality of Community Use of Public Places'. This is a very new piece of legislation. I think it is a commendable attempt to try to deal with what is, in some sense, quite a subjective view of what constitutes a public nuisance. It is designed to enable people to enjoy public places without being abused, harassed or intimidated by drunken or aggressive individuals. I think we would all agree that that is everybody's right. Indeed, it is a right of police officers as well when dealing with the public in those situations.

Some examples of offensive language and offensive behaviour are given in the explanatory notes to this legislation to give some concept of what is covered by this new community nuisance provision. I will mention a couple of examples because they are ones which, as the minister is aware, have caused quite a deal of concern in Cairns. Examples are included to assist the courts in making decisions as to what constitutes a public nuisance. Examples are a person walking past persons dining and interfering with that person's food; a person seeking money or property from another in a manner that causes a person to be intimidated, have concerns about their safety or such as to cause a person to leave a public place; a person urinating in view of another in a public place; and a person who encourages another to participate in a fight. An example of offensive language is that of a person calling another person a 'slut' in a shopping centre or a park. As I have said, I think that is a very good attempt to try to deal with what is a very difficult problem.

The Liquor Act will be amended by this legislation to double the penalties for licensees and employees of licensed premises who sell or supply liquor to intoxicated persons. Again, I think that is something which we need to crack down on. I hear complaints from people within my electorate that that is a significant issue. That is certainly the case in the CBD of Cairns. I am quite

sure that these amendments will be welcomed both by the residents of Cairns and by tourists who are often reported as being quite frightened or offended by the behaviour of drunks or itinerants in public places like The Esplanade in Cairns.

As others who have spoken on this legislation have said, I think it is important that we have a review to determine its effectiveness. Because the reality is that many people who will be the subject of these new changes will be indigenous persons, I think it is important we are satisfied that this is not abused and that people do not feel they have been victimised by virtue of their cultural and ethnic background.

The legislation is also very important insofar as it is a first attempt in Queensland, and I think anywhere in Australia, to protect young people who are putting themselves at enormous risk by chroming—that is, using volatile substances such as glue, paint and petrol to get a high. Whilst that is not a problem in Cairns to the same extent as it is in other parts of the state, it is a reality. We have a group which is coordinating a response to that issue. I am sure that group will welcome the powers that police will now have to search young people and to detain them and take them home if they find them in the possession of such substances or affected by those substances and are putting themselves at risk. To be able to take them to a safe place if home is not the appropriate place is very appropriate.

I am pleased, too, that retailers who refuse to sell such substances will be protected. At the same time if they do sell those substances to young people who they know or should be reasonably expected to know would be abusing such substances then they can find themselves in breach of this legislation and be fined. I am pleased that Cairns is one of the four trial communities with respect to this legislation because it gives us the opportunity to see how it works in a regional centre as well as in a centre such as Brisbane.

The electorate of Barron River is—

Mr Mickel: Well represented.

Dr LESLEY CLARK: I take that interjection; it is well represented. What I was going to say is that it is very fortunate in that it has a relatively low rate of crime. The northern beaches and western suburbs of Cairns, which are in the electorate of Barron River, have low crime rates. I enjoy being part of the Neighbourhood Watch movement as a Neighbourhood Watch coordinator in Freshwater, where I live.

I would like to put on the record my appreciation of the Neighbourhood Watch teams and officers, particularly in the Smithfield division. I have some statistics that demonstrate the good work they are doing in my electorate. The Smithfield division has a population of around 38,500 and extends from the Barron River to Ellis Beach. In 2002-03 there was a total of 1,959 offences. As I said, this is a relatively low crime rate of which we are very proud. This is the second year in a row that crime rates have fallen for this area, with 2,290 offences in 2001-02 and 2,302 offences in 2000-01. We are definitely on the downward trend, as is the case with many other parts of the state.

I was particularly pleased to see that, overall, assaults were down 9.8 per cent. Property offences also showed a decrease—in this case, 12.3 per cent, with break-ins to houses and shops down by 20 per cent. That is a great result. As I say, I would like to commend the police and the community on their effectiveness in working together to get those results. In particular, as I have said, I commend the Smithfield division, Tim Nolan and his team; our police beat officers, Russell Parker and Paul Stanley at Trinity Beach and Holloways Beach respectively; and all the volunteers in the Machans Beach, Holloways Beach and Kewarra Beach Neighbourhood Watch groups who are all doing excellent work.

At a future time in this House I would like to debate a couple of other amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, and that is in relation to the powers that police have to deal with trail bike riders. I think it is an illustration of the fact that we do have a very low crime rate in comparison to other places in Barron River that most complaints I am receiving at the moment relate to the noise and trespass that comes from illegal trail bike riding.

I commend the Police Minister for the support that he has given to the parliamentary legislative committee to work together to provide recommendations to him as to how we might address this issue, which is a very difficult one. In relation to police powers in particular, we have suggested that complaints should be able to be anonymous, that police should not have to attend a complaint to a house to hear the noise themselves but, rather, if a complaint is made they can go to the area where trail bikes are operating and have the power to seize a trail bike for

a short period of time. They can then refer the matter to the courts which would have the power to seize the bike for longer or to permanently confiscate it.

The same goes for a case of trespass. If a young trail bike rider is trespassing on private land, the police need to have powers to go out there, see what is happening, seize the bike for a short period and then refer the matter to the court, which could end up with a permanent confiscation. It is very similar to what we have done with the hooning legislation.

I look forward to those amendments coming to the House because I think that will make a significant difference to the way that we can address that problem, as well as working together to find legal places for these young people to ride. I have a problem with trail bike riding only when it causes problems to other people. I know many other members in this House share the view that we need to find places for these young people so that they can get out in the environment and enjoy themselves.

Mr Mickel interjected.

Dr LESLEY CLARK: Yes, that is very good. I think we all need to find those sorts of solutions.

In conclusion, I congratulate the minister on bringing another fine piece of legislation to this parliament. I would also like to make mention of Assistant Commissioner Alan Roberts from far-north Queensland. He is retiring shortly. I would like to place on record my thanks to him for the fine work that he has done and wish him well in his retirement. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (3.10 p.m.): In rising to speak to this bill, I note that there are a number of pieces of legislation which will be amended, most of which I certainly welcome. There are comments that I would like to make about some bills and I will seek responses from the minister.

Firstly, there is an amendment to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 when vehicles are impounded or forfeited. This relates particularly to the issue of road hooning, which has been a very topical issue and one that members from across the parliament have very strongly lobbied the government in regard to changing laws because it has a significant community impact in a lot of areas. Obviously it has had an impact on the Sunshine Coast. As vehicles have been impounded or potentially forfeited, it has raised awareness in the community. It continues to be an issue that will need ongoing monitoring and implementation with regard to police having adequate resources and good working relationships in our area with council rangers and looking at the other ways of trying to mitigate what has been a significant social nuisance.

There is an amendment also to the Bail Act and the Juvenile Justice Act which is 'to allow police officers other than officers-in-charge of police stations and police establishments and watch-house managers to grant bail'. While mentioning watch-houses, we would like to see taken into account in a number of areas the number of officers who have to be on duty in watch-houses and the fact that there is a need for additional staff above the complement in our area to adequately resource the police to do their job on the streets. Currently a lot of police are obviously involved in providing services such as watch-house services which take up a lot of their time. Their numbers are taken as part of the complement of the district. We would like to see more police added to that complement to address on-street issues in recognition that watch-house duties are extremely time consuming, as well as transferring prisoners elsewhere, and particularly transferring juveniles to appropriate areas.

The Corrective Services Act is to be amended to provide, according to the explanatory notes, 'a more efficient method of arranging for prisoners to appear before a court'. There is also an amendment to the Police Service Administration Act 'to provide for criminal history and antecedent checks be undertaken on persons applying for employment, or directly or indirectly employed by the Queensland Police Service'.

The amendment to the Prostitution Act 1999 is 'to abolish the Prostitution Advisory Council and increase the membership of the Prostitution Licensing Authority' and, allegedly, 'to address a health related matter'. I would like to make some comments about this in my position as shadow health minister and as the shadow minister for women's policy. There is currently a review that is being done of the prostitution licensing laws in Queensland by the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

It is interesting that as part of that review the CMC is looking back to the original aims of the Prostitution Act 1999. One of the aims of the Prostitution Act 1999 was, amongst other things, to

try and help people leave the prostitution industry and to address issues of public safety and public health. The interesting thing is that the advisory council was supposed to report to a ministerial committee, which included the Police Minister as well as the Families Minister, the Minister Assisting on Women's Policy and the Health Minister.

On a number of occasions I asked the various ministers, 'What is happening to help women get out of prostitution, to help people leave this industry and what is happening to stop people taking it up?' There has been no adequate response from the government. I have quite a file on the buck-passing between the Health Minister, in her capacity as the women's policy minister and the Health Minister, and the Attorney-General. It would be comical if it were not so serious. It was an aim of this legislation which has not been fulfilled.

The Prostitution Advisory Council was supposed to provide advice to the government, and government ministers in charge of those key portfolios were to oversee programs which were to assist people leave the industry. If those ministers had been successful in seeing adequate programs and safeguards put in place, surely they would have had the courtesy of not only advising the House when I raised those issues, certainly in the parliamentary estimates process. They should have also had the courtesy and professionalism to have raised that in their correspondence.

To date, the only answer they have been able to provide was that the legislation limits advertising as far as seeking to recruit people for the prostitution industry. I was able to say, 'Well, hang on a moment. I have proof where the law has been breached already in regard to people advertising, and quite clearly breached.' When my office and I sought to have these matters raised with the licensing authority, we found that there was a reluctance to pursue those issues. Eventually they did go around and talk to the people who breached the laws. I am talking pretty blatant stuff—a newspaper article with advertising and the phone number to ring; how people were needed to work; and if anyone wanted this work, to ring the number. That is why I am very sceptical about not only legislation but also the government's stated policy that it is trying to help people leave the industry.

I know people who have worked in this industry will tell members how difficult it is for a woman to leave the industry, given the fact that they often have drug issues that force them to stay in the game. They also have significant issues, usually being from a low socioeconomic clientele. They do not have a lot of educational opportunities and work opportunities. It can seem like good money and very glamorous, but once they are caught in the lifestyle it is hellishly difficult to break out and get out of it.

That is why I want to register my criticism that, having talked to women in particular who have managed to break free of this cycle and get out, who have a passion and a heart to help others live their lives and get free of the prostitution industry, it is time that we saw a similar passion and a heart from the government rather than, as we have seen to date, seeming to turn their eyes the other way when the law is breached and not put in place proper programs to illustrate the damage that this industry does particularly to women, though there are men also who are affected, and the damage that is also done when a realistic viewpoint is not presented. It does not matter whether it is legal or illegal. Having talked to girls who have been in the game, I am aware that it is an industry which has significant mental health issues, not only physical health issues. That is a real concern. In all the legislation and amendments before the parliament no mention is made of some of those significant mental health issues that they have to contend with. It is time that we saw this issue addressed, not just in the paperwork of legislation and not just in the press releases of the government but with some hard, cold facts of what is being done.

If the government is going to stand up in the summing-up on this bill and say, 'Well, it is happening,' I would like to see evidence of it. Certainly in the correspondence that I have had with government ministers there has been no evidence of any assistance to address this issue seriously. It is a significant issue. The voice of those who have been there in the industry and have got out needs to come out. I commend those who are starting to speak publicly, at great risk to their own personal security. It is an industry which does a lot of damage and has significant stigmas attached to it because of the damage that it does.

I welcome the provisions to toughen up liquor licensing laws. I wish to state on the record again that, although the liquor laws have been reviewed and changed in recent times, there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of liquor licensing officers to help implement those laws and also to provide adequate education for the increasing number of liquor licensees. A significant onus is being placed on licensees to do the right thing. Yes, it is appropriate for licensees to take responsibility, but there also needs to be an appropriate framework for

implementation, with officers in the field providing ongoing education and enforcement of the laws.

In recent years it has become more difficult to assess whether there have been breaches of the laws, given the changes to dining requirements that no longer mean that kitchens have to be open in order for a premises to serve alcohol. It has become more difficult for those officers to do that work. I have to question why we change legislation yet do not see a corresponding increase in resources to ensure that licensees have access to adequate ongoing education and also that communities have the protection of these laws. The laws should not just be on the statute books; they should be implemented effectively through the provision of adequate numbers of officers in the field.

When this issue has been raised previously, the standard response from the government has been that we have hundreds of police, who are also supposed to be implementing these laws. I suggest, most respectfully, that honourable members look at the Liquor Licensing Act and consider how many police officers would be aware of all of the intricacies of the implementation of some of those laws. Certainly, public intoxication is something the police often have to deal with. However, when it comes to the serving of alcohol in establishments, sufficient numbers of Liquor Licensing officers are needed to provide adequate monitoring, supervision and enforcement of the laws.

I note that there have been cooperative arrangements in particular in the Mooloolaba area, one of the key tourism areas on the Sunshine Coast, between Liquor Licensing officers, the police and council inspectors as well as licensed outlets. I commend those who have been involved in that process. However, that handful of Liquor Licensing officers is stretched over a significant number of regions. Given the increase in the number of licensed outlets, that is not fair to them and also to the communities. There is potential for there to be significant holes in the effective implementation of our liquor licensing laws.

One of the challenges faced these days is responding to the trend whereby people drink before they go out and present at a licensed premises. They might not initially appear to be intoxicated but could have consumed a lot of alcohol prior to arriving at those establishments. There has been a changing trend in the way people socialise and consume alcohol such that it is now consumed prior to going out. Perhaps unfairly, young people are often targeted over public drunkenness. Certainly, they are very visible. However, older people—people in their thirties and forties—are also engaging in public drunkenness. I am not just talking about alcoholics living in parks but about people who have a home and who engage in public drunkenness. This is an issue we need to address in our communities. This is not limited to communities with different cultural backgrounds; it is happening right across Queensland communities, particularly in tourism areas where there is greater access to licensed premises.

We welcome the advent of outdoor dining, with its ambience of a relaxed tourism lifestyle. However, there are significant issues with respect to access to excessive alcohol by individuals who are not coping. This impacts negatively on the rest of the community. This requires significantly more research as the demographics change, that is, not only concentrating on young people and their uptake of binge drinking but also looking at some of the other age groups, too, that have been involved in these practices. This has the potential to make our roads more dangerous. It also impacts on people who are trying peacefully to enjoy outdoor spaces, particularly when dining outdoors in summer.

I commend the minister for the provisions in the bill that seek to strengthen the penalties with regard to serving people who are already intoxicated. I also ask the government to consider how these laws can be better enforced. I emphasise also the importance of proper procedures being followed in terms of recording information from people found to be intoxicated. Statements should be taken to ascertain where they became intoxicated so that that information can be fed back into the system to our Liquor Licensing officers for follow-up. This is something that is happening around the state anecdotally on an ad hoc basis. This is an additional responsibility for the police, who are already very busy out on the streets. The correct protocols need to be followed. When officers identify people who are publicly intoxicated, they should take a statement from that person as to where they became intoxicated and their pattern of drinking so that if a licensed premises has been involved that can be followed up by Liquor Licensing officers. This happens in some cases. Unfortunately, it tends to depend largely upon there being local pockets of commitment from certain officers and is not applied consistently.

Carrying out blitzes at particular times with an emphasis on this trail of information to ensure that the issue is hit and problem outlets are targeted may be a more appropriate way to respond.

However, I commend a more systematic way of ensuring that that information is gathered so that blitzes can be targeted at the few licensed outlets that abuse the privilege of holding a liquor licence. This also helps us to identify those in the community who have assisted people to engage in public drunkenness.

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (3.27 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I support this bill. This is another example of the Beattie Labor government listening to the community and acting. Firstly, I wish to speak about the amendments regarding intoxicated and disorderly persons in a public place. I welcome the amendment of section 44A of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to permit police to seize unopened liquor when a police officer seizes open liquor from a person and a police officer reasonably suspects an offence against the liquor provisions.

With regard to the Liquor Act 1992, for the selling of liquor to intoxicated or disorderly persons the penalty units have been increased. This bill will also establish a new public nuisance offence, that is, a person who behaves in a violent, threatening, disorderly or offensive manner that interferes or is likely to interfere with the peaceful passage or enjoyment by the public of a public place commits an offence. Behaving in an offensive manner will include using offensive, obscene, indecent or abusive language. Behaving in a threatening manner will include using threatening language.

It is timely that we are having this debate now. I know the residents in my electorate are sick and tired of youths walking suburban streets drinking alcohol and gatecrashing parties. They disturb the peace of the neighbourhood and often destroy and vandalise property while walking the streets. At this time of year the police and my office receive many complaints about end-of-year school parties. Young adults celebrating the end of 12 years of school just want to have a good time with their mates. Unfortunately, they sometimes forget that the rest of the suburb does not wish to celebrate with them, especially in the early hours of the morning, so police are called to deal with these complaints.

The local police and I have been actively promoting the Queensland Party Safe Program that allows parents and party organisers to register their parties with local police to enable a swift response if things go wrong. The program also provides parents, party-goers and hosts with helpful hints and strategies to minimise potential risks and promote safe partying. Party-goers, party organisers and parents need to take responsibility for themselves and prompt others, and there are many steps they can take to ensure safety and security to complement the work of the police. The Party Safe kit gives practical advice on how to do this.

I have been encouraging the use of this kit in my electorate as I want the people in my electorate to enjoy a party, have fun and stay safe. I must admit that many of the students in the area do just want to have a party, but it is those uninvited youth who turn up in large numbers, who disturb the peace and who usually create scenes of bedlam that we have seen on media reports and that we have all received complaints about. Once again it is our police force that the community turns to in these situations.

With the end-of-school parties now here, these amendments will assist parents and police when unwelcome youth turn up on their doorstep creating mayhem. It is not just the party home that suffers. These youth often walk around the streets creating havoc, drinking alcohol and being a nuisance. I know that the residents of Springwood also welcome the definition of 'offensive manner' to include using offensive, obscene, indecent or abusive language. During school holidays my office receives many calls regarding offensive behaviour.

The community has had enough and these amendments demonstrate our support to our police officers who do a great job in our community. It is important that we support police in their roles. I believe that these amendments will assist police in ensuring there is peace in the community. On behalf of the people of the Springwood electorate, I say thank you, Minister, for listening to their concerns and for bringing these amendments to the parliament. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Superintendent Brett Pointing to the Gold Coast district. I know he will work hard with our community on policing issues.

The second part of the bill that I wish to speak on is the misuse of volatile substances. It is, indeed, very sad and disturbing to see the evidence of chroming in our communities. Recently I travelled with the On the Edge night patrol through the northern suburbs of the Gold Coast and throughout Logan. The evidence of chroming was overwhelming. We have all seen media coverage of the issue, but to see it first-hand was extremely upsetting. Why young people turn to volatile substances, alcohol, illegal drugs or a life of crime is complex. There are many reasons.

Therefore, I do not believe that the volatile substance misuse can be fixed solely by a police response.

In September 2002 the Commission for Children and Young People presented a report on volatile substance misuse in Queensland. It highlighted that this is a growing problem in our state and that the lack of police powers is often blamed. The report also acknowledges that a lack of dedicated services available to assist young people who turn to volatile substances exists.

Petrol sniffing began in the early 1950s, introduced by US servicemen, and has since grown beyond petrol sniffing to include the inhaling of volatile substances. This community problem will not be solved quickly. There needs to be an all-of-government approach to a problem that has devastating health effects for our young people. It is simply not a case of just a retailer or police approach. In fact, there is nothing simple about this problem at all.

If we look at the products involved, we see that there are approximately 250 products which contain volatile substances. These range from nail polish, deodorants, air fresheners, lighter fluid, oven cleaner to paint. The list goes on and on and many of the products are our normal household products. So where do we start?

This bill is a start. In trial areas such as Logan, a police officer will be given the power to detain a person affected by a volatile substance and take that person to a place of safety such as a hospital or place that can provide a suitable level of care to the affected person. In the past police have complained of being frustrated with what they can do to respond to the growing community concern about this problem. So this provision to take a person affected by a volatile substance to a safe place is a step in the right direction.

Many strategies have been undertaken by retailers in an effort to restrict access to volatile substances. In March 2002 a volatile substance misuse workshop was held in Logan. It was noted that restricting the accessibility of some products encouraged users to take up other products. So it was decided that a uniform approach needed to be taken. In Logan retailers have set up a group called RALY—Retailers Assisting Logan Youth. The reference group consists of Logan City Council officers; Logan police; Logan area youth justice service officers; Department of Families officers; retailers; the state member for Woodridge, the fabulous Desley Scott, who has worked very hard on this issue; and me.

