

THURSDAY, 8 JUNE 1995

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. Fouras, Ashgrove) read prayers and took the chair at 10 a.m.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Liquor Licensing; Police Staffing, Mackay

From **Mr Casey** (81 signatories) praying that (a) discussion and debate be reopened concerning liquor licensing and closing times; (b) serious consideration be given to night clubs/hotels closing at or prior to 3 a.m.; and (c) additional funding be provided for an increase in police staffing in the Mackay district.

Police Staffing, Gold Coast; Palm Beach Police Station

From **Mrs Gamin** (639 signatories) praying that action be taken to boost police numbers in southern areas of the Gold Coast and that a police station be built at Palm Beach.

Housing Commission Accommodation, Innisfail

From **Mr Rowell** (25 signatories) requesting that carports be attached to Housing Commission accommodation in Innisfail.

Abortion Law

From **Ms Warner** (139 signatories) praying that sections of the Queensland Criminal Code which make abortion unlawful be repealed and that abortion services be established in the public hospital system and community based women's health centres with no charge attached to this service.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

- (a) Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Rural Communities (Mr Mackenroth)—

Copies of references to the Local Government Commissioner dated 26 May 1995 to examine, report and make recommendations on certain reviewable local government matters in relation to the areas of—

- (i) Shire of Kilkivan and the area of the Shire of Cooloola;
 - (ii) Shire of Calliope and the area of the Shire of Monto;
 - (iii) Shire of Kilkivan and the area of the Shire of the Nanango;
 - (iv) City of Charters Towers and the area of the Shire of Dalrymple; and
 - (v) Shire of Murweh and the area of the Shire of Tambo
- (b) Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development (Mr Hayward)—

Government Response to the Parliamentary Committee of Public Works Report No. 29 into the Mackay Small Craft Harbour.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Financial Management Strategy

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: The Queensland Government is committed to the development of strong and sustainable economic growth that ensures rising living standards for all Queenslanders. In April this year, the Premier released *From Strength to Strength*, a comprehensive strategy to build on Queensland's strong economic foundations and meet the challenges of the new millennium.

From Strength to Strength encompassed a range of initiatives aimed at further enhancing the domestic and international competitiveness of Queensland business, and providing the building blocks to accommodate and sustain future economic growth and development. Fundamental to this approach is the Government's continuing commitment to sound financial management and low taxes, which are central to the creation of an internationally attractive environment for business. The focus of my statement today is on the area of fiscal and financial management.

It is indisputable that Queensland's financial strength is unrivalled. We have achieved the lowest tax regime of any State in Australia at the same time as reducing net State debt. This has allowed the Government to initiate a major expansion in expenditure on social services and infrastructure, without the need to increase the tax burden on

businesses and households. Roughly 12 months ago, I tabled in Parliament the Financial Management Strategy—Improving Financial Management in the Leading State. Today I intend to table a progress report on this strategy.

The Financial Management Strategy laid the foundation for Queensland to remain the leading State well into the foreseeable future. The strategy has three specific goals: ensuring that the Government services are provided on the basis of best value for money; maintaining the State's infrastructure in a condition that is appropriate for present and future generations; and preserving the long-term financial stability of the State. The Government has pushed ahead with the reforms implied in this document and has completed the first phase of the reform process of financial management in the Queensland public sector.

To date, 17 new initiatives have been identified to ensure sound financial management and the adoption of a culture of continuous improvement. Through the Financial Management Strategy, this Government is requiring agencies to, among other things, establish a clear client focus, strong fiscal discipline, high standards of expertise for staff, clearly stated objectives and strategic approaches to service delivery, more appropriate levels of management authority and autonomy, improved performance measurement and evaluation and strengthened accountability. Considerable progress has been made in the first 12 months of this reform package. The first phase has seen: all agencies surveyed on their status relative to the initiatives of the Financial Management Strategy; agencies developing formalised plans for implementation of the process; and firm timetables established for the completion of reforms identified.

It is pleasing to report that agencies have already made good progress in a number of areas and that benefits are already starting to accrue well ahead of schedule. Some of the non-financial benefits which have occurred to date include: improved awareness of financial management processes amongst senior management; a greater understanding of the role of financial management by program managers, that is, those actually responsible for service delivery; improved interdepartmental communication leading to gains in operational efficiency; and implementation of improved practices identified in other agencies. Agencies have clearly indicated a willingness and commitment

to undertake the reforms associated with the Financial Management Strategy.

I have pleasure in laying before the House a report on progress achieved to date in implementing the Financial Management Strategy. The report includes detail in relation to each of the 17 initiatives being implemented. It also includes copies of two recently completed policy initiatives: a new Public Finance Standard for improved management of the State's considerable physical asset base; and a policy framework and guidelines for the introduction of client service standards by Queensland Government agencies.

Mrs SHELDON proceeding to give notice of a motion—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume her seat. I have asked members in the past to give notice of a motion in the proper form. The member is making a statement. That is not a motion at all; it is like a speech. Notices of motion should be motions put before the House rather than members outlining what they think or feel. The member will table that notice of motion. It will be edited by the Table Office and it will appear in edited form in the notice paper.

Mrs SHELDON: Mr Speaker, I have followed the form of a notice of motion. Could you point out to me where I am wrong? I had almost finished my notice of motion, apart from the part starting with the word "condemns". Mr Speaker, I move—

"That the member for Caloundra be further heard."

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am merely saying that notices of motion should be in the form of a motion and should not be an occasion for debate. I will allow the member to finish giving her notice of motion. If the member went to a P & C meeting or a meeting of any similar group and moved that notice of motion, it would be ruled out of order. The member is indulging in a debate. She may conclude reading her notice of motion, but the table staff will edit it.

Mr Gibbs: This is the first representation you have made for your electorate in three years.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Southport!

Mrs SHELDON: And that is the one millionth lie that Minister Gibbs has told in this House. I will finish my notice of motion.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Southport under Standing Order 123A.

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Report

Mr McELLIGOTT (Thuringowa) (10.12 a.m.): I table a report on my participation in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association parliamentary visit from 26 April to 12 May.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Abolition of CJC

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly) (10.13 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday in this Parliament, the Attorney-General claimed that I had publicly advocated the abolition of the Criminal Justice Commission. In fact, the Attorney-General quoted from his own answer to a question on 7 October 1993, not from something I have said. I have been misquoted before, but I must say that this is the first time that I have been so blatantly misquoted in this fashion. It is an outright disgrace, a blatant abuse of the privileges of this House and further, utterly untrue.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: The member is right. Where is the Attorney-General today? I suggest that he has a few problems. The record of my support for the CJC and the Opposition's support for the CJC is both well documented in this Parliament and in the media. In fact, it was only in October last year—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. In a personal explanation, the member is allowed to say only how he has been personally misrepresented; he is not allowed to debate the issue. The member has already said that he has been misquoted. I think that is all that he is allowed to do. He can say only how he has been personally misrepresented.

Mr BEANLAND: I will conclude by saying that I call on the Attorney-General to unequivocally apologise to this House for that blatant untruth.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Anti-racism Rally

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (10.14 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday afternoon

and again this morning, the Minister for Family Services, Ms Anne Warner, has attempted to misinterpret and misconstrue comments that I have been making in respect of the proposed anti-racism rally set down for this coming Saturday in Townsville and my comment that to erect a monument to the late Eddie Mabo would not be wise at this time. I made those comments as a matter of what I believe to be public responsibility based on two factors: one, that any further focus on the tragic events centred around—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Firstly, the member will seek leave to make that personal explanation.

Mr STONEMAN: I did. Mr Speaker, you said that I had leave.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Secondly, the member is not allowed to debate the issue.

Mr STONEMAN: I am not.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member said that he was making the personal explanation on the basis—

Mr STONEMAN: This is the basis of—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member is starting to debate the issue; he can only state how he was misrepresented.