RALY went to work on doing something practical for the local community retailers to combat this growing problem. They introduced the RALY resource kit which includes information on volatile substance misuse, benefits for retailers in being involved in the RALY project, what retailers can do to help reduce volatile substance misuse, emergency response guidelines, a certificate of participation for them to display in their retail outlet, examples of store policies they might like to adopt and a voluntary retailers code of conduct. This group has been active for at least six months. Their primary purpose is to assist and encourage retailers to adopt a more responsible approach to the management and sale of volatile substances and to minimise loss of products through theft. RALY also aims to minimise the misuse of volatile substances in Logan and to promote relations between police, retailers and other stakeholders in the Logan community. I congratulate this group on the work they are doing in response to a community problem. I am sure that this legislation will assist them in their endeavours.

The new section inserted into the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act 1931 will prohibit the sale or supply of a potentially harmful thing if the seller knows or believes on reasonable grounds that the customer intends to ingest or inhale, or intends to sell or supply it to another person for ingestion. A potentially harmful thing means a thing that a person may lawfully possess that is or contains a substance that may be harmful to a person if ingested or inhaled.

These changes mean that retailers will be able to refuse to sell volatile substances without fear of being found guilty of unlawful discrimination. These amendments will certainly complement the work being done by retailers in Logan. I applaud them for recognising their responsibilities as retailers and for caring about our community. This is an example of what the Queensland Commission for Young People's report on volatile substance misuse in Queensland suggested—a community response that includes all stakeholders to develop solutions that can adapt to local circumstances and the available resources. I am proud to say that the Logan community is working together to identify, educate and rehabilitate young people with a volatile substance addiction.

Legislation such as this before the House complements the hard work that is being done by the community. I congratulate the minister for bringing the bill before the House and for listening to our community. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (3.36 p.m.): In common with many other communities, the Maryborough community has quite a problem with chroming, especially amongst indigenous youth—and no more so than with the very sad recent passing of Auntie Olga Miller, who was an esteemed Aboriginal elder from the Butchulla tribe and a good friend. Auntie Olga Miller had a tremendous way of being able to round up the young people and talk some sense into them. She is very sadly missed.

A lot of unsung heroes work with at-risk Aboriginal children, particularly in the area of chroming in our region. One of the directors of the Unndennoo Kindergarten—and I had the privilege of going to their Christmas dinner the other day—tirelessly works with the indigenous kids in helping them to overcome dysfunctional family situations and so forth.

The issue of chroming is heartbreaking to all members of this House. It provides somewhat cheap thrills, but has, of course, horrific and expensive outcomes in terms of health and societal dysfunction. I note in the introductory research on this bill that 2.6 per cent of Australians have reported using inhalants for this purpose at some time during their life and that, unlike other substance abuse, inhalant abuse is most predominant among younger adolescents and decreases with age. I pose the question: what would the figures be like if the parameters were reduced to 20 years of age as a maximum?

I had the opportunity of attending a briefing by the police put on in this campus regarding these particular issues. One of the interesting things is the purpose of taking a person to a place of safety for treatment or care when they are detained, and I will talk about that a little bit further on in my speech. I have some concerns as to the litigation consequences if the affected person then does not stay put in the place of safety or if they do damage either against person or property at the place of safety. I wonder what the legal implications would be. On balance, it is probably the best and perhaps the only course of action. However, I am concerned about the situation it places the people in who are providing that place of safety.

I note that the Australian schoolchildren drug and alcohol survey was done in 1999. This is not a brand-new problem. However, chroming, in its incredible outbreak of new users, is a relatively new problem. I noticed also that 26 per cent of students had used inhalants at some time, and that is truly an alarming figure. It is a figure about which our society should be very scared because the addiction to chroming is not easily broken.

I also noted that, with regard to indigenous communities, in 2001 the Victorian Department of Human Services reported that more than 25 per cent of clients seeking treatment for inhalant abuse were from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

We do well not to assume that this particular problem of chroming is a problem only in the indigenous community, because if one was to reverse those figures that means that approximately 75 per cent of the people who had sought treatment for inhalant abuse were not from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. So this is not just an indigenous problem.

A lot has been said about the health effects of inhalant abuse, both the short-term and the long-term health effects. The short-term health effects include a feeling of wellbeing, confusion, drowsiness, aggression, enhanced risk taking, loss of inhibition, sexual promiscuity, loss of muscular coordination, incoherence, slurred speech, vomiting and hallucinations. So clearly to a person who has no money and is somewhat disfranchised and finds themselves in a very at-risk and vulnerable place in society, one does not have to be blind Freddy to work out that chroming is a cheap thrill.

The other effects are chronic headaches, sinusitis, diminished cognitive function, tinnitus—or ringing in the ears—ataxia, a chronic or frequent cough, chest pain or angina, nosebleeds and the sad and sorry list goes on and on. Of course, chronic exposure may do significant damage to the heart, lungs, liver or kidneys. As I said before, these are not just the short-term effects but the very long-term effects. Even if kids are to break this hellish addiction that they find themselves with, they could have done significant damage to their health and may require long-term hospitalisation and very expensive health care later on in life. Sudden sniffing death syndrome resulting from heart failure has been reported if a person does strenuous exercise or has a sudden fright immediately after inhalation. So chroming is a terrible problem.

When we look back into the history of any problem, it is always wise for us in a society to look at the reasons that have caused the problem. Many reasons have been given for inhalant abuse, such as primarily the low cost and accessibility of the substances that people use which are, generally speaking, lawful to buy. For young people who probably do not know better and maybe just think from one thrill to the next, as it were, the initial pleasant physical effects of euphoria and

a rapid high or a rush resemble alcohol intoxication without the expense and also the legal impediment of having to buy alcohol as minors. Perhaps people experiment out of curiosity; perhaps it is out of a sense of bravado; maybe they are just too silly to really think about the long-term effects or too bored to care. Homelessness, dysfunctional families, family breakdown and poverty are all factors that could cause these sorts of abuses.

As I prepared to speak to this bill, one of the things that really broke my heart was to read the reports coming out of the Northern Territory of children who are chroming not for the thrill of chroming but to dull their hunger and cold. I want to record my extreme displeasure in this House of what is a damning indictment on our society to think that we have kids anywhere in Australia who would inhale these things to dull their hunger and cold. Maslow talks about the hierarchy of needs, but when kids are chroming to dull their hunger and cold, that is a sad day in Australia.

As I look at the bill overall—and as I said I attended a briefing on it—the only negative that I can think of is that I am very concerned about the wellbeing of people. If children are taken to a safe place, I am very concerned about the litigation potential for those people who are sued if the kids run amok or disappear and are hurt. I would welcome the minister to comment on that later on. Proposed clause 4 refers to the power to search and seize potentially harmful things. Clearly, civil libertarians might whinge about that sort of thing, but I have to say that I think that that is a great thing. I am happy to see kids' civil liberties impinged if it is for the greater good of their health.

The member for Maroochydore also mentioned, as part of a wider address on this bill, the desire to see young people set free from the tragic life of prostitution. A couple of months ago I remember reading in the *Sunday Mail* an article that talked about prostitution as being virtually a career path. That absolutely appalled me. As a father of six kids, I just looked at that article and I thought that every one of those kids was someone's daughter. That is a very sad thing. I would support anything that the minister could do to make the media more responsible. If a young girl who works in a supermarket for a very small amount of dollars per hour reads about glamorised prostitution, that can look like a very good alternative. But, like chroming, it can have potentially very long-term and damaging outcomes for that person. On balance, I think that this bill is a great piece of legislation and I commend it to the House.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.45 p.m.): I rise to support this important bill, which contains major reforms that address law and order issues with the best interests of the members of our communities. The Beattie government has instituted a number of these reforms since being elected in 1998. In my area, residents can see that this government's commitment to law and order is paying off. In the Oxley police district, the Beattie government has provided 53 extra police positions. A 14-officer tactical crime squad to service the Oxley district will also be established early next year to provide an additional policing service to focus on drug and property crime in this area. These initiatives are a credit to our police and show that the strategies of police and the community, particularly the Neighbourhood Watch groups in the area, working together to fight and prevent crime are working. A couple of weeks ago I attended a Neighbourhood Watch meeting in Jindalee. The visiting police officer announced that there had been no crime reported in that area over the past two months.

The government's commitment to community safety and the Queensland Police Service is also evidenced through its sixth consecutive record budget for Police, with this year's budget tipping the \$1 billion mark with an \$84 million increase. We will never shirk from our responsibility on law enforcement issues.

The bill addresses 13 significant legislative amendments and makes amendments to 11 acts. The Police Powers and Responsibilities Act is amended to specify clearly when a vehicle may be impounded or forfeited for a road hoon related offence. The act is also amended to allow for the search and seizure of a potentially harmful thing—a volatile substance—so that a person is prevented from inhaling or ingesting that thing. Volatile substances are things such as glue, petrol or spray paints that a person intends to use foolishly to get a high. Additionally, a person affected by a volatile substance may be taken to a place of safety for treatment or care.

Ann and Anthony Lanza are residents of my electorate who set up an antigraffiti group in my electorate a number of years ago. They have been talking to me of their concerns about there being no control over the sale of spray cans to young people. They actually see children affected by chroming whilst the group is out cleaning off graffiti. Not only are spray cans used for vandalism, but they are a cheap high for young children in the area.

The effect of chroming on children is absolutely devastating. They are endangering their lives by misusing volatile substances. Substance abuse can make the user highly anxious and prone to risk-taking behaviour. Other more serious effects include heart failure, suffocation, choking or, in some cases, death. It may also cause disabilities including irreversible hearing loss, brain damage and damage to the bone marrow, liver and kidneys.

The good news is that this government will complement this legislation with regard to prohibiting businesses selling volatile substances. The law is likely to take effect in April 2004. It will mean that, in certain circumstances, retailers will be able to refuse to sell volatile substances if the seller has reasonable grounds to suspect that a person intends to ingest or inhale the thing or intends to sell it to another for that purpose. This legislation is part of a comprehensive approach to volatile substance misuse and will complement the retailer's code of practice that has been produced by the Brisbane City Council. I support all aspects of this bill and commend the minister for his work in this area, particularly in relation to his care and concern for children who take volatile substances.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.49 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2003. I indicate that there is much in this bill which I support wholeheartedly. There are, however, some comments I would like to make. I believe some enhancements can be made at some time down the track.

I do not want to labour over things we agree on; however, I make the point that the hooning legislation has been good legislation. We provided bipartisan support to the government, and I am pleased that it has brought this amendment to parliament to ensure there is absolutely no doubt about the original intention of the law. One of the things we see from time to time is that some people seek all sorts of legal avenues to undermine the original intent of the parliament. The parliament's intention was very clear when it passed those laws with regard to road hoons. I think by and large the legislation has been effective.

The other day I was at a function at which people were talking about road rules. Basically, they summed it up by saying that, regardless of the road rules, five per cent of people do not care and will continue doing what they want to do, 20 per cent will follow the rules regardless of how silly they may be and the other 75 per cent will be governed by the status of regulations that exist to govern behaviour on our roads.

No doubt many of the people who are picked up by the hooning legislation do not really care. I suppose that is evidenced by the fact that some of them have actually had three strikes and their car has been taken away. Quite frankly, I have absolutely no time whatsoever for people who want to do that. If they want to go around making a nuisance of themselves and destroying the amenity of the community then, quite frankly, they deserve to be dealt with and dealt with very seriously. Only last night I was driving somewhere and was stopped at some traffic lights in Brisbane. When the lights changed a person hooned away, screeching their wheels. I just hope that one day they will be picked up.

Mr McGrady: Did you get the numberplate?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Actually, they went that way and we were going that way. We just heard them going off, so we did not in that case.

Mr Matt Foley: It wasn't Bob Quinn, was it?

Mr SPRINGBORG: It certainly was not a responsible driver like Mr Quinn. The Police Minister raises a reasonable point; that is, we can all be responsible and we can take people's numberplates. I have done that in the past—

Mr McGrady: Dob in a hoon.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Dob in a hoon. I have actually reported them, because that is what we can do. Quite frankly, they endanger people's lives. They are fools and idiots and they carry on as such. They deserve to be treated with contempt by the community. This legislation unequivocally provides the opportunity to do that.

There is much debate from time to time on crime figures. In the last week or two we have heard some more from the government on this point. Last week saw the release of the police report, which certainly contained many statistics. I have publicly welcomed the reduction in property crime. That involves breaking and entering, burglary and other property theft, including car theft. This is an issue on which we can make some very direct comparisons.

I will make one comparison which I am happy to admit. In the last year of our government in Queensland—I always say that the rate per 100,000 is the best measure of what is happening with crime in Queensland—the rate of property crime per 100,000 was 7,662. In this current police year it is 7,370. So the reduction has been about 300 per 100,000. There is quite a demonstrable decrease in the area of property crime. I welcome that. It may be as a consequence of more proactive policing. It may also be as a consequence of the fact that car security is becoming a little better and also the community is becoming more involved.

I say to the minister that I was disturbed last year to read a report from the Australian Institute of Criminology which indicated that up to 60 per cent of rural property crime had gone unreported. I do not know why that is the case. I know that we have had property crime in the past which has not been reported. I may have thought, 'What is the point?' I think sometimes there is an element of frustration on the part of people. They wonder whether anyone will be caught. I think the clean-up rate is a fair measure of that. The figure of 60 per cent of rural property crime going unreported is of concern to me. I do not know whether that figure has changed in the last year. That is something that needs to be addressed. Also, we need to view those figures against the background of potentiality of unreported property crimes. I think we need to work harder to improve the clean-up rates. Nevertheless, comparing apples with apples, the rate per 100,000 has dropped.

One thing I am not so complimentary of is the rate of person crime. In the same five-year period the rate per 100,000 has gone up from 816 to 858. There may be some spikes with regard to homicide, but by and large homicide rates in Queensland have not changed all that much since the 1930s. Crime against the person, which includes a range of violent crimes, whether they be sexual or physical crimes, have increased some 42 per 100,000 in the last five years. That is indisputable. They are the government's own figures. The rate of other crime—prostitution, drug related crime, et cetera—has gone up from 2,709 to 3,368 per 100,000. They are actual figures—actual comparisons between 1997-98 and 2002-03. I welcome the reduction in property crime, but there has been an increase in the areas of person crime and other crime.

The other area of concern—we can try to explain this away in all sorts of ways—relates to breaches of domestic violence orders. They have gone up quite extraordinarily each year since 1997-98. There were 4,802 breaches in 1997-98. In the current year there have been 7,820 breaches. That is something we need to be dealing with in an overall context.

I acknowledge what the government is doing in the area of the sale of substances which may be inhaled or ingested. I note that there will be a trial in this area. There will be some prohibitions on the sale of certain substances if the shop owner or the retailer believes that that person is going to use that thing for some sort of illegal purpose that may harm them.

When I read through the provisions relating to the capacity to relocate a person who has been affected by inhaling or ingesting a substance from a thing, I note that the person does not have to be kept where they have been taken. Success of the provision will involve the commitment of the people who are accepting that person as well as the commitment of the person who is staying there. I have seen people intoxicated by these substances. They really do not think straight. They are quite scary when you look them in the eyes.

I think it is about time we went a bit further with this. In our policy we are looking at putting the onus on the purchaser to prove their age. We would not allow the purchase of spray cans by people under the age of 18. A lot of retailers say the same thing, that the onus should be on the purchaser. Whilst I acknowledge that the government has an approach to this, the onus is still on the retailer to try to decide the intention of the person buying that particular thing. Small business says that it is getting sick and tired of being loaded up by regulations. I think that is something we need to look at.

I think we really need to put a regime in place that ensures more people who commit graffiti offences are made to clean up their graffiti mess. That is why I would like to see compulsory graffiti clean-up orders. I do not know how many people convicted of graffiti offences in Queensland in the last couple of years have been given such orders, but certainly when I asked the question in this place two or three years ago I was not able to be told because no figures were kept. Quite frankly, people are of the view that if you make a mess you should be made to clean it up, not have somebody else running around cleaning it up. If these characters, who have absolutely no regard whatsoever for somebody else's property, are caught and convicted then they should be made to clean up the mess—and somebody else's mess if there is not enough of their own—as a consequence of their vandal actions, which destroys the amenity of our community.

A lot of research has been done on this issue. It is called broken window research and it follows from research done in the United States. If someone moves into an area that is predisposed towards criminal activity—for example, they find a window is broken or a community is looking a bit run down—then it tends to attract more people to engage in criminal activity. The same can be said for graffiti offences. Whilst we have community groups organising rapid clean-up approaches and trying to address the issue themselves, quite frankly, the people who made the mess, once caught and convicted, should be made to clean up their mess and the mess of other people if need be.

Whilst the government is doing some things to address the issues of graffiti and chroming, there is more that we can do. We should not close our minds to it in the future. We should be more proactive and more severe in the future. That is our intention. I would encourage the government to consider that issue. By and large, we support the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (4.01 p.m.): I am pleased to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2003. This is a particularly important bill containing major reforms that reflect the Beattie government's commitment to continually address law and order issues with the best interests of members of our community in mind. Our government never has and never will shirk its responsibility on law enforcement issues. The bill addresses 13 significant legislative amendments.

I would like to outline how police are proactively addressing law and order issues on the Sunshine Coast. In the Sunshine Coast district, individual officers in charge of stations work in partnership with police intelligence officers, specialised sections like the Juvenile Aid Bureau and Tactical Crime Squad, community members and local organisations to identify seasonal, historical and potential issues with their respective areas of command. Specific patrol objectives are set to address these issues, and regular operations are conducted to proactively deter offenders from committing crime. Examples include events like schoolies week and other holiday periods and other major events that occur. POPP—problem oriented partnership policing—programs have been established in the Sunshine Coast district, where police work in close partnership with community groups to further identify problems in the community and develop strategies to reduce and resolve these problems.

I would like to put on record how the Beattie government intends to ensure an increase in police numbers in regional areas that experience population increases. Our government is committed to increasing police numbers across Queensland to 9,100 sworn officers by the year 2005. This will represent an increase of almost 20 per cent during the Beattie government's second term. The Sunshine Coast district is an area that is currently experiencing high population growth, and since the election of the Beattie government in 1998 the approved sworn policing strength of our district has increased significantly.

I am very lucky to have some marvellous Neighbourhood Watch groups on the Sunshine Coast. The police coordinator, Sergeant Di Kirkman, and other local police do a marvellous job working with our community. I would like to commend not only the police but also all those involved in Neighbourhood Watch programs within the Sunshine Coast police district, as they offer benefits to residents including improved personal safety and household security, and a reduction in the number of preventable crimes. Neighbourhood Watch receives support from local police officers and the District Crime Prevention Unit, which provides community members with information and advice concerning crime and the prevention of crime in our community. This information is provided to encourage members of the community to report suspicious activity to police, improve home security and reduce the likelihood of offences occurring in their community. Officers also gain valuable feedback from local residents on issues affecting the community and are able to develop strategies to address these issues and provide an optimum delivery of service.

Our government has and will continue to increase police numbers, build more police beats and shopfronts. We have developed the State Flying Squad to boost police response in targeted areas. We have established tactical crime squads, expanded the drug court trial, passed new laws to allow Queensland police to fully exploit DNA technology as an investigative tool and a formidable crime fighting weapon. Our government introduced legislation which allows police to confiscate the vehicles of those drivers who participate in illegal drag racing and other dangerous driving. We introduced new civilian confiscation laws to give law enforcement agencies powers to seize assets and freeze bank accounts of criminals. We introduced the Sexual Offences

(Protection of Children) Bill 2002, which will make our maximum penalties for indecent treatment the toughest in Australia.

Importantly, our government's approach to crime is working. Queensland police statistics show an ongoing decrease in total offences against property. I would like to advise the House of a very successful initiative on which I was very proud to work with Kawana Waters Senior Sergeant Paul Sarquis and Sergeant Jed Graham to deliver. Quad bike patrols in the Kawana police district commenced on 19 February 2001. The mobility of these vehicles makes them ideal to access and patrol beaches, sand dunes and parklands not previously accessible by police. The significant increase of police in these areas has assisted in providing a safer environment for our community.

Quad bike patrol police have attended numerous incidents such as wilful exposure, stealing and searches. A number of arrests for offences including break and enter, possession of a dangerous drug and indecent behaviour have also been made. The quad bikes have increased mobility in difficult terrain and allow a timely response when calls for service are received. Local residents as well as beach users have regularly contacted both the Police Service and the Caloundra City Council praising the patrols as a recognised security improvement for successful policing initiatives. I also know very well the leader of the Caloundra council lifeguards, Stuart Cordingley. He has told me that Caloundra council lifeguards have noticed a significant increase in the number of women who are coming back onto beaches who were formerly frightened away by deviants and perverts. But now that these police quad bike patrols have increased security, women are coming back in their numbers, which is a very good thing.