Mr STONEMAN: That is what I am saying. This is the basis of how I was misrepresented. Any further focus on the tragic events centred around the desecration of the tombstone of the late Eddie Mabo would only bring more infamy to the people of Townsville, a community which I believe is no more or less racist than any other community in Australia. Secondly, to carry out the two proposed actions—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member is debating the issue. He will resume his seat.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Royal Brisbane Hospital

Mr BORBIDGE (10.17 a.m.): I refer the Premier to statements by the RBH Medical Staff Association that the hospital's budget is inadequate, that cuts in bed numbers have resulted in difficulties for staff and patients, that the Health Minister has failed to address the underlying problem of poor policy direction and that plans to further cut the size of the hospital mean that there will not be enough beds and services to serve the State, and I ask: how has the Premier managed to spend a billion dollars more on public health while

delivering a service that front-line health workers have again rejected as inadequate?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have not seen the statement from that association, so I will respond only in general terms. We are spending substantial amounts at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, as we have during the life of this Government, and more money will be spent there because this Government is committed to rebuilding the public hospital system of this State from the state of disrepair and neglect to which the National Party Government allowed it to descend.

In the last month, I have been to the Royal Brisbane Hospital and have seen the construction work which is currently under way at that hospital. Millions of dollars worth of construction work is taking place as this Government sets about the task of rebuilding the public hospital system. The member for Toowoomba South referred to the PA Hospital's accident and emergency centre. This Government is discharging its responsibility there as well with a \$5.5m redevelopment of the accident and emergency centre at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

Mr Borbidge: Where's the money gone?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The Leader of the Opposition asks where the money has gone. I will tell him where the money has gone. Right now, millions of dollars are going to the PA accident and emergency centre and into the Royal Brisbane Hospital. The member should go and have a look at it. Construction, at a cost of millions of dollars, is occurring at Royal Brisbane Hospital.

Furthermore, yes, the number of beds at those two major hospitals has been reduced, and this Government makes no apology for that. The number of beds is being increased, and those beds are being relocated to hospitals in places the National Party neglected, places it did not care about and places where it treated people like dirt.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Toowoomba South under Standing Order 123A.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The National Party Government treated those people like dirt because they were working-class people. For 20 years, it took the view that they were working-class people and that they could be ignored, that they could be treated like dirt and with contempt. Let me tell you, Mr Speaker, and let me tell members opposite that we will

increase those bed numbers and relocate those beds to places where the people are, where the need is and where young families are.

As to health services—Labor will lift the social wage, the standard of living and the standard of health care. Where has the money gone? The \$5.5m has gone into the accident and emergency centre at the PA Hospital; a new building which is under construction this very day at the Royal Brisbane Hospital; a new hospital at Logan City, with a new stage being added and new beds for a working-class community that the National Party treated like dirt; increased beds at the Redlands Hospital; and at Caboolture, along the coast and across this State. There is an increase in medical services, an increase in nurses, their wages and conditions, and an increase in primary health care. What is the bottom line result of that dramatic and justified increase? The result is that, in 1995, under Labor, the Queensland public hospital system will treat 3,000 more patients a week than it did when the National Party mismanaged the health system in this State.

Environment

Mr BORBIDGE: Not even the health workers like the Premier any more. I refer the Premier to the Minister for Environment's answer to a question yesterday which included an attack on Federal Greens convenor Bob Brown over his criticism of the Government's performance on environmental issues. I table the Queensland Conservation Council's assessment that only 16 per cent of the Government's 1989 environmental election promises have been fulfilled. Despite this, the Government has claimed in its self-assessment, which I also table, that 59 per cent of its 1989 commitments have been fully met, while 26 per cent have been partially met. In tabling the documents, I ask: how does the Premier explain the Conservation Council's poor assessment of the Government's environmental record and rejection of the Government's clearly fraudulent self-assessment?

Mr W. K. GOSS: This Government has a proud record on the environment. It is a record that we will take, with some glee and pride, to the forthcoming election. We will be happy to stand toe-to-toe with the environmental vandals opposite in every electorate in this State. We will point to the record, we will point to the Bellevue Hotel, and we will point to the appalling level of national park estate in Queensland when Mr Borbidge

was in Government with Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. We will point to this Government's doubling of the national park estate. We will point the Leader of the Opposition to properties like Starcke and Silver Plains. He was a part of the Government which sold off high conservation value coastal Cape York land to property developers. The Opposition does not like that!

Mr HOBBS: I rise on a point of order. The Government sold \$1m worth of freehold land in the mahogany glider area.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Warrego under Standing Order 124. Members are taking points of order that are spurious, as that one was.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The Opposition members do not like it, but the Leader of the Opposition asked the question so they can squirm a little longer. The Leader of the Opposition was part of the Bjelke-Petersen Government that sent National Party Ministers—

Mr SLACK: That was years ago.

Mr W. K. GOSS: It is his environmental record.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Yak, yak, yak! The Opposition cannot take it. The Opposition does not want to hear that Mr Borbidge was part of a Government that sent National Party Ministers to every Hilton Hotel in the world to try to stop the Labor Party from saving the northern rainforests. It took the election of this Government to stop the misuse of taxpayers' money, to stop the destruction of that rainforest and to stop the court challenges. It took this Government to stop logging on Fraser Island and to World Heritage list Fraser Island. It took this Government to save the Noosa north shore. It took this Government, in the last month, to save Marcus Shores, the last fragile link between Lake Weyba and the Peregian high dunes, where a Liberal Party member advocated development. The Liberal and National Parties supported development of that area and it took a positive, pro-environment Labor Party candidate and this Government to save Marcus Shores. Our environmental record will go on. The Opposition might do a private deal with Mr Hutton, but the public of Queensland—

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: What else can be going on when Mr Hutton attends a function to support Mr Lingard in Beaudesert?

Mr FITZGERALD: That is completely inaccurate, and for the record, Mr Lingard is not here, but he did not attend that function.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Lockyer under Standing Order 124.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. The comment made by the Premier is totally untrue.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

Mr W. K. GOSS: If Mr Lingard is on an RDO, that is not my fault.

Mr Borbidge: He has gone to a funeral.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I accept he is at a funeral, but the Opposition has to accept that that is what the people of Beaudesert tell me. The member for Beaudesert would be the most anti-environment member of this Parliament.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise on a point of order. The honourable member is at a funeral, and he is being subjected to personal abuse.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: I withdraw; the member for Beaudesert is not the most anti-environment member of this Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition is.

This Government will make sure that the people of the Mount Coot-tha electorate understand that Mr Hutton is not a representative of the conservation movement; he is a politician seeking to get elected and is using—indeed misusing—certain elements of the conservation movement to achieve his own ends. Mr Hutton has stood for many parties and many causes, and if he does not get elected on the back of the conservation movement he will be back at the next election with some other cause and some other front.

Corporatised Government Entities

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I refer the Treasurer to reports that the Opposition Leader has promised that, under a coalition Government, corporatisation will not be a haven for sneaky taxes. Can the Treasurer inform the House whether the Government is using corporatised entities as a cash cow?

Mr De LACY: I know who is intending to use corporatised entities as a cash cow, and I will come to that in a minute. I never cease to be amazed at the poor understanding that members of the Opposition have of the

process of corporatisation and what it really means. It means that we are putting our Government enterprises on a fully commercial basis. They will have a commercial capital structure and they will be required to generate commercial rates of return. Flowing from that will be commercial dividends and taxation policies.

As for those opposite who are members of a party that used to pride itself on being the party of private enterprise and free enterprise—one would think that honourable members opposite would understand and accept a few basic commercial principles, but they say that they are going to use corporatisation as a cash cow. My point is that that rational, sensible approach to the management of Government enterprises is something that ought to be supported by everybody. It contrasts starkly with the confused and contradictory approaches by members of the Opposition, or the so-called coalition parties.

Mr Borbidge is running around Queensland talking about corporatisation being a sneaky tax haven and saying that it is a flawed concept. He sits in this Chamber beside Mrs Sheldon, the Leader of the Liberal Party. We would expect them to talk to one another and to get their policies consistent. Mr Borbidge is saying that corporatisation is a sneaky tax haven and that the coalition parties would have nothing to do with it. Mrs Sheldon is down at the Gold Coast pledging to axe land tax. How is she going to do it? I will quote from an article in the *Weekend Bulletin*—

"Mrs Sheldon said the State Opposition intended to raise—

Mr Borbidge: What year was that?

Mr De LACY: I know that their policies change, so the members opposite need to know the date. It is 22 April 1995.

Mrs SHELDON: I rise to a point of order. What about a little truth? We did not say that we would axe land tax. I suggest that the Treasurer reads the whole report.