The success of the quad bike patrols has seen state government funding for the recent purchase of two more quad bikes. Currently there are two quad bikes at Kawana Waters Police Station and one at the Caloundra Police Station. We had a ceremony where we named the police bikes in honour of Reverend Colin Munns, who was the long serving local police chaplain for the area. He was also stationed at the Bokarina Uniting Church for quite a period of time. The other was named after Brian Rush, a former police officer who retired not long ago. He was a very good friend, a very good worker in the community and a fellow Lake Currumbundi/Kawana Lion.

Policing on the Sunshine Coast is set to receive yet another boost because police beat shopfronts will be built at Kawana Shopping World, and a police beat shopfront will also be built at the Middys complex in Buderim. Our investment in policing has translated into good news for the Sunshine Coast, with new police facilities set to enhance the area's presence. This represents the culmination of a lot of hard work by residents throughout the community. The establishment of a police beat shopfront is a proactive policing initiative designed to reduce demands and complement the work of existing services. Police beat shopfronts create an increased and highly visible police presence in the community which acts as a deterrent to crime.

The Beattie government holds a firm view that we need to strengthen ties between police and the community to fight crime, and I am very confident that these two new police beat shopfronts will help achieve that. The announcement followed the news that the police budget would tip the \$1 billion mark for the first time this year, with an \$84 million increase compared to previous years, creating the highest police operating budget on record.

Our community will also benefit from the continuation of work of the Sunshine Coast Tactical Crime Squad. Based at Kawana Waters Station, the tactical crime squad has achieved impressive results in attacking drug and property crime on the coast. The broader Sunshine Coast community is also benefiting from the Beattie government's commitment to boost police numbers, with approximately 300 additional police to be employed this year across Queensland. The Beattie Labor government has already provided well over 100 funded police positions for the Sunshine Coast district since coming to office. Our community will continue to benefit from this program to boost police.

On behalf of my community, I thank the minister for providing a \$459,000 state-of-the-art water police vessel for the Sunshine Coast Water Police, which we launched last year.

In closing I would like to put on record some correspondence I have received from Sunshine Coast residents following the antihooning legislation. I quote from an email I have received—

Congratulations on the anti-hoon measures being introduced. It is great to see something positive happening in this area.

The negative impact hoons in cars and on foot have on tourist accommodation in Mooloolaba and surrounds is enormous. I hope the tourists see that the government are doing something positive and listening to the electorate.

It came from one of the accommodation managers that the minister has met. I thank the minister for coming up and meeting with them on more than one occasion as we attempt to address the Liquor Licensing issues.

Finally, this is a letter from a resident of Alexandra Headland. While it is out of my electorate, the person wrote to me about the hoons at Alexandra Headland—

I am delighted that headway is being made regarding this matter. I now see police up this way and they are making a difference. I am in touch with many residents and your letters to me go down to the grapevine to those who have had an absolute gutful of the situation.

I have obviously kept in regular contact as I have forwarded these letters to the minister and his department—

To use Aussie vernacular to yourself, the Assistant-Commissioner of Police, Peter Beattie and the Police on their rounds, "Good on ya"!!!!

For years residents have been loudly voicing our woes and at last something is being done. I cannot thank you enough for your concern, correspondence & most of all, action regarding the "hoons".

In closing, I would like to commend the minister for being a very positive minister, this being my first time in the Beattie government. I have found the minister very open and easy to approach. I am glad to be able to host him on the Sunshine Coast next week. I also say that the police commissioner is beyond reproach and one of the best that I have ever seen. I commend the minister and his department, and I am very proud to support the legislation before the House.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (4.12 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak on the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2003. Right from the start the shadow minister for police has indicated that the coalition is in support of the legislation and has spoken in depth in relation to the issues that the legislation covers.

I would like to speak briefly about the policemen and policewomen who work in my electorate, the infrastructure that is involved in my electorate and a few other issues as well.

Mr McGrady: I went to Sarina Police Station.

Mr MALONE: I was pleased to hear that the minister was there. Unfortunately I could not meet with the minister there. I was intending to try and get around, but I was not able to. I hope the minister saw the situation first-hand. I will talk about that later.

First I would like to talk about the police stations that I have in my electorate office. They are based at Glenden, which is about 200 kilometres west of my electorate at Sarina, at Nebo, Finch Hatton, Mirani, Marian, Walkerston, Eton, Sarina and at Marlborough. I cover quite a large area in terms of the police district. I find that the people who work in that area are magnificent people. I take my hat off to them.

I make special mention of Mick Newell, who was the police constable at Nebo for a long period of time. Mick did a terrific job under sometimes fairly difficult conditions. His wife ran the swimming pool complex. They fitted into the community brilliantly. Mick took on board the running of the pony club and had a great involvement with the youth of the Nebo community. I take my hat off to the policemen and policewomen who get involved in the community as Mick did. Unfortunately Mick has moved further west. Gavin Hill has moved out there to take up residence with his wife and children. I have known Gavin for quite a length of time, too. He had seven years stationed at Finch Hatton and before that he was at Marian. I welcome Gavin into that position. I know that he will do a magnificent job. Of course, Nebo is now at the cross roads with a lot of heavy machinery moving through there because of the mining operation. As I have said before in this House, that town is growing very quickly and becoming a very busy centre. I also take my hat off to the council at Nebo, which has done a magnificent job of almost rebuilding the town in terms of infrastructure and beautification. It is quite a beautiful town to visit. If any members are wandering around my electorate one day, drop in to Nebo. It really is quite an eye opener.

Talking about the police station at Sarina—officer in charge Sergeant Pat O'Loughlin does a great job there. There are some fairly long-term police stationed at Sarina in John Black, Tony Lee and Trooper Campbell. Quite a contingent of police work at Sarina. It is a busy station. It was pleasing to hear that the minister called at Sarina a little time ago.

I wrote to the minister in August, and I have written previously to the minister, about the police station. The police station is part of the courthouse complex. The police station particularly is very cramped and extremely outdated. There is very little privacy for the police officers. When they are endeavouring to do their reports somebody has to get out of the office. The police station was funded in a budget probably five or six years ago and was high on the list to be

replaced. That money has gone towards the construction of a North Mackay police station, the sod which was turned just the other day. That was an election commitment by the Beattie government in the last term. I would have expected that station to be well and truly under way, but I understand that a sod was turned just the other day so obviously it is going to be some time before the North Mackay Police Station is completed.

Mr McGrady: I turned the sod the other day.

Mr MALONE: That is what I am saying. It was a commitment at the last election to have it built. It has taken some time and I know that land acquisition was a problem.

Mr McGrady interjected.

Mr MALONE: I am glad to hear that. I hope that the minister can move as quickly on the Sarina police station and get that replaced because it really needs some major changes very quickly. I probably need to write another letter to the minister or come and talk to him a little bit more on that because it is quite an issue.

With that, I would like to mention a couple of the other police officers around the electorate. We have a new officer at Glenden, Senior Constable Trevor Robson. I was at Glenden the other night at a speech night. Trevor is fitting into that community in a nice way and taking a lot of responsibility in terms of looking after the young people in the town as well. I had a long association with Fred Baguley at Mirani. Fred is almost an institution in the Pioneer Valley. He is involved in pretty much anything that happens. As I have said before, it is good to have police officers who actually take on board community policing to the nth degree.

I sponsored a bowls day at the Gargett Bowls Club a couple of weeks ago. Fred was up there with his wife bowling and fitting into the community, as he does. There is not really much that happens in the Pioneer Valley without Fred Baguley knowing about it. That is not to detract from the others who work in the Pioneer Valley at Marian and Finch Hatton. As I said, right throughout my electorate I really do appreciate the work that the police do. In Sarina the traffic officer is Brian Cumming, who travels up and down the highway. I am very careful not to attract Brian's attention too often because he is very keen to pick you up with that gadget on the side of his car.

There are a couple of issues that I wish to raise in relation to the speed zones in my electorate. Members of the public are getting rather concerned about the changes in the speed zones. That is not necessarily an issue concerning the police, who are there only to enforce the speed zones. On the highway, coming through Sarina and heading north, motorists drop back from 100 to 90, 80, 70, 60 and finally to 50 kilometres an hour through the township. Coming from the north, it is very similar: 100 back to 80, 60 and then 50 kilometres an hour through the town. That is on the highway. Obviously, a lot of people travelling through Sarina are not aware of the different speed zones. I take exception to the fact that on a highway there is a speed zoning of 50 kilometres an hour. My contention is that where speed zones change quickly there should be some indication of this painted on the road. That road can be quite busy, with many trucks and so on. People should be looking at the road rather than at the signs on the side of it. From a safety and policing aspect, people should be aware of the speed zoning along the section of road they are travelling.

Also, travelling up the Pioneer Valley there is a very similar situation with a lot of zone changes. I was caught out when travelling at night in wet weather. Earlier in the year, when we had some rain, a car was following me very closely and I inadvertently went into a speed zone that was about 20 kilometres lower than what I thought was the speed zone in that area. I did not notice the signs on the side of the road. A camera was set up on the side of the road and, inadvertently, I lost some points. I make the point that if it is good enough to have a speed zone it is good enough to have the speed zone painted on the road. Particularly during busy times of the day or night and at night in wet conditions or conditions where it is not possible to observe the signs on the side of the road—and if one is not aware of the speed zones—people will get caught. There always seems to be speed cameras on the side of the road. If there are to be a number of different speed zones—and I know this is put in place by Queensland Transport—they should at least be painted on the road. Perhaps that would lead to better policing. I support the police in my community. I commend them on their work. I know it is not easy sometimes. I support the legislation.

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (4.23 p.m.): I am pleased to support the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2003. The amendments incorporated in this bill go a long way towards improving the protections for law-abiding citizens and providing

safety measures for those in danger of harming themselves or others. Since the election to office of the Beattie government in 1998, we have had a consistent community safety policy of being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. The *Queensland Police Service annual statistical review* tabled by the minister in the last session of parliament indicates our measures in relation to improving community safety are having success in reducing crime rates.

In the Metropolitan North police district an extra 175 police positions have been provided, including 106 since February 2001. The statistical review shows that offences against the person fell 15 per cent as a result of decreases in assaults, robbery and sexual offences, and the number of sexual offences reported to police has decreased by 51 per cent over the past year. There was a further seven per cent reduction in armed robberies, a 12 per cent decline in unarmed robberies, property offences fell by 11 per cent as a result of decreases in all property related offences categories and there were 1,471 fewer unlawful entries reported in the 2002-03 year. All of this combined is evidence that our strategies are working to fight and prevent crime in our local area. But, of course, we cannot be complacent.

This afternoon I take the opportunity to commend our local police officers for the great work they do not only in crime fighting but also in supporting our local community through their attendance at and involvement in local community activities. We are very fortunate in our area, as we have very community-minded police officers who have formed very strong partnerships with community groups and our local schools to help make our community a better place.

A very good example of police and community partnerships that work in the Pine Rivers area is the Bray Park Community Consultative Committee, ably chaired by Karenne Haygarth and guided by police officers Ty Connell and Tim Brown from the Bray Park police beat. Over the past few meetings of the Bray Park Community Consultative Committee concern has been raised over reported incidents of young people chroming—that is, being under the influence of volatile substances—in and around our local shopping centres. This is a new issue in our community, and the committee wanted to be able to understand more about volatile substance misuse and develop measures by which we can assist our young people.

To that end, the consultative committee has been engaging with the Commission for Children and Young People to develop a local strategy which has as its goal harm minimisation. In February next year the committee is sponsoring a retail forum to discuss the responsible sale of volatile substances for retailers in our area. Chroming, or paint sniffing, or inhaling other volatile substances has tragic health consequences. Everyday substances like glue, spray paint, lighter fuel and even Impulse body spray or Linx deodorant have the potential to be harmful when abused. Chronic exposure to any of these or 100 other everyday products can cause significant damage to the heart, the lungs, the liver and the kidneys. Some of the damage is irreversible even after inhalant addiction has ceased. Although volatile substance misuse is not in epidemic proportions, it is a problem and we are only beginning to gain knowledge about the extent of abuse and ways to manage it. Any program to address volatile substance misuse must have at its core the aim of reducing the harm to misusers.

I believe the measures included in this bill which give police the power to seize potential harmful things as well as take a person affected by volatile substances to a place of safety are to be commended. At present the police cannot do this unless the person goes voluntarily with them or voluntarily hands over the substance that is being misused. In this way, the police can be more proactive in protecting the person—and from what we know, it is normally young people—from self-harm or potentially killing themselves through volatile substance misuse.

However, I note that the increase in police powers in this regard is only being trialled at this stage in three places across the state and there will be an evaluation of the trials within 12 months by both the department and by the Crime and Misconduct Commission. It is my hope that the evaluation shows that the measures have assisted in providing positive treatment for inhalant addiction and have improved the lives of the young people the police have come into contact with. I hope there is not a finding that we have harmed the misusers of inhalants by alienating them further from society or that they have become involved in more harmful practices. I will be keen to see the outcome of the evaluations of the trial.

This bill also contains provisions to amend the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act to provide for the unlawful sale of potentially harmful things if the seller knows or believes on reasonable grounds the substance is to be ingested or inhaled for harmful effects. A potentially harmful thing means a thing a person may lawfully possess that is or contains a substance that may be harmful to a person if ingested or inhaled, such as glues, spray paints, solvents or

methylated spirits. But this section does not apply to things that are intended by the manufacturer to be ingested or inhaled such as medications or tobacco products.

The Beattie government's commitment to work with retailers for the benefit of saving young lives is demonstrated through the work of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Commission for Children and Young People and the setting up of the Volatile Substance Misuse Steering Committee chaired by the Brisbane City Council. This work has culminated in the release of a code of conduct for retailers for the responsible sale or supply of volatile substances. I take this opportunity to congratulate all those retailers who have already taken on board the need for the responsible sale of harmful products, have put in place their own codes of conduct in this regard or have even stopped selling products that they know are popular in their local communities but prevalent for misuse.

In particular, I congratulate Super Cheap Auto. They have put together their code of conduct for the responsible sale or supply of spray cans and solvents. It is quite a comprehensive code. Even though they have found that there has been some incidents in their stores after they have refused the sale of spray cans or solvents to particular people who they know will use them for harmful effects, they have persevered. I know that they will be very thankful that there will be laws in place to uphold their position in relation to the responsible sale of spray cans of paint and solvents and other harmful products. I also congratulate the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and all those involved in putting the *Let's Can Chroming* pamphlet together. It is a very informative pamphlet. I know that the retailers in the Pine Rivers area will be most pleased to see what we are doing to work with them in relation to preventing volatile substance misuse.

The proposed provision in relation to the sale of potentially harmful things will come into effect on 1 April next year. This will give retailers plenty of time to put in place measures to uphold the code of practice for the responsible sale of harmful things. These measures, along with community support and interaction at a number of levels within the community, will address both the causes and symptoms of volatile substances and misuse. I believe they will go a long way to saving young lives. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (4.33 p.m.): I am pleased today to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As mentioned by the shadow minister, the member for Gregory, we will be supporting this legislation. This bill makes a number of changes that will certainly improve the responsibilities and the powers of the police in Queensland. Some of the main objectives of the bill are to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to clearly specify when a vehicle may be impounded or forfeited for a 'road hoon' related offence, to allow for the seizing of potentially harmful things and to allow a person affected by a potentially harmful thing to be taken to a place of safety. The hooning laws seem to be working but there are a few problems in relation to it.

I wish to speak now in relation to the power of the police to seize potentially harmful things. The increase in chroming and the sniffing of glue, petrol and other substances is a very sad situation. No doubt it is a worldwide problem. It does enormous damage to those people, which is quite extraordinary. It is disappointing that these people do not realise the impact it will have on them further down the track.

I noticed that in his second reading speech the minister talked about the confiscation of liquor. In the past it was only opened liquor that could be confiscated. For instance, if a person had a carton of stubbies and there was one opened, the police could take only the one that was opened, not the unopened ones in the carton. Once this legislation is passed they will be able to take also the unopened ones. That is fine, as people with that much alcohol on board are probably only going to cause trouble down the track. However, we have to make sure that if, for instance, the police have picked somebody up and the situation is not all that serious, they do not go around confiscating full cartons that people have on board. That can happen in certain circumstances when people get a little bit overzealous.

Another issue that was raised in the minister's second reading speech, which surprised me, is the practice adopted by some shopkeepers of keeping metho in the fridge. I find it quite extraordinary that they actually do that. I am probably pretty naive. I know that metho can be used for cleaning and so forth, but, holy smokes, it would be a dreadful thing to drink. It is a sad situation for those poor souls who reach the stage where they do drink it. That has been occurring in our communities for a long time. It is quite extraordinary that shopkeepers chill it down for them so they get a better drink, and the book should be thrown at them.

One issue that I wish to refer to in the debate on this legislation is the supply of drugs. We have made some significant progress in our schools—although there is still a way to go. Drugs are still present in schools. We use a three-pronged approach in combating drugs. The first is awareness of the danger of drugs, and those programs in the schools are working quite well. The second is the process that people go through if they do have a drug problem. The third one is the hard one, that is, to actually catch the drug dealers. They may not be the big people, but they are certainly the people who peddle these dreadful products to our children. They do tend to move around in a lot of districts and communities, even in my electorate where people would not think drugs would exist. However, I can tell honourable members that they are present in my electorate. I have spoken to the police about it as well. Recently in one of our towns the police were able to nab a few of these drug dealers. They just seemed to be wandering around the streets. It is dreadful that they are out there. Some progress is being made, but we have to be ever vigilant to that problem and give the police all the support we can to try to catch these people.

The bill also amends the Bail Act and the Juvenile Justice Act to allow police officers other than the officers in charge of police stations and police establishments and watch-house managers to grant bail. In the past it was the responsibility of the officer in charge. In this day and age and with the increased population they more or less have to be on duty 24 hours a day. That is difficult, so this amendment will make police administration a bit easier.

The bill also amends the Corrective Services Act to provide a more efficient method to arrange for prisoners to appear before a court. In other words, in future they will be given a notice to appear rather than having to go through a much longer process. It also amends the Police Service Administration Act to provide for criminal history checks to be undertaken on persons applying for employment or directly or indirectly employed by the Queensland Police Service. The checks are supported by legislation. That is obviously a good idea to make sure that we get the right people in the right places.

The bill also amends the Prostitution Act 1999 to abolish the Prostitution Advisory Council, to increase the membership of the Prostitution Licensing Authority and to address a health related matter. The bill also amends the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act 1931 to provide a new part dealing with the quality of community use of public places, to provide for the unlawful sale of potentially harmful things, and to prevent the unlawful tattooing and body piercing of minors. Certainly, the sale of glues and methylated spirits to those who intend to inhale or ingest them is a bad thing. That amendment will be welcomed. The amendments that relate to the genital and nipple piercing of minors is also welcomed. It is quite extraordinary what we see these days. The other day in the *Courier-Mail* there was a photograph of someone who had the most studs in them. I am not sure whether it was a girl or a boy, but it looked like they had been caught by an exploding hand grenade full of ball bearings. There were studs all over them. It is quite extraordinary that people go to that level. Anyway, I guess they think that they look pretty good and that is important for them.

This bill also amends the Liquor Act to complement the amendments to the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act by increasing the penalty for the sale of alcohol to certain persons. Obviously, that penalty already exists, but this bill increases the penalty. So that should work out pretty good.

The bill also amends the Weapons Act, the Weapons Regulation and the Weapons (Categories) Regulation to require the licensing of crossbows, to regulate the use of shanghais and swords, and to clarify the licensing conditions on weapons. I want to raise a few points in relation to this issue. In my area people, particularly those who are engaged in wild game harvesting, have to use weapons as part of their livelihood. It seems to be one rule for everybody. Quite a few people in my electorate have had their livelihoods affected when various things have occurred.

I want to raise an issue with the minister in relation to the amendments in this bill that relate to the Weapons Act. Sometimes the legislation can create anomalies. In my area particularly, and also in some parts of the minister's area, people are involved in the wild game harvesting industry, such as kangaroo shooters and suchlike. Sometimes lineball issues arise. For some reason, those people have their weapons confiscated. Maybe they are caught up in a legal case.

I have one example of this issue that I would like to raise with the minister today. I have written to the minister about this; it will be in his files somewhere. A chap's gun licence was revoked. The police removed his guns that were located in a secure cupboard, but which was unlocked at the time. On that day, this particular fellow was called away to attend to his elderly father, who is disabled. His partner stayed at home. In other words, there was somebody at home

all the time. So somebody was virtually in charge. In April 2002 this particular chap was advised that pleading guilty to failing to secure weapons would not affect his ability to hold a gun licence and carry on his profession as a kangaroo shooter. On 20 April 2002 he was fined \$300 and has since outlaid a considerable amount of money to purchase a freezer and an accredited aluminium tray for his vehicle. He has almost completed his level III meat importer's certificate.

Since then, a problem arose for this chap when he wanted to upgrade his licence. The computer showed that he had committed an offence. An amendment to the Weapons and Other Amendment Act 2002 attempted to clarify the application of sections 10A and 10B. As the bill was assented to on only 4 March, it could be argued that the relevant period of this amendment commenced on 4 March 2003. However, in this man's case his gun licence was revoked for an offence that occurred well prior to 4 March 2003. That means that, effectively, there has been a retrospective application of the relevant period, which is a denial of natural justice to this particular chap.

Had this person known in April 2002 that the conviction for the offence would have affected his ability to hold a gun licence in 2003, he would have strongly challenged the charge. But he was told, 'Three hundred dollars and everything is right and you can carry on.' He did that. I think that this is a genuine case of a problem with the legislation. It is a ridiculous situation because this person is of good character—and I will give the minister a copy of this letter later—and he is a wonderful worker for the community, but he is likely to lose his livelihood. There are very few other opportunities for employment in the district where he lives. This chap is caught up in the legislation and that has created quite an unsatisfactory situation. With those few comments, along with the comments of the shadow minister, I support the legislation.

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (4.45 p.m.): I am pleased to support the bill before the House. In fact, over recent weeks there have been some very public calls for this government to take action in regard to people who have been consuming methylated spirits. For example, there was a call from Lionel Quartermaine, who is the acting chair of ATSIC as well as a commissioner for the northern zone of ATSIC, for the sale of alcohol and methylated spirits to be strictly controlled. He is quoted in the *Cairns Post* as saying—

We've got to look at management of the sales of methylated spirits—find out how we can limit the sales.

Publicans and liquor stores also have to take responsibility for the sale of alcohol.

I am pleased to inform Mr Quartermaine that his every wish is our command, so to speak—although the action that we are taking today has been in place for some time now. Only a couple of weeks ago I was saddened to read a report in the *Cairns Post*—and I am for a moment presuming that it is accurate—that there had been four-litre bottles of methylated spirits confiscated from unconscious and intoxicated drinkers in the city's parks and streets. The article stated—

Police Inspector Rolf Straatemeir said metho-drinkers generally were meaner and more violent drunks than those consuming wine, beer or spirits.

He said some drinkers were drawn to methylated spirits because they could buy the cleaning fluid early in the morning before hotels opened.

It is absolutely abhorrent to most of us to even think of drinking methylated spirits. Unfortunately, it is a practice that has been occurring over many years, although probably not as publicly, and apparently as commonly, as it has been more recently in Cairns.

The facts on methylated spirits are that it is indeed a very dangerous substance. Methylated spirits is a mixture of ethyl alcohol—95 per cent—and methyl alcohol, five per cent. Methyl alcohol is poisonous. In fact, it is added deliberately to methylated spirits to make it unpalatable and the drinking of it less likely. Methylated spirits is highly flammable and toxic. It can cause all kinds of physical side effects and permanent damage to the nervous system, to the eyesight. In fact, it can kill. Therefore, it is appropriate that we take this action to rein in the use of methylated spirits for consumption. To that extent, I strongly support the provisions of this bill.

They go back to a joint ministerial summit in Townsville that was held in May this year. At that summit, the Minister for Police and other ministers of this government were present. They met with the local people who were concerned about the drunk and disorderly persons in public areas in Townsville. At that time they discussed addressing the consumption of methylated spirits and various actions that we might take to, by redefining the existing provisions, give better control to police and others in the government.

In fact, even earlier than that meeting in May I had myself raised this issue with ministers in the government, as had Bob Norman, the president of the Cairns Chamber of Commerce. So this

problem in Cairns has been coming for some time. It does seem to those of us who become frustrated with the public drunkenness problem on the streets of Cairns as though as soon as we close one loophole then another little problem arises somewhere—that these determined alcoholics find some kind of way, even at risk of harm to their own bodies and even death, to continue drinking.

I have to say that in general the problem in Cairns has been much, much better in this last six months. Still, from time to time some groups will gather, and occasionally amongst them there are people who drink in whatever form too much alcohol and behave in ways that not only offend the public decency but also break the law. There is a swift response these days thanks to the improved powers, particularly the move-on powers, but also thanks to the increased numbers of police on the streets in the CBD of Cairns. We have additionally two police liaison officers who are tasked with the prime responsibility of tracking the people who may be intent on becoming drunk and disorderly in the streets and assisting them with whatever services they may need to avoid that situation arising in the first place.

We are, therefore, doing well with regard to this problem, though of course moving these people on, confiscating their alcohol and even pouring out unopened bottles of liquor and methylated spirits, as police will be able to do after this legislation is passed, is not sufficient action on its own. I give recognition, therefore, to the other actions taken by other ministers towards providing health services, housing, training and potential work situations for these people.

I take this opportunity to mention that there is rising concern not so much about public drunkenness in daylight hours on the streets of Cairns but rather about the drunkenness, brawling and violence that is occurring in the middle of the night when mostly males exit nightclubs. There have been some horrific episodes in which serious damage has been done to people involved in the violence, and some have even died.

There is a strong call from the broader community for us to rein in the intoxication by alcohol in nightclubs and other venues. I must say that I think in fact there is a complicating factor, that it is more than alcohol. There are early reports that these young people are using what has been termed 'party drugs' and that the combination of a relatively heavy intake of alcohol and some unspecified drugs drives strong, healthy men crazy and that they do things that they would not in their normal character do and that are well beyond even the behaviour of a man who is intoxicated with alcohol.

This problem will need, of course, more resourcing and more investigation before we are clear about what is happening. It may not be seen so often by members of the public because of the hours at which it occurs, but it is probably more serious than the public disorder that we experience from time to time with some drunken persons during daylight hours.

I would like to pay my respects to the Police Minister and to the police. The additional numbers of police as well as the excellent policing under the supervision of Superintendent Stephen Hollands, Rolf Straatemeir and Bruce Kuhn in the CBD area have made the CBD area of Cairns a much safer place. When the figures do pop up again, with an increased number of offences reported, the police crack down, and quickly so.

I take a moment to mention in this context that all venues in Cairns should be on notice as we come up to this Christmas period. Liquor Licensing is planning a further blitz on licensed premises in Cairns towards ensuring that there is responsible service of alcohol. Venues are warned that this will be happening, and it will be taken very seriously indeed if we find venues that are offering inappropriate and extended cheap drink promotions or if we find venues that are serving people who clearly are already intoxicated and should not be given more alcohol. Obviously, of course, our Liquor Licensing officers will also be looking at fire safety precautions and ensuring there is not overcrowding.

Unfortunately, I have to inform members that various infringement notices have been issued to licensed venues in the Cairns CBD recently. These have included two noise abatement orders and warnings in relation to responsible service of alcohol and breaches of the 'no pass out after 3 a.m.' requirement. At this time of the year, too, we are very mindful of underage drinkers and ensuring that licensees fulfil the letter of the law.

I really do support all of the amendments in the bill—those changes in relation to inhalant use as well as those that I have spoken of today in relation to methylated spirits.

Mr WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (4.55 p.m.): It is my pleasure to rise in support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2003. Recently we celebrated the first anniversary of the Beattie government's antihooning legislation, brought in to address

illegal and dangerous driving behaviour across the state. I know that this legislation deals with a whole range of policing matters, but I wish to focus on the antihooning legislation. I think it is one of the key initiatives of this portfolio in this term that is having an incredibly warmly received impact in every local community throughout the state.

The laws have been highly successful and, as I said, warmly welcomed by the community. Since 4 November 2002, 876 cars have been confiscated across the state for 48-hour periods. Only six cars have been confiscated for three months as a result of a second offence. I think these figures speak for themselves in highlighting the effectiveness of these laws in deterring hoon behaviour. The changes in this bill will further tighten these laws. There are a number of detailed changes which have a significant impact upon the effectiveness of this legislation.

In the past, people charged a second or multiple times with road hoon offences could escape having their car impounded for three months or forfeited by pleading not guilty and committing further offences while awaiting trial. As the legislation now stands, a person must first be found guilty of a prescribed offence and then commit another offence before an application for a three-month impoundment can be made. It was never the intention of the legislation to allow repetitive offenders to escape justice through a loophole of this nature.

A new section 59AA of the police powers act determines when a person is taken to have been charged for the purpose of the division in terms of the impoundment of or application for impoundment of vehicles. Additionally, the replacement of section 59H corrects an unintended limitation in the act that allows a person to continue to commit prescribed offences without the risk of a three-month impoundment or forfeiture of a vehicle when previous prescribed offences have not yet been heard and determined by a court. The amendment allows for an application for a three-month impoundment or forfeiture of a vehicle to be made to a court where a person either has been previously found guilty of a prescribed offence or offences or has been previously charged with a prescribed offence or offences which have not yet been heard and determined. The section also allows for a combination of prescribed offences for which a person has been found guilty or has been charged but which have not yet been heard and determined.

A new section 59I complements the amendments by requiring a court to adjourn the hearing of an application where a charge has not yet been heard and determined until the driver has been found guilty of the relevant number of offences. The court is also required to order the return of the vehicle to its owner unless a person has previously been found guilty of a prescribed offence, in which case a discretion rests with the court. The section also requires that a person not sell or dispose of a vehicle subject to an impoundment order which has not been heard or determined.

A new section 59LA provides a court with a determined method for calculation of the order of offences so that a person may not escape the intent of the legislation as they have in the past. It does not matter in which order offences are heard and determined by a court. As I say, there is no escape from the act.

These changes will allow our antihooning legislation to work to full effectiveness. Amendments will also be made to section 7 of the Bail Act to allow police officers other than an officer in charge of a police station or police establishment or a watch-house manager to grant bail to a person in custody. The amendment is necessary so that an officer in charge does not have to be recalled to duty to grant bail. Clearly, an officer in charge cannot be expected to be available 24 hours a day to grant bail. There is no reason why the senior police officer on duty at a station should not grant bail to the relevant person. Bail can currently be granted from a police station. A person does not have to be taken to a watch-house in order to obtain bail.

Additionally, a watch-house manager in a major watch-house such as Brisbane cannot be expected to attend to every consideration of bail. A watch-house manager, understandably, has managerial functions to perform associated with operating the watch-house without the need to personally grant bail on every occasion. Additionally, a new section 40 declares that any bail granted by a police officer other than an officer in charge of a police station or a police establishment or a watch-house manager in the period since the commencement of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 is not invalid. In other words, the section is necessary to ensure that bail granted remains valid and that any offence committed which may relate to a bail offence or a bail hearing can be heard and determined by a court.

In conclusion, can I say a word of congratulations to the Minister for Police in relation to the Neighbourhood Watch Program operating in the Ferny Grove police division. The minister may recall—I am sure he does—that in late March of this year he, along with the Police Commissioner,

were kind enough to attend and be guest speakers at a large public meeting that I convened in Arana Hills, the objective being to reinvigorate Neighbourhood Watch in that area and associated suburbs, and to encourage new people to attend and get involved in existing committees and to establish committees where committees are not presently operating.

I am pleased to be able to report to the minister through the House today that on Saturday the new superintendent for Brisbane west, Superintendent Carew, was able to officially launch a new Neighbourhood Watch for a section of Arana Hills. Also in attendance was Inspector Tony Brame, who has had a big role in Brisbane west in helping me and local residents—

Mr McGrady: He used to be in Mount Isa.

Mr WILSON: Yes. He carries an excellent reputation not only from Mount Isa but also, I am told, from the Petrie division. Some of my colleagues were regretfully telling me this morning they did not know why they had lost him. That is how valued he is as an active community worker in the Queensland Police Service. There is a lot of interest in the Neighbourhood Watch Program in that area, and we hope to be able to set up a new Neighbourhood Watch in Samford Valley shortly. Hopefully, that will spread to other areas as well. With those few words, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (5.03 p.m.): The Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill carries on from a number of police powers and responsibilities bills that we have seen over a period of time since the coalition government was in power and commenced a major review and reorganisation of police powers. That process commenced under then Police Minister Russell Cooper after there had been an intense period of research. Police powers were brought in to provide police with effective tools and guidelines so they could operate properly.

At the same time a lot of thought was given to ensuring that those police powers were used responsibly. That was why the bill, from the outset, was called the Police Powers and Responsibilities Bill because with powers came certain responsibilities. In return for certain powers there were certain responsibilities. Some of these early bills were about move-on powers and suchlike, particularly to make the streets safe and to provide practical ways of policing.

At the same time Russell Cooper and the coalition government put in place the new police academy in Townsville—a major improvement in policing, even though the Labor opposition of the day opposed the academy. It has been outstanding in the way it has provided training for recruits in north Queensland. It was part of the planning by the coalition government to introduce a system of boosting police numbers which were dramatically in need of boosting when we came into government. We put in place a system that saw in the order of 340 extra police per year. I know that has slipped back to about 300 per year at the moment because the target that the coalition government set was nearly achieved at that particular time.

Russell Cooper set the level to which to raise police numbers, and that required a number of years at around 320 to 340 extra police per year. At the same time it utilised the retread scheme, which the previous Police Minister, Paul Braddy, introduced just before we attained government. It was a combination of the retread scheme, a reorganisation of the training systems at Oxley and the new police academy at Townsville that brought about the increase in numbers by about 340 per year. Prior to that we had a number of years where police numbers stayed static. We needed an increase in police numbers so that we retained the existing police and provided satisfaction, career opportunities and training for police.

As I said, the original Police Powers and Responsibilities Bill has been added to and amended over a number of years. The one power which is still needed by the police, and one which I think is a serious discrepancy in their not having, is telephone tapping. We are dealing with criminals who in many cases are using information technology and who are modern in the way that they work. Whilst other states have phone tapping powers, in Queensland criminals are able to use mobile phones and telephones with gay abandon in going about criminal acts.

We have seen over the past few years with the responsibilities part of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Bill that there are ways to ensure telephone tapping is properly supervised and is used correctly and for the right purpose in catching criminals. To some extent, criminals have been given a 10-metre start on police because they are able to use their phones to carry out drug deals knowing that their phones will not be tapped. Only in special circumstances and after going through a lot of processes are police able to invoke the special powers of the CMC to bring about police tapping. Police do have covert powers—powers of surveillance. They are able to put particular instruments into places and so forth, but they are not able to tap phones. I think that is

something that is missing. We owe it to our police to provide them with all the modern aids of modern detection to be able to compete with the communication systems that criminals are able to use.

The new police station in Toowoomba is a great addition to the city, particularly for police officers themselves. I fought for that station and the funding of it for a number of years. As I have said before in this parliament, we virtually had that funding when there was a major proposal for a big inner city development in Toowoomba that would have involved the old courthouse, the old post office and the police station being all together in the CBD. It was a most exciting development that was proposed for inner city accommodation. It would have given us inner city living similar perhaps to that which big cities like London or Paris have. It also would have provided a tourist attraction for people and a place for people to live in the CBD to make use of the historical aspects of the old post office, the old courthouse and the old police station.

At the time Minister Schwarten was very helpful in working with us. Unfortunately, the major Malaysian developer at the time pulled out of the project. I think it was a wonderful opportunity. The then editor of the *Toowoomba Chronicle* was well behind it at the time. It was a major opportunity for an inland Australian city to have this style of development which would have provided so many opportunities for our young people. People on day trips could have stayed right in the CBD and gone to the Empire Theatre and the various eateries in Margaret Street, Queen's Park and so forth.

Anyway, it was not to be and that held things up for a couple of years. Substantial funds came forward in the budget of 1999-2000 and 2000-01 and then finally the larger amounts came through from 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 and so on. Ultimately, almost \$20 million will be spent when all stages are completed of the police station, the watch-house, the connections to the courthouse and the district and regional offices. The regional offices are currently on the western side of the city in Margaret Street. It will all be located in the one campus, as will the district traffic office. It will also mean that the police will have access to two major road frontages in Hume Street and Neil Street and is therefore centrally located. We are pleased with that and the fact that the staff of the Toowoomba Police Station are able to enjoy those facilities.

It was interesting to note that at the opening of the police station Cutting Edge Post was there taking all the vision and using it in Labor Party ads that have been going to air. Cutting Edge Post of course is the company that got some six or seven grants through the Department of State Development and followed the minister around—

Mr McGrady interjected.

Mr HORAN:—in getting all the cuttings—

Mr McGrady: Won some awards, too.

Mr HORAN:—in trying to build that into an ad. This is the same thing with regard to the fraudulent health ads we are now seeing based on the health report done by the Premier's own staff. People in Toowoomba are saying to me that they are not falling for this trick about the health report. They see that as fraudulent and take no notice of it whatsoever. In fact, it only reinforces to them the millions of dollars that the Labor Party has to throw into publicity.

I want to say something about the proactive work that is being done by the police in Toowoomba, particularly with regard to the many events around the town that they help out with and the courtesy that they always extend. The police in Toowoomba are held in high regard and respect, particularly for the courteous way they operate during the Carnival of Flowers, the Toowoomba show and Weetwood, and a number of country police come in for those particular events. The police in the area are being proactive in trying to prevent car thefts. They are working with the local media to give people hints and to make people aware all the time that Toowoomba is no longer a country town and people can no longer leave their car with the keys in it or with a wallet visible on the seat of the car and all the things that people should be aware of to make their car as safe as possible and prevent easy theft.

The police beats in Toowoomba which were used as pilots for the earlier police beats are very good, and I am a great believer in neighbourhood policing. As our towns and cities have changed in that many husbands and wives go to work all day or elderly people are at home on their own, the suburbs can be empty and lonely during the working hours. Corner stores have also disappeared; there are now big shopping centres. Previously the elderly used to be able to go down to see the butcher or someone and report a problem and they had that network of people around, but that is no longer there in some of the suburbs. That is where the reintroduction of neighbourhood policing is so important.

The neighbourhood police in Toowoomba are well known, well liked and well respected. People know how to contact them. They poke around, whether they are on their motorbike or on foot. They get to know people, the shops, the schools and so on. They do a great job. They get to know if there are a few young fellows up to a bit of mischief and can warn them. The young fellows also know that the police are around and can help set them on the right track.

The Adopt-a-Cop program at our schools is excellent. I know that in many cases young people are looking for someone who can provide them with that security and stability. It also helps develop good relationships for the future between young people and the police. I also commend Neighbourhood Watch. I commend not only the police officers who give their time to attend Neighbourhood Watch meetings and be a part of it for those who are seconded to a particular Neighbourhood Watch but also the people who run Neighbourhood Watch, because it does give a sense of community and a sense of safety. The various systems they put in place of watching out, of engraving and of signs around the place and so on all provides help to the police. They are the eyes and ears of police in the suburbs, and that is very good.

I want to compliment Geoff Holmes, the chairman of our crime prevention committee, and the work that the crime prevention committee does in working closely with the police in doing everything that we can as citizens to prevent crime and to provide support for the police. Ultimately, of course, it is the police on the ground, the general police, the CIB, the JAB and the district traffic police who are doing all the work. The other section of the police that has done an excellent job has been the PLOs. Since we have had PLOs in Toowoomba, there has been a significant improvement in the behaviour within the CBD of indigenous youth. The police have worked closely with them, their families and the elders and have developed different systems so that we have been able to provide a place where young people can go in the city where they behave and they know that they are under the watchful eye of the PLOs. They have worked in a diplomatic, careful and understanding way, and they have done a great job.

Earlier I mentioned the work on the ground for the CIB and the general duties police. Despite the numbers of police that we supposedly have, when that is split up into seven days and three shifts a day and take out six weeks leave and sick leave and leave to go away on training and so forth, it still leaves us with a city of 100,000 people with only one or two cars on duty at times. One of the big workloads for Toowoomba is that a number of trainees go to the city every year, and I am grateful and thankful for that, and so are the police. But it has to be recognised that there is a workload with trainees. They are not able to work on their own or in pairs. They have to be with an experienced police officer. There are periods of the week when they have to do training in the station. There have to be training officers to provide that training for the trainees. It does provide an extra workload in that the station itself is not just out there investigating and doing general police duties but has a fairly large responsibility for the 12-month period for the trainees to be trained, looked after, cared for and so forth. That is something that always has to be taken into account with a station which has responsibilities like Toowoomba has.

At times in the past few years I have felt quite sorry for the police. I know from speaking to them—and I have known many of them for many years—the frustration that they feel at times with the sentencing arrangements. Today an enormous amount of work goes into investigation. The days of sitting someone down and questioning them in a room until they admit it because the police officer knew that they had done a crime are gone. As it should be, everything is tape recorded, video recorded and so forth. It is a very skilful process of investigating and getting the evidence together to be able to make an arrest.

When police go through all this work and at times see some of the sentences that they and the community believe does not impose a stiff enough deterrent is very frustrating to them and at times must break their hearts. I have spoken before in the parliament—and I note that the Attorney is in the chamber—about the case of the armed robbery at a take-away shop in the suburb of Harristown recently. The woman shopkeeper had a knife held at her belly. She was robbed of all her takings. Those two fellows are now out doing community corrections—mowing lawns or picking up papers and whatever else they do. The whole community is outraged and the police are totally frustrated. During the last session of parliament the Attorney-General said that he would review that matter and look into it.