Mr De LACY: This was in April. I know that there is another one in May. Mrs Sheldon may not have said that, but the Gold Coast *Weekend Bulletin* said that she said it. She can take it up with the publishers. The article stated—

"Mrs Sheldon said the State Opposition intended to raise between \$500 million and \$700 million by corporatisation of a number of government instrumentalities and this

would help fund the shortfall in land tax revenue."

So we know who is going to use corporatisation as a cash cow! I appreciate that in May Mrs Sheldon changed the policy to privatisation. When I said that the other day in this Parliament, somebody said afterwards that they know why the policy changed; it was because Mrs Sheldon changed her policy adviser. She has got a new economic adviser.

Mrs SHELDON: I rise to a point of order. I would like also the date on which I changed that to privatisation—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member not to take spurious points of order. That is not a point of order at all.

Mrs SHELDON: It is a matter of having the truth on the record.

Mr De LACY: The important thing is to have consistent policy advisers so that Mrs Sheldon can have consistent advice. We would have some policies if she changed the policy adviser every month. The Government looks forward to what Mrs Sheldon is going to do leading up to the election. I know that she has a policy for corporatisation. Mr Borbidge is opposed to it. Then Mrs Sheldon has a policy for privatisation. Is Mr Borbidge supporting that one? What a policy package!

Redcliffe Hospital Urology Clinic

Mrs SHELDON: I direct a question to the Premier. I table a letter from the Redcliffe Hospital which informs a patient that his appointment at the Urology Clinic at the Redcliffe Hospital has been confirmed. The letter states—

"As you will notice the next available appointment is in 1997."

I ask: would the Premier be prepared to wait until 1997 for an appointment at a public hospital? If not, why should the people of Queensland be forced to wait two years for basic medical help from our public hospital system?

Mr W.K. GOSS: It is a management matter for the hospital. I will refer it to the appropriate Minister. I do not actually manage the patient list at the Redcliffe Hospital.

Operation Noah

Mr BUDD: I ask the Minister for Police: could he outline the success of the annual Operation Noah conducted yesterday by the Queensland police to target illicit drug activity?

Mr BRADY: This year's Operation Noah has been extremely successful, particularly as there has once again been a rise in the reported calls relating to organised drug activity as distinct from personal use. The police coordinator informs me that this year 78 per cent of the calls received across the State during Operation Noah concerned suppliers, cultivators, manufacturers and distributors of drugs. That is a rise of 10 per cent from last year. It certainly means that Operation Noah is worth the effort and that the public understand the importance of giving information that relates to manufacture, cultivation and supply. By 9 p.m. on the day, 1,319 calls had come in around the State, and 78 per cent of them—I emphasise this—related to supplying, cultivating, manufacturing and distributing. As to the particular drug to which the information related—some 842 calls related to cannabis, 131 to heroin, 32 to cocaine, 199 to amphetamines and 51 to LSD or Ecstasy.

Across the State, the numbers of calls have been very significant. There were 157 calls from the south-eastern region based on the Gold Coast, 177 calls from the metropolitan south region, 124 calls from the southern region based on Toowoomba and 203 calls from the north coast region based on Maroochydore. The highest number of calls received across the State was actually received from the north coast region based on Maroochydore. There is no doubt that with the increasing use by the public of Operation Noah and with the increasing number of people calling in with information about cultivation, manufacturing and distribution, Operation Noah is a very good service. It complements the increased numbers in the Drug Squad and the attempts by the police to target the real criminals in relation to drug activity—the organisers and the distributors of the drugs.

Woodwark Bay Project

Mr SLACK: I refer the Minister for Environment and Heritage to reports that the Japanese-owned Laguna Quays resort at Proserpine has gone into receivership. As this development is not far from the Woodwark Bay site where this Government excised 60 hectares of environmentally sensitive ocean-front land from the Dryander National Park to enhance a similar proposed development by Kumagi Gumi for the provision of a third golf course, I ask: what is the current status of the Woodwark Bay project and when is it likely to proceed?

Ms ROBSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. I have not had a recent briefing on the status of Woodwark Bay, but my recollection is that there was a contractual date to be met by the proponent. I would have to check on the actual date, but I understand that 30 June 1996 was a date for completion of part of the agreement in terms of obtaining finance. I am quite happy to get back to the member and provide that information.