What we need is the sort of sentencing arrangements that the coalition will put in place when we win the next election, and that will mean that if a person commits an armed hold-up they will do time in jail. The idea of a sentence is not only rehabilitation but also a deterrent. It is also about helping those people who have been the victims of crime through the terrible trauma that they go through. Unless this has happened to a person, no-one would know what it is like. When

one talks to the people they get some idea, but it must be a dreadful thing. Women in particular who have been held up are sometimes fearful of every second person who walks in the door of the shop. It has destroyed the enjoyment that they once had in their facility. I hope that the Attorney-General is able to come back to me at some stage and advise me that he has in fact looked into whether a review of this sentence can be undertaken. If it can, then it should be done, because it is about time that we backed up the police, we supported the community and provided a proper deterrent as well as rehabilitation.

I wish to thank in particular Assistant Commissioner Col McCallum for his leadership, Superintendent Wayne Browning and all of the staff at the Toowoomba Police Station. A lot of work falls on the electorate secretaries of shadow ministers, and mine are no exception. The support and assistance that we get from the police is fantastic. We are experienced and we know there are always two sides to a story. If someone comes to us with a complaint about the police, we forward that on and tell people about the proper processes. There has always been an immediate and balanced response. Particularly in cases where people have had problems—it might be with hoons on the streets, problems in the neighbourhood or break and enters and so on—when we have contacted the Toowoomba police the response has been immediate, courteous and very professional. We are very fortunate to have that leadership in our city and that the young and middle-ranking police can learn from those experienced senior police officers.

As I said, this bill is another in a whole string of powers and responsibilities bills, starting from when the coalition introduced them back in 1997 or 1998. The amendments all make sense, particularly the provisions for the impoundment of vehicles following hooning related offences. I think word gets out amongst young people that if they do those sorts of things they will lose their prized possession for three months. This also fixes up some of the things that were wrong regarding second offences and so on.

The Bail Act amendments make a lot of sense. They enable a more practical and sensible system in the watch-house in respect of the granting of bail and other systems for managing the watch-house. Likewise, the changes to the Corrective Services Act provide a more efficient process for the arraignment of prisoners in court.

The changes to the Prostitution Act will abolish the advisory council and increase the membership of the Prostitution Licensing Authority. We opposed the introduction of licensed brothels. I do not know whether it has made any difference whatsoever to the amount of illegal prostitution occurring in parts of the state. We always said—and I always said in particular—that the addition of licensed brothels added a new and further level of prostitution in Queensland. Single-operator prostitution was legalised by the Goss government. This gave a new and additional level of prostitution to the state.

The Prostitution Act also allowed people in towns or cities of 25,000 or fewer to be able to veto through their local government an application for a brothel in their town. However, for those unfortunate enough to be in a city of 25,000 or more, the local government did not have a power of veto. If it is good enough for a city of 25,000 or less, it should be good enough for a city of 25,000 or more, if the governing local authority and the citizens of that city did not want to have that additional new level of prostitution in their city.

Along with the opposition, I support the other amendments and I hope this bill assists the police in doing their duty.

Time expired.

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (5.23 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2003. The bill reflects a number of major reforms to law and order in the state, making amendments to some 11 acts. I take the opportunity to congratulate the minister and his department on bringing this bill into the House and ensuring that Queensland, the Smart State, stays at the forefront of policing.

I would like to spend a moment talking about the changes to the act relating to when a vehicle may be impounded or forfeited for a hooning related offence. In my electorate of Cleveland we have experienced problems with hooning, particularly around the Wellington Point Reserve and in other areas, for instance, in Cleveland. Many constituents have raised with me concerns about the noise and stress caused by drivers hooning around streets in their cars. Many members would have received similar complaints from constituents concerned about hooning. I must note that hooning is not just the domain of adrenaline junkies or boys in their late teens. It is a serious and real issue.

I am pleased that this government has taken a stand to outlaw this activity for those few people who choose to risk the lives of many and upset people who wish to enjoy a quiet night in their homes. Although it is the legitimate right of car enthusiasts to drive their vehicles around the streets—and we have many in the Redlands who do this and do so without upsetting anyone—there are some, unfortunately, who must know that when they step outside the boundaries of the law they will be dealt with by the police and punished. Changes to the law whereby offenders will forfeit their vehicles to the state once their vehicle has been impounded for the initial 48-hour period should be warning enough that hooning will not be tolerated. These reckless hoons will be the subject of tough mechanisms designed to punish those who endanger the lives of themselves and other innocent people. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (5.25 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and join the chorus of members congratulating the minister on his initiative in introducing this bill into the parliament. I can vividly recall a number of years ago some people on the Sunshine Coast coming to meet with me. They were angry, frustrated and wanted to sell up and move on, simply because of their frustration with hoons. We spoke about the police, the council and about a whole range of issues. But the minister's antihooning legislation did the trick. I congratulate the minister on responding in a firm but sensible way to an issue that was getting out of control.

Since that meeting I have not needed to have further meetings with constituents on the Sunshine Coast to hear complaints about hoons. The minister has a lot of supporters in our community and on the Sunshine Coast for his antihooning legislation. I also support 120 per cent his initiative to have police checks on people who want to apply to undertake employment with the Queensland Police Service and also his proposal that there be further police checks on current employees in the service and, more importantly, that the police checks extend to service providers to the Queensland Police Service. What I say to people is, 'If you have nothing to fear, if you have nothing that you are concerned about in your background, you should not be worried about a police check.' It is only the guilty, only the people who have something to hide, who are afraid of a police check. I certainly do not have a problem. I again congratulate the minister on that initiative.

I will take a few moments of members' and the minister's time to digress and speak about some issues in the electorate of Nicklin. I remind the minister of the great Police Service that we have. Some time ago, the minister joined me in an inspection of the Nambour Police Station. The police station is still there. Many of the old vehicles from the police holding yard have been removed and we now have wonderful open space in the heart of the Nambour central business district that we could use to expand the police station. Our officers work in cramped conditions. I know other police stations in the state might have more cramped conditions but, be that as it may, we would love the minister to come back and visit the Nambour Police Station and talk to us about a plan to expand it or even to obtain some relocatable buildings. We have plenty of space. The courthouse is even built on police department land.

The police beat through the central business district of Nambour has continued to be the success that it was when it was first introduced. There is great support from the community and businesspeople when they see the police officers walking around. A couple of months ago, when I was driving down Anne Street, one of the streets in downtown Nambour, a policeman and policewoman were on both sides of the street and I was wondering what was happening. They were counselling people about jaywalking. The minister may not be aware of this, but there is major redevelopment occurring in Howard Street, Nambour. We expect that within 12 months Nambour will have a whole new face.

As the Premier mentioned in his ministerial statement to parliament this morning, the sugar mill is planning to close by the end of next month. When the mill closes, it will be demolished and eventually there will be new owners of that land. Who knows what the future will hold for that part of Nambour?

Our policemen on the Sunshine Coast recently got behind a charity calendar. They were going to have the minister as Mr December, but unfortunately the organisers were not able to fit in with his diary and their time constraints. So, unfortunately, we were not able to have him as Mr December. The calendar has been launched. The calendars are being sold for \$15. All the proceeds will go to the Women Helping Women organisation, which is a community service group on the Sunshine Coast helping women in crisis.

Mr McGrady: I'll buy one tomorrow.

Mr WELLINGTON: Actually, I am Mr August.

Mr McGrady interjected.

Mr WELLINGTON: I was fully clothed. I was nursing a python. The python was in the care of our Australia Zoo. The young women from Australia Zoo certainly looked after me and they reassured me that their python was their pet and nothing would happen.

I return to the bill and the matters before the House. Our Neighbourhood Watch meetings on the Sunshine Coast and in my electorate are a great success. Our police youth club is also battling on. We are certainly looking forward to trying to form a new partnership with another state government agency or another party who would be interested in assisting us in meeting the horrendous insurance costs which we have to meet at the moment.

While I am talking about police matters, I also put on the record that many of the residents of the Blackall Range—that is the Mapleton/Montville area—would one day like to have a police station up there. I use this chance to put that on the record. It is great to see that our police are spending time at Bli Bli. A few years ago there was a real concern amongst that community, but that seems to be under control. I will take no more of other members' time. I congratulate the minister on the bill. I say well done. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (5.32 p.m.): This bill addresses quite a number of significant legislative amendments. I would like to concentrate on three of the changes, firstly, the changes to the Weapons Act. The amendment will require the licensing of crossbows, shanghais and swords and will clarify licensing conditions on weapons. This one particularly affects some local issues. I was actually surprised by the number of phone calls and letters I received on just how many people the changes to the Weapons Act would actually affect.

In my electorate of Pumicestone each year there is a world-class and very famous Abbey Medieval Tournament. It is the single largest medieval festival in Australia covering 1,000 years of English European history from 600 AD to 1600 AD and attracts over 12,000 visitors from interstate and overseas. I was contacted by the director of the Abbey Museum, Mr Michael Strong. Both the staff and a team of dedicated volunteers run this highly successful and well-respected medieval tournament in the grounds of St Michael's College. He was deeply concerned that the changes to the Weapons Act would affect the tournament.

I immediately wrote to the minister, the Hon. Tony McGrady, who quickly confirmed that the Abbey Medieval Tournament festival would not be affected. The minister is very aware that there are a number of community organisations and people who display swords or use swords for ceremonial and historical re-enactments. The proposed amendments will in no way disrupt those legitimate activities involving swords such as marshal arts events and training, ceremonies, military re-enactments and theatre productions.

With regard to crossbows, in common with any other weapon, they will now have to be registered to an appropriate person. This will allow the use of crossbows in public by those groups who compete in a sporting event involving the use of crossbows. These weapons are lethal, as has been shown by a number of serious incidents from 1997 to as recently as April 2003. Hopefully, these changes to the Weapons Act will go a long way towards further protecting the community that we live in.

Secondly, I would like to make a brief reference to road hooning. We are all aware that it still exists and it is a difficult activity to stamp out. It has been confirmed on a number of occasions that hoons now work together and have spotters who place themselves in a position to be able to see police cars approaching and alert their hooning mates so they can disappear before the police arrive. This makes an apprehension difficult. However, the Beattie government has put in place a number of changes to the act that has toughened the laws and made a very unpleasant outcome for those hoons who reoffend. Eight hundred cars have been confiscated and only a few drivers have been recidivist offenders. This is the good news. Hopefully, the message is getting out that this government will not tolerate hoon offences.

There is a small minority who are flouting the law and these new changes will close an unintentional loophole. As the law stands now, a person who commits a string of hooning offences can have the hearing and determination of that offence adjourned by a court for a certain time. This is normal practice to permit for legal advice to be sought and a defence prepared. While a finding of guilty is made on a prior offence, every subsequent offence has to be dealt with as a first offence in terms of vehicle impoundment. So the risk of a three-month impoundment or forfeiture of vehicle can be avoided. However, in future an application for a three-month impoundment or vehicle forfeiture may be made to a court irrespective of relevant

previous offences not being heard and determined by that court. Therefore, under the new legislation, pleading guilty to a second offence before pleading guilty to the first offence will make no difference whatsoever to an application for a three-month impoundment.

I would like to concentrate my final remarks on the growing concern in the community about chroming, particularly since it has been brought to my attention not only as the local state member but also as the honorary president of a local drug awareness team. The Drug Caboolture Drug Awareness Team Incorporated is a drug awareness and prevention program servicing mainly the primary schools in the electorate of Pumicestone and Glass House.

Ms Nelson-Carr: You're a very hardworking member.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN: I take all of those interjections. I thank members very much. I class myself as being very fortunate to be able to be the honorary president and for some 13-odd years now.

I also take this opportunity to thank the member for Glass House, Carolyn Male, who has been very instrumental in helping us run the program through the local schools. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those schools and the local service clubs, including Lions, Rotary, Crest, Apex and Lioness clubs and also the Neighbourhood Watches for their continued support of the program.

I have been approached by a number of schools to discuss the issue of children misusing volatile substances. It is well known that it is possible to get high on sniffing material such as glue, paint or petrol. Unfortunately, these substances are very easily accessible and also are very cheap. The medical consequences, as we have already heard from other speakers, are very disturbing. We are trying at least to address the issue head-on. It is impossible to legislate to ban the products that are used for sniffing, particularly the ones that I have already mentioned. As honourable members would know, when we ban one substance there is always a substitute. I have heard of a number of other substances that have been used for sniffing. I imagine that, people being people, they will often experiment with other substances to try to get that cheap high.

The changes that form part of this bill do not create a criminal offence for misusing a volatile substance; rather, they allow police to take quick and decisive action in the interests of the person affected by that volatile substance. As the act stands now, police officers can seize only inhalants which are visible to them and which they reasonably suspect the person is inhaling or about to inhale. They currently do not have the power to take anyone who is intoxicated by inhalants to a safe place like a hospital for treatment or care. There are also no restrictions on the sale of inhalants in this state.

Amendments will provide police officers with new research, seizure and detention powers in relation to people who misuse volatile substances. Also, the government is committed to working with retailers to support the responsible sale and supply of these volatile substances that can be inhaled, for example, paint, or ingested, for example, methylated spirits. New legislation will help to limit inappropriate access to these volatile substances.

When the proposed changes take effect in the new year, retailers in certain circumstances will be able to refuse to sell volatile substances without fear of being found guilty of unlawful discrimination. But it will be their responsibility to inform and train staff of the new changes. I want to place on record my thanks to the Minister for Police, the Hon. Tony McGrady, for highlighting the problem of chroming and attempting to do something about curbing the misuse of volatile substances in the community. My thanks also go to those people who were involved in the Queensland government's *Let's can chroming*, which is working with retailers to prevent volatile substance abuse. It is a very informative document and I have already received some good comments from the neighbourhood watches that I sent copies out to. I plan to send out some more copies to those businesses that may be interested. We all must continue the fight to overcome this damning and very damaging problem and make sure that our children have the very best possible chance to become adults and lead a productive life.

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to the police officers in my electorate who have helped to produce significant drops in percentages of certain crimes in the electorate of Pumicestone. I take this opportunity to welcome Sergeant Darren Tucker, who is the newly appointed officer in charge of the Bribie Island Police Station, and plain clothes detectives Tony Green and Mark Corry, who will be welcome assets to the existing police staff, particularly Shane Rockley, who has been done an admirable job role in his job as acting officer in charge. Also, I give a special thanks

to Constable Paul Graymore, who is relieving at the Beachmere police beat. I congratulate him on his efforts and thank the Beattie government once again for placing a permanent police presence at Beachmere for the very first time.

The 2002-03 state Police Service annual statistical review shows that the Beattie government's investment in record police numbers and other law and order initiatives is paying off. The results in my area show a decrease in break and enters, motor vehicle theft, fraud, arson and liquor offences. Drug offences remain a problem—up by six per cent—but that may be attributed to a more concerted effort in targeting by police leading to improved detection rates. I look forward to working with the police and the community to continue to see those figures drop for the benefit of the everyone. I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel—NPA) (5.42 p.m.): Firstly, I would like to support the bill. Having said that, as this could be—and we do not know when that big occasion will be—one of the last speeches that I make in this House, I would like to take this opportunity to commend our police for the wonderful work that they do in helping to keep us all safe, in helping to make our state run, and in helping people generally. The life of a police officer is never a simple one. They have to be at the scene of an accident, they have that dreadful task of reporting to parents that their young child has been killed or injured, sometimes they get hurt and, unfortunately, sometimes they get murdered. Among the many other duties that they have to perform, they have to counsel people, they have to show good manners and they have to keep us safe. I believe that they do those things very, very well.

I would like to apply those comments in particular to the police whom I dealt with in my early days as the member for Belyando—around Clermont, Alpha, Jericho, Emerald, Collinsville, Moranbah, Blackwater, Comet—and then at a later stage as the member for Peak Downs and then at a later stage again as the member for Keppel. In various situations—whether that be a one-person police station or a large police station—those police all had the interests of the public at heart. Sometimes they would not be happy with whatever various governments had done to assist, that it was perhaps not enough, but they did not let that frustrate their work.

I would like to also suggest, as I have done on many occasions, that Yeppoon is at the point of needing a 24-hour police station. We have it, but we have it with the minimum of numbers. I appreciate the efforts of the minister and others in bringing about this police station. It is working as best it can. However, I think we appreciate that when one officer gets sick, goes on holidays, or whatever, the police at that station are down to the bare bones. I am aware that we have trainee officers there and they are assisting. At the moment, there are 16 plain clothes officers, three water police officers, three detectives and two administration officers. They operate in pretty crowded conditions—or should I say very crowded conditions. I think that the minister wrote to me telling me that the station was on a 10-year plan. One of these days when there is a little bit more money the minister might see if he could put it on another plan. I will not nominate the time. Tomorrow would be good. An upgrade of this station is needed and I am not making those comments lightly.

I would like to commend the officers at Emu Park. We have a new portable type station there that is working very, very well. The police station at Lakes Creek has always been a bone of contention. This is a beautiful little police station—fair bang in suburbia in Lakes Creek. I believe that it does the job, with one police officer there, of community policing, which was a recommendation of a former Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee report. In fact, that recommendation had the support of the then Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. When I was chairman of that committee we went to north Toowoomba and looked at the very effective efforts in north Toowoomba.

Mr Shine: An excellent result.

Mr LESTER: Yes, it was, because the police officer could anticipate what was happening and get to know people. I thought that it worked well.

The police station at Lakes Creek is no different. We have had some wonderful officers at that station. Unfortunately, the current officer has had a very serious family bereavement. They have lost their little child and I offer condolences here in the parliament. However, we have had that station closed for a little while—and I am not going to knock what has been done—with the support of officers coming out part-time to the station from the North Rockhampton branch. It has been a bit of a problem, through the terms of all forms of government, that when an officer leaves Lakes Creek, it takes a devil of a while to fill the vacancy. Sometimes there is an appeal and that takes time to resolve. Sometimes we have had to wait up to six months for that position to be

filled because of the normal process. I would like to see a relieving officer there in between the times officers are relocating. That station does an excellent job. Certainly that police officer—and we have had a number of them and they have all been very good—has kept this close liaison with the community and I am sure that has made the community feel safer. Indeed, on some occasions that close liaison has pre-empted what could be nasty instances.

So all in all, this could be one of my last speeches. We do not know when we are coming back next year—probably the Premier himself does not know at this point and I will not speculate on that. But as the time gets nearer, my speeches will be fewer and fewer. So I take this opportunity to commend our wonderful police. If I can digress for one second only, I add to that the people who work with them: the ambulance officers, the firies and, of course, the SES people. They all work as a unit. Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your tolerance in allowing me to say these important words from the floor of the parliament to our police and our state emergency people in general. We are better off for their great efforts.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (5.49 p.m.): I am pleased to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I welcome the trend in the honourable member for Keppel's speeches and I will leave it at that.

I would like to make some comments in relation to the speech made by my colleague the honourable member for Toowoomba South. He made certain comments with respect to the police station at Toowoomba and the presence of the television firm Cutting Edge at the opening of the police station. Honourable members will recall that one of my first speeches in this House called for that police station to be built. I am very pleased that the minister and the government responded to that call.

This seems to have miffed my colleague somewhat in terms of his having called for a police station some years before. But he will recall that, for example, with the Toowoomba Hospital—this was part of the redevelopment by the Goss government with respect to all public hospitals throughout Queensland—when he was Minister for Health he ensured that that building came to be constructed. It was already due to be constructed at that time, but he claimed the credit for it. Likewise, I have no hesitation in reminding the House of the events as they did occur. That was acknowledged on the opening day by the minister and by the Premier, who was present.

I would, however, like to endorse the remarks of the member for Toowoomba South concerning the assistance given by the police to his electorate office. That equally applies to my office. I particularly acknowledge the outstanding assistance given to my office and to me in terms of constituent matters by Inspector Gary Wells of the Toowoomba police.

I also acknowledge the Police Minister's openness in listening to my representations on behalf of Toowoomba police when I went in to bat for them with respect to the question of some of the trainees remaining in Toowoomba. That is now the case. I am very pleased that that is so. It is important for the Toowoomba police that that happy situation exists.

Provisions in the legislation relating to volatile substances are of great importance. Chroming is one of those tragedies in our society that every member in this House deplores and regrets to see exist. One of the aspects of the legislation is that people engaged in that activity can be taken to a place of safety. That leads to the general problem of drug dependence, be it of this sort of substance, alcohol or typical drugs that are in our society today, and where people should be taken. I am happy to say that last week the Minister for Health, Wendy Edmond, at the invitation of the Toowoomba mayor, came to Toowoomba to officially launch the Sunrise Way drug rehabilitation centre at Unara in Toowoomba.

Drug and alcohol abuse has many social, health and economic costs both for the individual concerned and for the wider community. The impacts on the individual, their family and friends can be devastating. Two youth suicides each week on average are occurring in the greater Toowoomba region. Most are drug related. In addition, drug related youth amputations and schizophrenia are all too common. The Sunrise Way concept was formed to do something positive about this serious social issue.

The volunteer board of management is committed to having the local community contribute to the provision of this treatment facility and not just rely on government money. As I said, the Sunrise Way model was launched last week in Toowoomba by the honourable Minister for Health. She is keen to see the model work so that it may well be able to be used as an example for other regions of the state.

This board of Sunrise Way Therapeutic Community was an initiative of the Toowoomba mayor, Di Thorley. She approached the Minister for Health and her department with her concerns

that Toowoomba had a problem with drug abuse. In November 2002 a seven-year renewable lease was signed for the Unara building—an old, run-down Queensland Health facility at 9 Tourist Road, Toowoomba, where I happen to have been born. The Health Minister, Wendy Edmond, made the site available to Sunrise Way under a peppercorn rent arrangement.

The board aims to provide a 26-person, very high-quality atmosphere and a stately, warm home rather than an institution. All works are planned around that objective. It is intended that residents feel safe in the house and have a desire to stay until recovered. Activities are planned to provide life skills to residents in a non-punitive environment, and external professional support is also available.

At the heart of this project is the intention for the community to be responsible for providing quality resources to assist people with drug and alcohol addiction to re-enter the community. Each client will be assessed and an individualised treatment plan developed in mutual collaboration with the client. This plan identifies the client's needs and goals and endeavours to work with family members and partners or friends through the recovery process if appropriate. The rehabilitation service provided by Sunrise Way will work closely with established services within the local community such as local general practitioners, alcohol and drug services of Queensland Health and local support groups.

There are a number of people in the local community who have worked hard to make the Sunrise Way drug and alcohol treatment service a reality. As I have already mentioned, our mayor, Di Thorley, worked tirelessly to secure support from the government and the community to ensure that the facility went ahead. Chairman Doug Harland, who is also CEO of Toowoomba Metal Technologies, has also worked tirelessly for Sunrise Way. He has encouraged the community to get involved in the project and has secured many donations of cash, in-kind and labour. Many tradesmen generously donated their time and have worked at discounted rates.

The event last week was organised very well by the function organiser, Vanessa van den Broek. Michael Stewart was master of ceremonies. Karen Roach, the southern zonal manager of Queensland Health, intimately involved in the project, spoke. The crowd was entertained by the great contribution of year 4B students of Toowoomba East State School, performing two musical items under the leadership of Mr Jack Bade.

At the launch a cheque for \$5,000 towards the centre was presented on behalf of Namoi Cotton by Mr Peter McCleary. As well as that donation, one major donation has been made by the Pure Land Learning College under the auspices of Master Ching Kung in the sum of \$200,000. This is a Buddhist Pure Land Learning College recently established in Toowoomba. It has been exceedingly generous to a wide range of charitable and educational organisations in Toowoomba.

The Sunrise Way Therapeutic Community board includes Mr Harland, Councillor Thorley, Mr Gordon Piets, Ms Emma Worland and committee members David Gifford, Michael Stewart, Sandra Thomson, Lee Smith, Linda Davies and Dan Toombs. They are set to do marvellous work. Mr Harland in a letter recently said—

Professional estimates place the refurbishment and set-up costs at \$1.0M. Through the Building and Infrastructure Committee ... we aim to complete this capital works programme for \$400k—\$500k approx., Based on community generosity, volunteers and work in kind.

The aspect about this project is that to a large extent it is the community getting behind the project and being a part of it, not leaving the problem to one level of government or otherwise.

Having mentioned that, however, and the support given by the state government in terms of making the premises available, I would call upon the federal government to seriously get behind this project, particularly as it relates to ongoing recurrent funding. I ask my colleague from Toowoomba, the federal member for Groom, Mr Ian Macfarlane, to see what he can do to press for acceptance of this scheme by the federal government, particularly from funds which have been set aside, as I understand it, with respect to drug problems in Australia. It is a most worthwhile endeavour, and it may well turn out to be one of the most significant things done in Toowoomba for many decades if it is successful. I commend those who have been a part of it as well as the minister and his officers with respect to the amendments contained in this bill.

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (6.00 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2003, I wish to make a few comments about chroming. The misuse or chroming of volatile substances such as glue, paint solvents, petrol and methylated spirits by children and teenagers is a significant issue that deserves the attention of the government. The Commission for Children and Young People hosted a volatile

substances misuse forum for retailers and service providers in January 2003. At this forum, leading retail associations committed to work with the commission to develop a voluntary code of conduct pertaining to the supply of and access to volatile substances by children and teenagers.

Several large retail chains have supported and adopted the voluntary code and have reduced accessibility to chroming goods. In other words, they have started to act responsibly on this matter. I note with interest, however, the *Let's can chroming* brochure tabled by the Premier in this place. In this brochure it says—

Recognising their responsibilities as retailers, a number of admirable businesses have taken steps to dissuade children and teenagers from buying potentially harmful substances.

The Government applauds these retailers, and we want to help them do more to prevent volatile substance abuse.

For that reason, the Queensland Government is bringing in legislation to cover businesses selling volatile substances.

The way it has done that in the bill is to make it illegal for persons to sell to other persons knowingly if they believe the substances that they are selling will be abused in the line of chroming.

At the same time, the minister has also stressed in his second reading speech that he does not propose to create a criminal offence for misusing a volatile substance. It would seem to me—and I would ask for a response to this—that there is some inconsistency in this approach. On the one hand, it will be illegal to sell a substance to a person who you know is going to use it for chroming but, on the other hand, the act of chroming, the act of using that substance, will not be illegal. So I ask for a clarification as to why the government has taken this particular point of view. That seems to be an inconsistent approach. It is a matter of clarification on this particular issue.

No doubt retailers will put in place a range of trading programs for their employees in much the same way as they have for cigarettes, tobacco products and so on. I believe if they take a responsible attitude to this particular matter some of the fears concerning this legislation will be allayed. I think the tobacco legislation has proved that to be a case in point. But there is a point to be made here and a point that I think needs to be clarified by the minister, and I ask for that to be clarified in his reply. With regard to the rest of the legislation, as most members in the House have said, it is good legislation which requires support, and we will do that on this side.

I would like to make a point with regard to the issue of hooning. I have sat here and listened to all the government members praise the minister for his approach to the hooning legislation. I can well remember when it was a problem on the Gold Coast. As a Gold Coast member, I proposed the confiscation of cars used by hoons, and the Labor Party and the minister opposed my proposal. That was the position at that time. The minister said that he did not believe the approach used in New South Wales would work. Some months down the track after putting in place a committee to investigate the issue he then brought legislation into the House to do what I proposed—that is, enable police to confiscate cars.

It is somewhat ironic that we have Labor members praising the minister for his good work when he was reluctant to do it in the first place. With those few words and a brief explanation of the hooning legislation, which I am sure the minister knows the history of as well as I do, I support the bill.

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (6.04 p.m.): I rise to speak briefly in support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill tackles head-on some difficult social issues, specifically hooning and chroming among young people. I will deal with hooning first. Lapping in Ipswich has been a problem since before I was born. For many years there has been a culture of young people getting together in the Ipswich CBD, catching up with their friends and driving a few laps of town. But, while lapping has been around for a long time, what we are dealing with today is not the same problem that we were dealing with 30 years ago.

No longer do we have just a handful of locals catching up in town. Ipswich has become one of the three big spots for hooning in south-east Queensland along with Redcliffe and the Gold Coast. People meet in Ipswich to show off their cars, hang around on the streets and drag-race. Recently I met with residents of the Villa Maria nursing home in Limestone Street and had a long chat to the ladies about their ongoing frustrations with the lappers. Whilst most lappers probably do not know that Villa Maria is even there, the ladies are constantly kept awake by people revving their cars as they pass by and by noisy people hanging around in the street swearing and yelling almost directly below their bedroom windows.

In the two and a half years that I have been the member for Ipswich, I have tried to take a tolerant approach. I, like the council, have tried to work with the lappers to encourage better behaviour, but frankly I have had enough. With the hooning legislation we passed through the parliament last year, the Beattie government has sent a strong message to street hoons. This kind of thing is not on. For the first time, these new laws give police the power to confiscate vehicles and the new laws are working effectively. Since they were enacted, 37 vehicles have been confiscated in Ipswich—a sign that police are well and truly on the job.

But still for some drivers the message is not getting through. It is not okay to rev your engines in the centre of town on a Friday night. It is not okay to drag-race through our streets. It is not okay to keep the residents of a nursing home from sleeping peacefully in their own beds, and it is certainly not okay to drive around like an idiot and kill yourself or your friends, as has happened twice in Brisbane Street, Ipswich in recent years. These hooning laws have made a real difference, but there is more change that still needs to happen. I call on the lappers who are not behaving too badly to put some pressure on the others to tone it down, and I call on those people who are driving like absolute clowns to get out of town. I am meeting with the council and the police next week to look at what more can be done.

I also want to talk briefly about the issue of chroming. Ipswich, I am happy to say, has led the way when it comes to addressing chroming. For five years the state government through the Department of Families has funded the Ipswich Management of Public Intoxication Program, which deals specifically with the problem. With IMPIP funding, Drug Arm runs a street patrol in the Ipswich CBD on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Drug Arm talks to young people who are hanging around on the streets and chroming and puts them in contact with the many agencies, youth shelters, youth justice service, police, Queensland Health and others who can help them with the problems that they have.

While I would never suggest that we have totally succeeded, there is no doubt that, without this approach of meeting kids in their own space and their own time and hooking them up with the services that can help them, the problem of chroming in Ipswich would be much, much worse. Still, there are gaps in the program. I am pleased to announce today that Ipswich's response to chroming is stepping up a gear. From next year the street patrol will continue but a community organisation will be employed to provide better case-by-case support for kids wrapped up in the chroming culture.

For years the chroming scene has been characterised by a small group of hard-core kids who have been very difficult to help and a larger group of hangers-on. This new case management approach will allow us to really support those kids and families with serious problems. At the same time a new program of holiday and weekend activities will give bored kids something better to do than get wrapped up in the chroming culture, and there will be better support and information for parents and families. The amendments we are making today, which make it illegal to sell volatile substances to people who are likely to sniff them, adds another weapon to our armoury. This is an important bill, and I commend it to the House.

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Lib) (6.09 p.m.): I would like to contribute to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2003. I commend the work the police and our civilians perform in Caloundra and the surrounding areas. We have a very effective and hardworking police force. Over the years their numbers have been increased under our government and under the present government. This is very important because we have had a considerable increase in population. We also have a considerable increase in the population during high tourist periods. At that time we still do not have adequate coverage, particularly after the hours of about 4.30 p.m. and in the evening and at weekends. I ask the minister to look seriously at this situation and see if he can provide some relief during those very busy periods when we have to look after the safety of our residents and tourists alike.

The hooning legislation has been effective, regardless of its genesis. Hooning became a real problem on the Sunshine Coast. It still is a problem. It was more of a problem in Mooloolaba than in Caloundra, but I endorse totally the comments the member for Ipswich just made, which is that these louts who break the law should themselves have to face the consequences of breaking the law. If that involves finally removing their vehicle, so be it, because they are destroying the peace and wellbeing of other law-abiding constituents. It is not a safe practice. I support totally any action our police have taken. I have encouraged them to do it. If there is a problem, I ask them to investigate it. If it is a repeat offender I will totally support their confiscating that vehicle, and indeed have done so.

Chroming is an appalling activity that is affecting our young. We really question why our wonderful young people have to resort to this sort of activity to get their highs. I agree with the member for Robina that not only should it be illegal to sell these substances to minors or to people whom they feel are going to use these cans in this manner; the persons engaging in these activities should be punished, particularly if they are of an age where they should know better and are influencing younger people to do so. Occasionally we do have gangs of young people in Caloundra who are led by leaders of gangs. Sometimes people as young as 12 are involved in these activities.

I would also like to thank the members of the Neighbourhood Watch. My own Neighbourhood Watch at Diamond Head is a very effective group of people. They contribute in no small way to the safety of us residents there. Alan Wood and his committee perform great work. Without this sort of support of community and members for each other, we have communities that do break down in law and order issues. We have, fortunately, in Caloundra a strong community spirit among our residents and constituents. This is no more evident than in this Neighbourhood Watch at Diamond Head.

I would also like to congratulate the police who, over the years, have run the blue light discos. They have been very popular and very effective in Caloundra. Many years ago, when I was president of the Chamber of Commerce before I entered parliament, I saw the work the police and their committee were then doing with very little funds and with nowhere much to do it. We often met after work. It was after work for the policemen too, may I add, who were involved. Sergeant Davison was very involved at that stage. He showed a great knowledge, ability and sympathy for the young people who were being provided with alcohol-free, very good entertainment at the blue light discos. That is something which we must encourage.

I would like to thank the minister for providing a watch-house in Caloundra to accompany the new courthouse that is being built. That has been needed. I was very happy to provide the funds so that the police could have a new police station when we were in government. They desperately needed one. The building they were in was quite appalling. The watch-house is welcomed. In this budget there was funding of \$1.1 million. It is going to cost about \$3.6 million overall. I thank the minister for providing that.

I see the Attorney is with us in the House. I ask the Attorney to seriously consider putting in a drug court in the new courthouse. The new courthouse is needed and will be very good. The drug problem is a big problem in and around Caloundra, particularly with young people, a lot of them still at high school. I feel the drug court and the rehabilitation programs that are available have been very effective at Maroochydore. We have a number of good back-up and support community groups in Caloundra that could help young people in this regard. Having these closer to the source in Caloundra, it would be very effective to have a drug court meeting there.

I have written to the minister and asked him if he will seriously consider a police beat in the CBD. I had organised for this to happen when we were in government. We obtained premises from the city council rent free. All we had to do was provide the police. Unfortunately, we lost government and the police minister at the time, who is not the current one, pulled the funding that was required and did not go ahead with it. I thought that was a very vindictive and very foolish step. I ask this Police Minister if he would go ahead with it. It is needed by the community. He will get great support from the council, the Chamber of Commerce, myself and other responsible members in the community.

I realise that all these things do take money, but with everyone working together it could be provided at not all that excessive expense. We need it in the CBD. Our police station is a little out of the CBD and the CBD—

Mr Purcell interjected.

Mrs SHELDON:—I am being rudely interrupted, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fouras): Order!

Mrs SHELDON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am nearly finished, but what I have to say is important to my constituents and to my contribution to this debate.

We do need a police beat in the CBD because there are gangs of youths who at times do roam through there, who vandalise the area and who create great concern for the restaurateurs in the street and at times harass the people who are going to these restaurants. Remember, we have a lot of tourists there. We have a lot of dollars coming into our area on the Sunshine Coast through our tourists, so we have to make sure that we protect that clientele.

This is an important bill. I am pleased to be able to contribute to this debate. I thank the police for the work they have done over the nearly 14 years I have been a member and for their cooperation, and I thank the community for the high regard in which members of our community hold them.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (6.18 p.m.): I rise in support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2003. In doing so I congratulate the minister and his team for putting such amendments through the House. They are good amendments which will improve the safety of our community.

This bill involves many different changes, but at the core of these changes is one primary concern, which is the safety of our community. I was pleased to hear from the minister two weeks ago that the crime rate across the length and breadth of Queensland had dropped. Break and enter, car theft and forcible entries have been reduced in the past six months in Queensland. A lot more has to be done, and this is why this legislation has to be passed.

I am particularly supportive of changes to tighten the successful antihooning legislation. This law has been highly successful in the last 12 months or so and warmly welcomed by the community. Since November last year close to 900 cars, to my knowledge, have been confiscated across the state for two-day periods. In the first year, 54 cars were confiscated in the metropolitan south police region, which covers my electorate of Capalaba. Having said that, only seven cars have been confiscated for three months as a result of a second offence. I think these figures speak volumes for the effectiveness of this legislation. The changes to this bill will tighten this law. In the past, people charged a second time or multiple times with road hooning offences could avoid having their car impounded for three months by pleading not guilty and could then commit further offences while awaiting trial.

The amendment allows for an application for a three-month impoundment or forfeiture of a vehicle to be made to a court where a person has either been previously found guilty of a prescribed offence or offences or has been previously charged with a prescribed offence or offences that have not yet been heard or determined. This simply means that people cannot ignore this legislation just because they have a case that has not been heard by the courts.

One of my constituents who is very supportive of motorists' rights came to see me. He told me that he believed this legislation on hooning was not complete. He believed governments should make places available for young people to use their cars safely. On the surface, I thought his argument had some merit. I put that proposal forward to a youth group in my area, the Redland youth network—a group of young people who obviously know about issues facing young people much better than I do. After two months of deliberation, they told me they believed that even if places were made available for people to do burn-outs and whatever else it would not work because on the way to and from that place they would still break the law. That obviously would not work.

This bill also makes changes to address problems experienced across Queensland with public drunkenness. Our way of life in Queensland and Australia means that we enjoy public spaces. We like to take our families to public spaces and enjoy the sunshine in Queensland. But public spaces are for everyone. People should not have to avoid such areas out of fear of harassment or intimidation by a group of drunken people who spoil things for everyone else. Because of time limitations, I will now conclude my speech by commending the bill to the House.

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (6.21 p.m.): I congratulate the minister on bringing in this bill to make life for our police officers on the beat a bit easier and to give them the powers they need to do their job. I thank Barry Bullion, the officer in charge of the Morningside Police Station, and the men and women who work so very hard for my constituency. They have opened a police beat at Cannon Hill, for which I thank the minister. There is also a bike patrol in Morningside and Bulimba which is highly effective. The information those officers gather and the confidence they engender in the community is enormous.

I wish also to acknowledge the graffiti busters committee, which has been going for well over three years now. I thank Monica Fleming, the chair of that committee, and a large number of other people, in particular Constable Cherie Crane, who worked very hard on that committee, and Senior Constable Holly James, who also put 100 per cent into that committee. I congratulate also our Neighbourhood Watchers who continue to do their silent work on behalf of all of us in the community. On a family matter, I thank the CIB officers at Dutton Park for their courtesy, hard work and the effort they put in. I commend the bill to the House.

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (6.23 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members who have spoken in support of this legislation. Fifty per cent of backbenchers have delivered speeches on this legislation today, which should indicate to us all that it is important legislation. I wish also to thank those members who probably have addressed the House for the last time. Mr Lester and Mrs Sheldon are two members who may not be coming back into this House, and I wish them all the best for the future.

The shadow minister, on behalf of the opposition, has wholeheartedly supported this legislation, for which I am grateful. At the beginning of my speech tonight, I thank those people who have assisted me to get this legislation where it is today. In particular, I thank Chris Woolley. On Saturday, Chris is marrying Trish. He is here tonight, all embarrassed. I am sure I speak on behalf of all of my caucus committee members and other honourable members when I say to Chris: all the very best for the future. Have a good life together. I am sure you will go from strength to strength in your career. I thank also Greg Thomas and Neal White, two police officers who have been of great help to us in formulating this legislation. I thank also my former senior policy adviser, Scott Singleton, who has now moved into private practice. He was instrumental in helping to conceive this legislation.

This legislation covers a multitude of issues. I have been somewhat astounded at the knowledge honourable members have demonstrated on all aspects of this legislation. It talks about chroming, hooning, prostitution, crossbows, piercing and criminal history checks, to name a few. But the origins of part of this legislation were in Townsville when there were ongoing disputes between the Townsville City Council and, to some extent, the government. The Premier decided that six of his ministers should go to Townsville, meet with the indigenous people, the Townsville City Council and others to try to work out a formula. As a result of that meeting with the six ministers, a memorandum of agreement was signed by the six ministers, the Townsville City Council and the indigenous representatives. As a result of that agreement, today—in a few moments time—this legislation will go through the parliament.

I do not have the time to go through all of the issues contained in the bill; they have been canvassed and supported by all of the various members who have spoken. But there is one issue that I do wish to say a few words on, and that is the issue of chroming. Some of the young people of this state are frying their brains. This is one of the real social issues confronting us. It is confronting people in Brisbane and people in the outback. This legislation sets up four trial areas. We are the first to admit that we do not have all of the answers. What we are hoping to find out in these four trial areas is whether we are on the right track or whether we may need some changes. At the end of the 12 months, a report will go back to cabinet from the police department and also from the CMC.

Anybody who thinks they have all of the answers to these social issues is kidding themselves. Every time we come up with what we think is a solution, there is a reason why we cannot go down that path. I do not want to go through all of the issues, because as I said a moment ago they have all been canvassed by many members in this parliament. What I will say, though, is that this legislation is all about raising the standards. All too often people in our community will not accept the standards that the community imposes upon itself. That is sad and it is regrettable. However, I think law-abiding citizens have the right to go about their life free from some of the nonsense that goes on in public places. That is the reason why contained in this legislation are a number of issues that affect standards.