Brisbane River Dredging

Mr BEATTIE: I refer the Minister for Environment and Heritage to the concern in my electorate of Brisbane Central about the dredging of the Brisbane River near New Farm, and I ask: could the Minister please explain to the House the work of the Brisbane River Management Committee and the removal of dredging from the urban reaches of the Brisbane River, particularly near New Farm and Teneriffe?

Ms ROBSON: This is an issue of which the Brisbane River Management Group, which has been set up under this Government to explore issues related to the Brisbane River and its management and use for the future, has been very conscious. We set up a working party to undertake that work. Obviously the member for Brisbane Central is very concerned about this issue as residents of both New Farm and other near-city suburbs have endured for many years the noise and visual impacts of river dredging.

Mr Foley: And Yeronga.

Ms ROBSON: And Yeronga, of course, as the Minister correctly points out. The Brisbane River Management Group now has a role in overseeing Brisbane River dredging. I can advise the honourable member that the operating conditions that apply to that section of the river are set out clearly in the permits that the dredge companies must obtain from the Department of Environment and Heritage.

For the area from the Victoria Bridge in the city to Norris Point at New Farm, those conditions include: no dredging to take place within 50 metres of either bank; the dredging depth at any point 50 metres from the river banks shall not exceed 12 metres; the river bed should never exceed a one in four slope as a result of the dredging; in any one day, the minimum distance between any two dredges will be 250 metres; dredging is allowed in a dredging zone for a maximum of five hours in any one day; the equivalent noise level from a dredge's operation has to be less

than 60 decibels with noise peaks remaining below 65 decibels; following dredging in any zone of the river no further dredging is allowed in this zone the following day nor within 250 metres of the previous day's dredging position; the hours of operation are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday to Friday, and 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, with no dredging to occur on Sundays or public holidays. Any breach of those conditions may result in the cancellation or suspension of the respective dredging permit.

Following the formation of the Brisbane River Management Group by this Government and in recognition of public concerns that have been expressed by the member for Brisbane Central and other members about river dredging, a separate working group was established. It is addressing the specific issue of management of extractive industries operating on the river. As a result of the work that has been done, I was pleased to be able to announce on Monday of this week, World Environment Day, the phasing out of all dredging in urban and city reaches of the Brisbane River over the next two years. I think this is a very significant announcement for the future uses of the Brisbane river, which have changed over the past few years.

Koala Coast Protection Plan

Mr SANTORO: In directing a question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage I refer to her submission to the Koala Coast pork-barrelling fund in which she listed schools according to her own order of priority which related to the distance of each school from the tollway route. I ask: how did the order of her list differ from the priority list finalised by the Koala Coast Secretariat, which the Deputy Leader of the Coalition tabled in this House? To demonstrate the point, will the Minister make her list available for public scrutiny?

Ms ROBSON: Firstly, I object to the terminology used by the honourable member to refer to that community facilities fund. As I have explained to this House, it is a community facilities fund which was specifically determined, as the honourable member very well knows, to fund people who are affected by the proposed motorway. I have explained that; I am not going to do it all again.

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Cunningham under Standing Order 123A.

Ms ROBSON: The process to which I submitted a proposal was independently

audited. If the honourable member cannot understand what has been clearly explained, and if he has not been able to access the documents which have all been tabled, I cannot explain the matter any further to him.

Youth Employment Initiatives

Mr BARTON: Although youth unemployment continues to decline in line with the general level of unemployment, this remains a major social and economic issue for Queensland. I ask the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations: what has this Government done to help our next generation build skills and find jobs for a better future?

Mr FOLEY: I thank the honourable member for the question and note his longstanding interest in the rights and welfare of working people. No issue is more important than the issue of unemployment. It is the great social issue confronting our generation. In particular, the problems faced by young people with respect to employment are very considerable. Indeed, the current ABS labour market figures show youth unemployment at 29.6 per cent, that is unadjusted, in April this year, which is down from a peak of 34.8 per cent in March 1994.