For the purpose of this legislation, we have treated methylated spirits as alcohol. Some people might not understand what goes on in some places. For instance, there are places where methylated spirits is sold from the fridge, next to the orange juice. That is something that, quite honestly, is acceptable neither to me nor the government. For the purpose of this legislation, methylated spirits will now be considered as a form of alcohol.

I will respond now to some of the questions that have been asked by the opposition. The shadow minister raised the question of crossbows and the requirement regarding their storage. Under this legislation and under the regulations, crossbows will have to be securely stored just like other weapons. As many speakers from the opposition and from this side of the chamber have said, crossbows are as dangerous as guns. So we are saying that crossbows have to be securely stored. Storage requirements currently applying to firearms will now apply to crossbows, that is, the crossbow must be safely stored in accordance with the Weapons Regulation when not in a person's physical possession. The Weapons Regulation specifies storage requirements depending upon the type of licence and number of weapons held by a licensee—for example,

part 5, 'Storage measures for armourers, dealers and theatrical ordnance suppliers'; part 6, 'Storage measures for collectors'; and part 9, 'Safety precautions generally'. The other question which was asked by the shadow minister was will advertising be done to let people know what the requirements are? The answer is, yes, there will be a 12-month introduction period in which Weapons Licensing will liaise with all relevant stakeholders.

The shadow minister also asked questions about the hand gun buyback and when it will finish. I made a statement in the parliament this morning in which I detailed the success to date of the buyback scheme. I did say that over \$9 million had been paid out in compensation. Of that \$9 million, two-thirds is funded by the Commonwealth and one-third by the state government. In regards to the hand gun buyback, I have requested the Commonwealth to extend the period of the Queensland buyback. I am confident that the Commonwealth will agree to extend this period and that, by the end of the buyback period, every police region will have been visited by the mobile buyback unit.

The member for Callide talked about the adequacy of capital works. He mentioned two stations in particular in his electorate, Biloela and Murgon. As most members would know, the government has an ongoing Capital Works Program which is providing new stations right across the state. Not only are we building new police stations but, as has been mentioned by many members today, we are also providing police beats and police shopfronts. In recent times we have spent or are in the process of spending \$7 million on the Mundingburra police complex, \$2.5 million on the Loganholme station, \$20 million on the Toowoomba Police Station along with the North Mackay station, and I recently had the pleasure of turning the sod with the members for Whitsunday and Mackay. There was a huge sign there telling the people of Mackay and the northern beaches that we are going to have a police station there very soon. There are many stations.

A government member interjected.

Mr McGRADY: It is a good sign. In fact, it is so good that people are saying to me, 'We want that sign doubled in size.' Who am I to say it cannot be? So the sign is going to be doubled.

Mr Livingstone: Size does matter!

Mr McGRADY: Size does matter when we are advertising the good work which the government is doing.

The member for Gladstone raised a number of issues. She asked if we intended to review the power in 12 to 18 months time to see how the power is to be exercised, primarily to ensure the power is not used inappropriately. I have to say that all the provisions of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act are regularly reviewed by the Queensland Police Service and cabinet on a regular basis. We want to know how these powers are being used. If they are being used inappropriately we would take action to make sure we change that.

The member for Gladstone also referred to places of safety. I said a moment ago that anybody who thinks that they have all the answers to this problem are fooling themselves. Places of safety now will be a hospital, the person's home or, indeed, the home of the extended family. There is some money floating around from the Commonwealth—\$2.5 million—which we are hoping to be able to get access to so that we may be able to fund organisations or have purpose-built buildings to which young people can be taken. We do not have the results yet from the Commonwealth.

We talked about criminal history checks. We talked about changes to the Prostitution Act whereby we have abolished the Prostitution Advisory Council because, quite honestly, it met very seldomly. As one of the four ministers who received these reports, I can say that very little came forward. So we have abolished this committee and increased the number of people on the Prostitution Licensing Authority by two. I will be quite honest: when we appoint these people I want to appoint a religious person—a person maybe of the cloth—but somebody who accepts the fact that we will have legal brothels in Queensland. They can add their expertise and their views to it. Again, I do not have anybody in mind. That is the type of person—at least one of those two—whom I would like to see on that authority. If anybody has any suggestions, by all means let me have some names.

The member for Maroochydore talked about more police and the Prostitution Advisory Council. From memory, I think she wanted to know how successful we had been in trying to get young people away from prostitution and into a life other than that. It is very difficult to find out. That is the reason why I made the changes, because this sort of information just was not coming forward. Maybe that committee was too big. We tried to get people from all different walks of life.

It was very difficult. In my opinion as the minister it was not working. That is the reason why we made those changes. So, no, we do not have evidence to suggest that, as a result of what we are doing, fewer people go into prostitution. People talk about crime, and the rate of prostitution crimes has increased because, as part of legalising prostitution in Queensland, the police are far more active now in going ahead and chasing street walkers and also people running illegal brothels. Naturally, if we have a campaign to cut down street prostitution and illegal brothels, we are going to have more arrests.

The member for Maryborough spoke about safe places. I reiterate to him what I said before. The Leader of the Opposition came in and talked about crime statistics, rural property crime and the fact that many people in rural Queensland do not report crime. I share his view. We need to get the message across that people need to report crime at all times. Crime against the person has been static. He talked about graffiti clean-up orders. We have done a lot of work in this area. In fact, I set up an all-party committee to come forward with recommendations, which it has done. I have sent that report out to the various ministers seeking their views and their consideration. We will hear more about that in the not-too-distant future.

The Leader of the Liberal Party and also the Leader of the Opposition both made the point about whether or not the onus should be on the retailer or whether the person who purchases the goods should be fined. The reality is that placing the onus on the purchaser would end up placing a person with a substance abuse problem continuously before the court. Some people may say so be it, but that is part of the trial. I have to be honest: we do not have the answers, but we will get all this information. The CMC and the police will express a point of view. Maybe when we conduct a review of the legislation we will come to a different conclusion. I want to table these amendments.

In conclusion, I again thank all those people who have participated in this debate. It has been a good debate. Half the back bench has spoken. As I said in my remarks, this is all about raising the standards of social behaviour in the state of Queensland. I am pleased that every single person who stood up here tonight and made a contribution supported the legislation and also referred to the hooning legislation and other reforms. I think this government is on the right track. Judging by the comments from both sides, that seems to be the view of the whole House. I thank members for their support.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) in charge of the bill.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—

Mr McGRADY (6.40 p.m.): I move amendment No. 1—

1 Clause 2—

At page 8, line 8, '13² commences'—

omit, insert—

'13 and part 11A¹ commence'.

¹ Section 13 (Replacement of s 371A (Power to seize potentially harmful things)) and part 11A (Amendment of Public Service Act 1996)

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—

Mr McGRADY (6.41 p.m.): I move amendments Nos 2 to 4—

2 Clause 13—

At page 24, lines 12 to 14—

omit, insert—

' 'review for 9 months after the sections commence.

'(2) The conduct of the review and the preparation of the report is a function of the CMC for the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001*.

'(3) In the course of preparing the report, the CMC must consult with the Minister.

'(4) The CMC must give a copy of the report to the Speaker for tabling in the Legislative Assembly.'.

3 Clause 13—
At page 24, line 16, after '371E'—

insert—

'and this section'.

4 Clause 13—
At page 24, line 17, after 'provisions'—

insert—

'and this section'.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 13, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 14 to 21, as read, agreed to.

Clause 22—

Mr McGRADY (6.41 p.m.): I move amendment No. 5—

5 Clause 22—
At page 29, line 6, 'complaint and'—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 22, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr McGRADY (6.41 p.m.): I move amendment No. 6—

6 After clause 22—
At page 29, after line 8—

insert—

' PART 5A—AMENDMENT OF CRIMINAL CODE

' 22A Act amended in pt 5A

'This part amends the Criminal Code.

' 22B Amendment of s 328A (Dangerous operation of a vehicle)

'(1) Section 328A(4)(b), from 'concentration of alcohol' to '100 ml of blood'—

omit, insert—

'offender was, at that time, over the high alcohol limit'.

'(2) Section 328A(5)—

insert—

' "high alcohol limit" see the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995*, section 79A.².

'(3) Section 328A(5), definition "operates, or in any way interferes with the operation of, a vehicle dangerously", paragraph (d), after 'in the operator's blood'—

insert—

'or breath'.'.

² *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995*, section 79A (When is a person over the limit)

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 23 to 28, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr McGRADY (6.42 p.m.): I move amendment No. 7—

7 After clause 28—
At page 31, after line 19—

insert—

' PART 8A—AMENDMENT OF POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (FORENSIC PROCEDURES) AMENDMENT ACT 2003

' 28A Act amended in pt 8A

'This part amends the *Police Powers and Responsibilities (Forensic Procedures) Amendment Act 2003*.

' 28B Amendment of s 10 (Replacement of ch 8, pts 2–4 and pt 5, hdg of *Act No. 5 of 2000*)

'Section 10, new section 318ZF(6), definition "reporting notice", from 'section 318B(2)'—

omit, insert—

'section 318A(2).³.'.

³ Section 318A (Prisoner serving term of imprisonment for prescribed indictable offence)

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 29 to 47, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr McGRADY (6.42 p.m.): I move amendment No. 8—

8 After clause 47—

At page 53, after line 17—

insert—

' PART 11A—AMENDMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE ACT 1996

' 47A Act amended in pt 11A

'This part amends the *Public Service Act 1996*.

' 47B Insertion of new pt 9A

'After section 114—

insert—

' PART 9A—CRIMINAL HISTORY REPORTS IF ENGAGED TO PERFORM RELEVANT DUTIES

' 114A Definitions for pt 9A

'In this part—

"criminal history" see the *Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986*, section 3.

"criminal history report" means a report given under section 114D to a chief executive by the commissioner of the police service about the criminal history of a person.

"engage", a person, includes any of the following—

- (a) appoint, employ, promote, redeploy or second the person within or to a department;
- (b) allow the person to participate in a work performance arrangement or an interchange arrangement, within the meaning of section 82,4 in a department;
- (c) start training the person in a department as an apprentice or trainee, within the meaning of the *Training and Employment Act 2000*, chapter 1, part 2.⁵

"relevant duties" means the particular duties in a department in relation to which the chief executive of the department decides, under section 114C(1), it may be necessary to have regard to the criminal history of anyone engaged to perform those duties to ensure the person so engaged is suitable to perform them.

' 114B Relationship of part with other laws

'(1) This part does not limit any other law under which the criminal history of a person may be obtained, including any other part of this Act.

'(2) Also, this part is subject to the *Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986*.

' 114C Chief executive may decide to obtain criminal history

'(1) This section applies if the chief executive of a department decides, under a directive issued for this part, that, because of the nature of particular duties to be performed in the department, it may be necessary to have regard to the criminal history of anyone engaged to perform those duties to ensure the person so engaged is suitable to perform them.

'(2) When the chief executive proposes to engage a person to perform the relevant duties, the chief executive may, under a directive issued for this part, ask the person for written consent for the chief executive to obtain the person's criminal history.

'(3) Subsection (2) applies to a person even if the person is a public service employee at the time the chief executive proposes to engage the person to perform the relevant duties.

' 114D Obtaining criminal history with consent

'(1) If a person gives written consent under section 114C(2) to obtain the person's criminal history, the chief executive may ask the commissioner of the police service for a written report about the person's criminal history.

'(2) Subject to subsection (3), the commissioner of the police service must give the report to the chief executive.

'(3) The duty imposed on the commissioner of the police service to comply with the request applies only to information in the commissioner's possession or to which the commissioner has access.

' 114E Assessment of suitability using criminal history report and subsequent destruction of the report

'(1) In making an assessment about the person's suitability for engagement to perform the relevant duties after obtaining a criminal history report about the person, the chief executive must, under a directive issued for this part, consider the person's criminal history.

'(2) If, after making the assessment mentioned in subsection (1), the person's criminal history report is no longer required to be kept under a directive issued for this part, the chief executive must destroy the report and any other document required by the directive to be destroyed.

' 114F If person does not consent to obtaining criminal history

'If a person does not consent to the chief executive obtaining the person's criminal history, the chief executive is not required to consider, or further consider, the person for engagement to perform the relevant duties.

' 114G Confidentiality

'(1) This section applies to a person who—

- (a) is, or has been, a public service employee in a department or a selection panel member; and
- (b) in that capacity acquired information, or gained access to a document, under this part about someone else's criminal history, including, for example, a criminal history report.

'(2) The person must not disclose the information, or give access to the document, to anyone else.

Maximum penalty—100 penalty units.

'(3) Subsection (2) does not apply to the disclosure of information, or giving of access to a document, about a person—

- (a) to a public service employee in the department or a selection panel member, for the purpose of assessing the person's suitability to be engaged to perform the relevant duties in relation to which the criminal history report about the person was obtained; or
- (b) with the person's consent; or
- (c) if the disclosure or giving of access is otherwise required under an Act.

'(4) In this section—

"selection panel member" means a member of a panel formed to make a recommendation to the chief executive of a department about engaging a person to perform relevant duties in the department.

' 114H Commissioner may issue a directive or guideline for this part

'(1) For this part, the commissioner may issue directives and guidelines under section 34.⁶

'(2) Without limiting subsection (1) or section 34, a directive issued for this part must make provision for—

- (a) the circumstances in which a chief executive may decide that it is necessary to obtain the criminal history of a person under section 114D; and
- (b) a reasonable opportunity to be given to a person to make written representations about a criminal history report obtained about the person before an adverse decision relating to the person is made.

'(3) In this section—

"adverse decision", relating to a person, means a decision about the person's suitability for engagement to perform the relevant duties in relation to which a criminal history report was obtained, other than a decision that the person is suitable for engagement to perform the relevant duties.'

' 47C Insertion of new pt 11, div 3

'After section 145—

insert—

' *Division 3—Transitional provision for the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2003*

' 146 Chief executive may ask for consent to obtain criminal history only if engagement is after the commencement

'The chief executive may not, under section 114C,⁷ ask a person for the person's written consent to obtain a report of the person's criminal history unless the chief executive proposes to engage the person to perform relevant duties after the commencement of this section.'

' 47D Amendment of sch 3 (Dictionary)

'Schedule 3—

insert—

"criminal history", for part 9A and section 146, see section 114A.

"criminal history report", for part 9A, see section 114A.

"engage", for part 9A and section 146, see section 114A.

"relevant duties", for part 9A and section 146, see section 114A.'

⁴ Section 82 (Work performance and interchange arrangements)

⁵ *Training and Employment Act 2000*, chapter 1 (Preliminary), part 2 (Definitions and basic concepts)

⁶ Section 34 (Rulings of industrial relations Minister and commissioner)

⁷ Section 114C (Chief executive may decide to obtain criminal history)

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 48 and 49, as read, agreed to.

Clause 50—

Mr McGRADY (6.42 p.m.): I move amendment No. 9—

9 Clause 50—

At page 55, lines 11 to 13—

omit, insert—

'(6) As soon as practicable after 18 months after the commencement of this section, the Crime and Misconduct Commission must review the use of this section.

'(7) The conduct of the review and the preparation of the report is a function of the Crime and Misconduct Commission for the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001*.

'(8) In the course of preparing the report, the Crime and Misconduct Commission must consult with the Minister.

'(9) The Crime and Misconduct Commission must give a copy of the report to the Speaker for tabling in the Legislative Assembly.'

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 50, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 51 to 61, as read, agreed to.

Clause 62—

Mr McGRADY (6.43 p.m.): I move amendment No. 10—

10 Clause 62—

At page 62, lines 13 and 14—

omit.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 62, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 63, as read, agreed to.

Clause 64—

Mr McGRADY (6.43 p.m.): I move amendments Nos 11 and 12—

11 Clause 64—

At page 63, lines 13 to 16—

omit.

12 Clause 64—

At page 63, line 18—

omit, insert—

'omit, insert—'.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 64, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 65 to 69, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr McGRADY (6.44 p.m.): I move amendment No. 13—

13 After clause 69—

At page 65, after line 17—

insert—

' 69A Amendment of s 52 (Physical possession and use of weapon sometimes allowed for the purpose of training a minor)

'(1) Section 52(1) and (2), after 'category A or B weapon'—

insert—

'or a category M crossbow'.

'(2) Section 52(2), after 'category A or B weapons'—

insert—

'or category M crossbows'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 70 to 76, as read, agreed to.

Clause 77—

Mr McGRADY (6.44 p.m.): I move amendments Nos 14 and 15—

14 Clause 77—

At page 66, line 21, 's 185'—

omit, insert—

'ss 185–186'.

15 Clause 77—

At page 67, after line 9—

insert—

' '186 Transitional regulation-making power

'(1) A regulation (a "transitional regulation") may make provision of a saving or transitional nature for category M crossbows for which—

- (a) it is necessary to make provision to allow or facilitate the doing of anything to achieve the transition from the operation of this Act before the commencement of this section to the operation of this Act after the commencement; and
- (b) this Act does not make provision or sufficient provision.

'(2) A transitional regulation may have retrospective operation to a day not earlier than the commencement.

'(3) A transitional regulation must declare it is a transitional regulation.

'(4) This section and any transitional regulation expire 1 year after the commencement.'.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 77, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 78 to 83, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr McGrady, by leave, read a third time.

SUPERANNUATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 11 November (see p. 4762).

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (6.46 p.m.): The opposition will be supporting this legislation. It reflects changes to the Family Law Act. The opposition will also be supporting the amendments to be brought in by the minister as they reflect changes to the Commonwealth Superannuation Act, which is, basically, decreasing the superannuation surcharge payable over time from 15 per cent to 12.5 per cent. As I said, we will be supporting the bill.

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (6.46 p.m.), in reply: I thank the opposition for their support of the legislation.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) in charge of the bill.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—

Mr MACKENROTH (6.47 p.m.): I move amendment No. 1—

1 Clause 2

At page 4, after line 11—

insert—

• section 5A'.

The amendment incorporates changes made to the Commonwealth's surcharge rates to be applied to superannuation accounts as outlined in the Superannuation (Surcharge Rate Reduction) Amendment Act 2003 into the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1970. I table the explanatory notes.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr MACKENROTH (6.48 p.m.): I move amendment No. 2—

2 After clause 5

At page 5, after line 18—

insert—

' 5A Amendment of s 25C (Superannuation contributions surcharge)

'Section 25C(3)—

omit, insert—

'(3) The maximum amount that the trustees may deduct is the total of the following amounts—

- (a) 15% of the State-financed component of the part of the benefit that accrued after 20 August 1996 and before 1 July 2003;
- (b) 14.5% of the State-financed component of the part of the benefit that accrued after 30 June 2003 and before 1 July 2004;
- (c) 13.5% of the State-financed component of the part of the benefit that accrued after 30 June 2004 and before 1 July 2005;
- (d) 12.5% of the State-financed component of the part of the benefit that accrued after 30 June 2005.'

This amendment is part of amendment No. 1.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 9, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, by leave, read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (6.50 p.m.): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Beautesert Hospital

Mr FLYNN (Lockyer—ONP) (6.50 p.m.): It is quite clear that a number of government departments are in disarray. Before government members get a bit huffy about that statement I say that that is the public perception. Two departments that spring to mind are Health and Families. I choose Health to tilt at today because our state hospitals are not what they were.

About 25 years ago waiting times in outpatients were around two hours—not bad by anybody's standards. Over the years they have extended from two hours to four, five, six, seven or eight hours—two days on some occasions. Today we see severe restrictions on the use of outpatients. In my opinion not all the blame for this can be sheeted home to federal government funding but rather can be attributed on occasions to inefficiencies and poor prioritisation by the state government. We can all cry foul about funding, but at the same time we see examples of maladministration of funding rather than problems with the funding itself. In particular I refer to the identification that funding to ATSIC has not been administered that well.

Time and time again communities complain to the government about troubles in hospitals, and each time this government fobs us off. Beautesert Hospital is poised to become one of its latest victims. If its accreditation is withdrawn—it is under threat—it runs the risk of reducing its services to become a nursing home. There is nothing wrong with nursing homes, but we have a brand new hospital there which replaced the one built a number of years ago. It now runs the risk of being downgraded.

The local community is sincerely concerned about the status quo at Beautesert Hospital. I think it is remiss of the minister to rely totally on the production of a report to put their minds at rest. They need to know that the hospital, which is an integral part of their community and which indeed services part of my electorate, is going to stay and maintain the services it has. It is not just a patch-up, bandaid thing; it has a first-class emergency outpatients, a maternity wing and an operating theatre. Members of the local community are concerned that it may disappear. I

challenge the state government to categorically ensure that the Beaudesert Hospital maintains its present status.

Nursing Home Beds

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (6.53 p.m.): It is with a degree of certainty and a measure of real concern that I am prepared to tell the House today that the current available vacancies for a bed in a nursing home in Brisbane's north is zero. That is, nothing is available. I am fairly certain that should I or a constituent of mine commence the sometimes distressing and heartbreaking job of looking for a nursing home bed as a matter of urgency we would be faced with no-vacancy signs at every turn.

Mr Purcell: Shame.

Ms BARRY: I take that interjection. If I was to seek the assistance of a service such as the Aged Care Network, an online tour of aged care facilities on the Internet, I would find that a search of available residential high-care beds for north Brisbane would yield the result that it could not find any suburbs with available beds matching the criteria. I know that because I did that search as late as today.

If I was to try to help constituents find emergency places for loved ones who are in desperate need to move from an acute hospital bed at Prince Charles, Royal Brisbane or Redcliffe hospitals or indeed to find a place for a parent or a family member who is in desperate and sometimes unsafe circumstances in their own home, I would have no success. In fact, on the very rare occasions that I have had success, without the assistance and the extraordinary efforts of the staff of my local state government nursing homes or a number of local nursing home directors of nursing who are indeed compassionate and understanding enough to listen to my constituents' distress and concerns and then to seek help where they can—I thank them for that help—I know that I would not have been able to get anybody into such emergency circumstances. I know that these directors of nursing often go to extreme lengths to help out my constituents.

This is in my view a hidden tragedy in our health care system—one that not only is ignored by the federal government but also has been created by it. It is true that over 400 people eligible for nursing home beds are currently in our public hospitals—people who quite properly should be receiving expert care in aged care facilities. I do not wish to criticise those facilities in any way, but they would be the first to acknowledge that aged care, in particular dementia and high-care residents care, is a unique specialty that requires the expertise of staff found in aged care.

The reality of those people who are unable to access a nursing home bed is that many of them will never access appropriate care in their lives. The reality is that the average length of stay in a high-care facility is only three months. Many people entering a nursing home are indeed close to the end of their lives and they require expert palliative care given by expert aged care nurses. The tragedy for many of those seniors is that they are left languishing on a waiting list or in a hospital bed where expert care is, quite frankly, limited. This is simply because of a federal government outdated planning formula that provides inadequate funds to fund nursing homes. It is a situation that is disgraceful.

Emergency Services, Staffing

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (6.56 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in the adjournment debate and support all emergency services people throughout Queensland in doing their job. However, I have to speak about what is happening with QAS and Emergency Services in Queensland in terms of management.

Recently I raised in this parliament the issue of 17 student paramedics being selected by late night phone call. Obviously, if they were not home or were not able to answer their phone they did not get a call-up to be trained as a paramedic. That overlooked a whole range of issues, but certainly selection by merit was overridden by the way in which these jobs were offered. It calls into question a whole range of issues in terms of selection. Those who were not selected have to go back and get medicals for the next time they might be selected. There is a whole range of issues with that.

The career path for people in emergency services is in jeopardy because of the way in which operational staff are selected within Emergency Services. It would appear, certainly at the higher levels, that unless you are a friend of the commissioner or the director-general it is very unlikely you will get a position higher up in the service.

During the last sitting I asked the minister a question about the number of stations that have been non-operational because of lack of staff—because staff either are calling in on stress or are on sick leave. He indicated to the parliament that he was unaware of that problem. I have to say that in the intervening period the unions have indicated to the minister that quite a number of stations around Queensland have been closed because of the rostering problems and that that will continue to happen. In some cases we have seen issues of transport officers being sent on code 1 jobs or of students being sent out on their own. It appears that at the stage I raised the issue the minister was unaware of the problem. I am sure he has been made aware of that now and he should be acting on it.

We are seeing people being selected off the street rather than from within the ranks of the volunteers or the honoraries. This is happening within QAS as well as QFRS. I think it is condoning a situation that is unfortunate. People who have been trained and who are doing the job, quite often voluntarily, are not being regarded as prime candidates for selection into the ranks of the paramedics or firemen.

The ambulance tax was a huge impact on Queenslanders, particularly on businesspeople who are paying multiples of the tax. The backflip on the concessions has been of no real benefit to those people paying—

Time expired.

Springwood Electorate, Child Care

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (7.00 p.m.): Earlier today I informed the House about the great preparation that was done by Shailer Park State High School, Springwood State High School and the Calvary Christian College in regard to the information given to school leavers. Information on men's and women's health, organ donation, sexual assault and health issues, CPR, gambling, counselling and responsibilities in respect to the Liquor Act, police powers plus many more life skills that can be used throughout their life were given to our young adults.

From big kids to little kids, it is all happening in Springwood. Last week I co-hosted a child care forum with the federal member for Rankin, Craig Emerson, at Cornubia. More than 25 local child care providers attended the forum at St Matthew's Church hall to discuss problems facing the industry. The guest speaker was opposition spokesperson for children and youth, Senator Jacinta Collins. In the electorate of Springwood, child care is an important issue for families. They cannot get the places and they are making decisions on the basis of availability of child care and not always on what is best for the family or the children. In other words, a space becomes available and they feel they have to take it because it is there. This is not exactly the best decision to be making or the best solution at the time.

At the forum we heard that half of the wanted places for child care throughout the country are in Queensland, yet the federal government does nothing. For 18 months now it has been reviewing the broadband funding—still no decision in sight. So Daisy Hill Family Day Care is still wondering about its operational funding. We heard from a variety of providers with unique situations. Logan TAFE Community Child Care spoke about students who are unable to get child care and who therefore keep deferring courses. In the end, it just becomes too hard and mum decides to give up her choice of studying which affects not only her future but also that of the whole family. This is just one example.

In Queensland over 38,000 newborns to 12-year-olds require child care. One would think this would be a priority for the federal government. Instead, all we get is the minister saying something, the Prime Minister saying something else and the Treasurer saying something different again. The demand for vacancies in Logan East just keeps getting bigger all the time. The federal government is causing division in our community with those who have the places and those who do not. Those who do not cast judgment on those who they believe should not have access to child care, and this does nothing to solve the problem. It does nothing for families and it certainly does nothing to bring the community together.

This country has committed childcare workers who do not get the recognition or support they deserve from the federal government. This forum gave providers the opportunity to speak to the opposition spokesperson about real concerns they are now facing in their industry and how they would like to see them addressed. The Labor Party at all levels recognised that this is a great concern in the community. I know that there is an extreme shortage of places in Logan East, and I will be continuing to take up this fight for the people in my electorate to have access to child care that they need and deserve for their children. The Beattie Labor Party recognises the needs of

children of all ages. That is why we have increased budgets in Education, Families and Health, because we are a government that cares about young people and families.

Powerlink

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (7.02 p.m.): The state Labor government and Powerlink continue to ride roughshod over the rights of residents on the Darling Downs in order to push through the proposed Millmerran to Middle Ridge powerline. I spoke in the chamber only a few weeks ago about the devious tactics used by the state government owned corporation Powerlink to deny affected residents their right to dispute the proposed powerline. These tactics involve Powerlink attempting to push the powerline through as a funded augmentation because the former application as a regulated asset was being held up by affected residents in the dispute process with the national electricity code administrator.

This dispute process was the residents' right, but they were forced to drop the dispute because of the changed application. It is no surprise that, as soon as the affected residents had dropped their dispute, Powerlink subsequently dropped its application for a funded augmentation. Having gazumped the dispute process, Powerlink has now gone further to override the rights of local residents by applying for a ministerial designation of the land for the proposed powerline corridor and for all access roads.

This ministerial designation will take away the ability of local councils along the route to conduct a full and open development assessment process as they normally would with development applications. Therefore, the local councils will not be able to conduct an impact assessment in line with their individual planning schemes. If the state government agrees to this ministerial designation, they will be denying local residents and the shire councils any input into the development of this major infrastructure. Local government puts extensive time and effort into planning schemes, and these have been endorsed and ratified by the state government.

Planning schemes take into account the individual social and environmental intricacies of the shires. They have had the full representation and input of the local communities of the shires, and are vital blueprints for the future prosperity and sustainability of the shire. I note that Powerlink generally chose not to have input into the state interest and public consultation processes when these plans were developed, but now it turns around and applies directly to the Local Government Minister to have its major infrastructure given a green light to proceed—completely disregarding the local residents and local councils.

The Beattie Labor government has the power to ensure that a full and accountable development assessment process is followed by rejecting Powerlink's request for ministerial designation and instead forcing this infrastructure to prove itself against individual local shire council planning schemes. Unfortunately, the Beattie government and the Minister for Energy have consistently been the driving force behind this powerline being pushed through without proper transparency or accountability.

The state government simply cannot continue to act with such arrogance and blatant disregard towards everyday Queenslanders. The proposed infrastructure has not been properly placed under the scrutiny of public consultation and impact and issue assessment. Therefore, it is not at all suitable for a ministerial designation to be granted for this development. I urge the Minister for Local Government, who is in the House tonight, to take very real notice of the concerns of local residents and local shire councils.

Emergency Services Centre; Northern Beaches Police Station

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (7.05 p.m.): Last week was a sod of a week—in fact, it was a week that saw the turning of two sods that marked the commencement of two projects of great importance to my electorate. On Monday, together with my colleague Tim Mulherin, the member for Mackay, I turned the first sod for the multimillion-dollar emergency services centre in north Mackay. This centre will be the first of its kind in Queensland housing in the one centre the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, the Counter Disaster and Rescue Service and the Queensland Rural Fire Service. For the first time, the residents of north Mackay, the northern beaches and the northern highway will have access to a fully coordinated emergency service response from a permanently staffed centre.

Some people in the community are understandably disappointed that the new centre will replace the existing auxiliary fire station at Bucasia, and I join with them in expressing my

gratitude to the wonderful volunteer officers who have serviced the needs of the northern beaches for many years. The fact is, however, that the new station will be staffed by permanent crews who will be on duty at the station 24 hours a day and who will provide an excellent service not just to the northern beaches but also to north Mackay and the areas along the northern highway. I thank Minister Reynolds for agreeing to my request for a six-month transition period during which local knowledge built up by the auxiliary firefighters can be passed on. I am also grateful that the minister has agreed to use a transition period to ensure that we have the right balance of equipment between the urban and rural fire crews who service the area. I welcome the announcement of the new emergency service centre and look forward to attending its opening in June next year.

On Wednesday of last week Tim Mulherin and I were joined by the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, Tony McGrady, to turn the first sod for the new Northern Beaches Police Station. This station, located on the new Eimeo Deviation Road, will be a state-of-the-art 24-hour station costing between \$2.5 and \$3 million. It will accommodate up to 20 police officers and will bring a whole new era of security to residents in the northern beaches and the greater north Mackay area. I thank the minister for his commitment to this project, and again I look forward to welcoming him back to officiate at the opening of the station next year.

Both of these multimillion-dollar projects are the result of commitments made at the last state election. In turning the first sod for both of these projects, we are not just delivering on a promise but also demonstrating our government's commitment to the residents of north Mackay and the northern beaches. I know that with the mushrooming population in the northern beaches these projects will provide a new level of safety and security that will serve us well into the future. I am proud to have played a role in the delivery of these important projects, and I look forward to continuing to work with the people of the northern beaches for many years to come.

Beautesert Electorate, Water Resources

Hon. K. R. LINGARD (Beautesert—NPA) (7.08 p.m.): When the Maroon Dam was built in the Beautesert electorate, there was no doubt that the main reason was for agricultural viability and the extension of irrigation in the Albert/Logan Valley. However, as urban and industrial demands were allocated water from this dam, and SunWater was allowed to grab all water and return a healthy dividend to this government, it was quite obvious that allocations of water would become seriously affected in times of drought.

The recent drought has shown that when there is a shortage of water, the demands of urban and industrial usage are considered to the detriment of the agricultural users. These users not only lose allocations from the dams but also begin to lose their rights to access water from creeks and rivers which have always been considered their riparian rights.

When the Goss government stopped the Wolffdene dam in the Beautesert electorate, one would have expected that capital infrastructure would have been implemented to cater for the demands. However, capital works by this government are absolutely non-existent in the area of dam construction.

In 1987 the coalition government proposed a \$7.8 million water supply scheme at the Bromelton Estate south of Beautesert. The Bromelton scheme was among the highest priority projects in the state government's water infrastructure task force recommendations. The infrastructure development was going to go across Queensland. It had been included in category 1 of the task force recommendations to be implemented within three to five years. The scheme included the development of an off-stream water storage facility, pumping station, water treatment plant, reservoir and distribution system, with water being sourced from an intake at the Bromelton Weir on the Logan River near Beautesert.

Irrigators in the southern end of Beautesert, especially around Christmas Creek and Running Creek, have recently reacted to the government's attempts to take their water. The state government released a strategy for dealing with water shortage in Maroon Dam. This will see SunWater, the state government owned corporation in charge of managing Queensland dams, supplied with water for free from the irrigators which they can sell to their customers. Under the strategy Logan River irrigators will be on zero per cent allocation, while those on Running and Christmas creeks will be restricted in their water usage.

The water that is taken from irrigators under this method will be sold by SunWater to Beautesert Shire Council and industrial users. Irrigators, however, will not receive any compensation as a result of this strategy.

Recently in the *Country Life* dated 13 November 2003 an announcement was made by SunWater that despite the drought it had turned in a profit this year, excluding valuations, of \$16 million, up by \$900,000 on last year. SunWater and the government should spend part of this money to make sure that Beaudesert receives water from Logan and from the Wivenhoe Dam. If this can happen and Beaudesert can access this water, then the irrigators south of Beaudesert will have access to the creeks.

Senior Citizens

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy—ALP) (7.11 p.m.): Our seniors are our most respected citizens. They are people who have struggled through the difficult and hard years of the development of this great state and nation. I have always looked to them with respect and have been keen to learn from their experiences.

As local members, we often hear of how our seniors are targeted by people who are looking for a fast buck. Today I wish to bring to the attention of the House an issue, and give a warning to residents, staff and families of those who reside in nursing homes and retirement homes about the high pressure and immoral sales tactics of a person acting for a company called Niagara Therapy, operating out of Loganholme in Queensland, Parramatta in New South Wales and Burwood in Victoria.

I am outraged and disgusted by the actions of this man, Mr Paul Willesden, during his recent visit to Gracemere Gardens, a nursing and retirement home at Gracemere near Rockhampton. On 6 November Mr Willesden approached an elderly resident of Gracemere Gardens and spoke with her about the benefits of a therapeutic chair he was selling. My constituent expressed an interest in what was a recline chair. Mr Willesden promptly signed her up for a contract to purchase the chair for \$9,000. That is right, \$9,000. I am told that a respected local supplier of therapeutic and medical aids can provide a chair of similar quality, if not better quality, for less than half that price. My constituent was not even given an opportunity to try out the chair before being encouraged to sign up. She actually had to buy from a brochure. The chair was delivered the following day. Despite its hefty price tag, the family suspects that it was not even new. It would seem to have been a demo model, or at least a second-hand chair, as it was not plastic wrapped, looked used and had no instruction booklet with it.

This is only half of it. What Mr Willesden did straight after coercing my constituent to sign the contract is even more outrageous. He drove the elderly woman into Rockhampton to visit her bank, where he had her withdraw and then hand over a sum of \$5,000 as a deposit for the chair. This is in clear violation of the fair trading requirements. Under the conditions for door-to-door sales, a vendor must not accept money, nor should provide goods or services, during the prescribed 10 day cooling-off period. The only upside to this story is that because he did accept a deposit from her during this 10-day period, my constituent has six months from the date of the contract to cancel it.

Fair Trading is now investigating. The family are seeking a refund for the chair from Niagara Therapy, which I trust will do the right thing if it wishes to maintain any credibility in this case.

This case highlights the vulnerability of our senior citizens, who are often easy targets for shonks and shysters. I would hate to see a repeat of this situation. I would urge staff and the families of loved ones in nursing homes and retirement homes to be vigilant about other door-to-door salesmen trying to pull the same type of stunt. I can assure Niagara Therapy that its slogan, 'Helping people feel better', does not apply to the family of my constituent, nor to me as the local member.

Queensland Rail

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (7.15 p.m.): For many years the Queensland government has been a supporter of its employees. We have had government housing supplied by Queensland Rail for teachers, for people in the courthouse system and others. Queensland Rail, however, now has a policy to divest itself of QR houses. Tonight I would like to challenge that policy, particularly in my electorate.

Many QR workers live in very difficult areas. They do not always live in areas that would be classed as remote. Mount Larcom is not remote but finding rental accommodation there is very difficult. I have a constituent who currently privately rents at Mount Larcom. He has four children and a partner. The house he is renting is owned by a Chinese investor who bought up quite

significant areas of Mount Larcom some years ago. That investor has now decided to sell off the houses and the constituent has to be out of the house that he lives in by the end of this month. The closest house that he can rent is 20 kilometres away. I imagine the rental that would have to be paid would be extensively higher than he is currently paying.

There are no Housing Commission houses in Mount Larcom and very few other rental properties. In Gladstone, Calliope and Boyne-Tannum rents have escalated—I have raised that matter in this chamber before—because of the industrial development. I imagine that this man and his family could be looking at having to pay double the rent that he is currently paying. Yet QR intends selling a house in Mount Larcom which will become vacant on 15 December. It is a Queensland Rail house. It is appropriate for the man, if he was allowed access to it, to rent. It also provides an avenue of accommodation for people in my area where, as I said, the cost of rent has become exorbitant. Representation has been made on this man's behalf to make available to him the QR house, but it is reinforced and reiterated, not only to him but to others that I have spoken to in relation to this matter, that the house will be sold.

I call on the Minister for Transport and Queensland Rail to withdraw the QR house for sale, to suspend the sale of all Queensland Rail houses and to reassess, on the basis of the local conditions, whether the houses under the ownership of Queensland Rail should be divested. It is fine to say that it is not their core business, but all government agencies and most employers say employees are our most important commodity. In this instance, QR is doing anything but looking after its important resource, its workers.

This family is hard working. They have contributed well to the community. They have contributed well to Queensland Rail. The moratorium should be extended to the sale of all Queensland Rail houses, but particularly in electorates like mine where rentals have become so very expensive. There is no need for this house to be sold. It can be held for—

Time expired.

Mount Sheridan Plaza

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (7.18 p.m.): I draw the attention of the House to a petition circulated in the southern suburbs of Cairns. It relates to the hard-to-fathom fact that the Mount Sheridan Plaza shopping centre is the only major centre in the Cairns city area where shoppers have been denied Sunday trading.

The city of Cairns is a designated tourist zone with respect to Sunday trading. Mount Sheridan is a gazetted suburb of Cairns and lies within the municipal boundaries. Mount Sheridan Plaza is a neighbourhood sized shopping centre with a Coles supermarket and 20 speciality stores. It is the principal retail shopping centre in Mount Sheridan, yet it is excluded from Sunday trading because the existing boundaries for the designated tourist zone have not been amended to incorporate Mount Sheridan following the amalgamation of the old Mulgrave shire under the Cairns City Council boundaries.

It should also be noted that retail shopping centres north and south of Mount Sheridan Plaza are all permitted to trade on Sundays. It is also a fact that Mount Sheridan is closer to the Cairns CBD than the existing Smithfield Shopping Centre that is included in the exempted trading zone. It is also the first major shopping centre tourists entering Cairns from the south encounter.

Mount Sheridan Plaza is the only retail precinct in Cairns not permitted to trade on Sundays and this is blatantly unfair. For the retailers of Mount Sheridan Plaza and the residents of Mount Sheridan the playing field is not a level one. Mount Sheridan has a principal catchment area of 32,000 residents and is the fastest growing residential area in Cairns. The largest and most highly rated tourist caravan park in Queensland lies just two kilometres away. Delfin Property Group is developing allotments for 7,000 residents on land immediately adjacent to Mount Sheridan Plaza.

The petition seeks to overturn the Industrial Commission's previous decision of 2002 specifically excluding Mount Sheridan Plaza from the exempted trading zone, as the decision was a restraint of trade within the retail trading precinct of Cairns and against the best wishes of the residents of Mount Sheridan. I seek leave to table a non-conforming petition bearing 2,045 signatures.

Leave granted.

Mr PITT: Over 50 per cent of people surveyed in the Mount Sheridan area indicated that they are Sunday shoppers, and over 70 per cent said that they would shop at Mount Sheridan Plaza if the shopping centre were open. Clearly, as I said, the playing field is not a level one and

the Industrial Commission is denying Mount Sheridan Plaza equal status to every other shopping centre in Cairns and has failed to recognise that a large majority of the people who live in Mount Sheridan work in the hospitality and tourist industry. As such, they should enjoy the same benefits as the rest of Cairns and be able to shop when their work schedules dictate.

I will be having discussions with the office of IR Minister Nuttall regarding the situation of Mount Sheridan Plaza. It is my understanding that the management of Mount Sheridan Plaza will be lodging a formal application in March next year. A positive result will benefit my constituents and proprietors of businesses at Mount Sheridan Plaza. I will be urging Minister Nuttall to support this application.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.21 p.m.