In response to this problem, the Goss Government has adopted a number of strategies included in the Goss Government's \$150m Jobs Plan. In particular, the Youth Jobs Plan component targeted a number of areas. Additional apprenticeships and traineeships in the public sector saw 335 young people put into jobs as apprentices and trainees. The housing industry trade training initiative, undertaken through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning, has seen 320 apprentices and 480 young people with group training companies building Government housing. The policy with respect to Government building and construction contracts and employment of apprentices requires a minimum level of apprentices in the companies gaining Government contracts and \$450,000 has been allocated over a period of three years to facilitate that policy. That program exceeded its target of 300 by placing 454 apprentices and trainees into employment and training.

Perhaps one of the most important initiatives was that conducted by the Department of Environment and Heritage, namely, the Youth Conservation Corp, in which young people had the chance to work in national parks on revegetation projects, track restoration and also undertake studies at a

TAFE college. That initiative was funded in the order of \$1.2m and helped to place 140 young people into employment and training.

On an ongoing basis, as a Government we have a special duty to assist young, unemployed people and that is why \$3.2m has been made available to employ an extra 20 youth employment consultants for three years, bringing the total up to 60 youth employment consultants. They have already exceeded their target by placing 3,390 unemployed people into jobs, placing 2,432 unemployed people into training and assisting a total of 7,670 people. These are positive results in assisting disadvantaged groups. Of the young people who were assisted by those youth employment consultants, a number of them were in areas that face special problems in the labour market: 11 per cent were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, 6 per cent were persons with a disability and 42 per cent were long-term unemployed.

It is true that Queensland is seeing 2,000 extra jobs generated every week, but we still have much to do to respond to the needs of the unemployed and, in particular, the youth unemployed.

QE II Hospital

Mr HORAN: In directing a question to the Minister for Health, I refer to the callous mismanagement of QE II Hospital, in particular the stripping away of maternity, paediatrics, the medical ward, intensive care and accident and emergency by his Government. I also remind the Minister that, before being savaged by his Government, QE II was the third biggest maternity hospital in Queensland and had the third largest accident and emergency unit in the State and that the National Injuries Surveillance Project of 1988 showed the QE II treating 3,000 more injuries per year than the PA Hospital. I ask: will the Minister now admit that the Goss Government's decimation of the QE II Hospital has been a disaster and that the State coalition's plan to reinstate accident and emergency, a medical ward and an eight-bed intensive care and cardiac care ward is the only way to restore the services of this once great hospital to the surrounding communities?

Mr ELDER: The easy answer is "No", but I will not let him get away with the easy answer—not today. As we all know, QE II was built to prop up two Liberal Party members years ago. It was built for no other reason, in no other place, but for political need—political grandstanding.

Mr Connor: Who were they?

Mr ELDER: Kyburz and Scassola. If the honourable member wants to know the others, he should just keep asking the questions.

Mr Connor: Who was the other one?

Mr ELDER: They are both probably now patients of our hospital system. That is why it was built. It was not built in Logan, where it should have been built in the first place. When it was built, it was left with floors empty and with a lack of services. He talks about commitment from the National Party. What commitment? When it was built, where was their commitment? Their commitment was in their boots. They supplied no services. They had no consideration for the people on the south side; they had no consideration for the people at Mount Gravatt or Mansfield in the immediate area. The National Party Government built it, but it did not prop it up with any services.

As for the nonsense about the volume of work that went through QE II—this Government has had to resolve the difficulties between the two campuses, that is, the QE II and the PA, in relation to the services that we will provide at the QE II. It has done that through negotiations with both campuses, the medical staff associations and others. The Government will now provide excellent services at QE II. Already, the hospital has an emergency care centre that treats 95 per cent of the people in that area who walk through the doors needing accident and emergency treatment. People who do not receive that treatment at that hospital are usually suffering from significant trauma, and they are treated at the RBH or the PA. The lie is that the member knows that. That is the word for it. He is misleading the people in that community, and that is the worst element of his ploys in relation to the QE II.

Just so that members are aware, I tell the House that today I signed documents to give the QE II teaching hospital status. That is the commitment from this Government to the QE II Hospital. It will be a centre of excellence in eye surgery and ophthalmology.

Mr Horan: You can't go there with a heart attack.

Mr ELDER: People can go in there for any service they need, and the member knows it. The member's hollow rhetoric about what he would do in relation to the QE II is just that because, since day one, the National Party has never been committed to it. This Government has taken up the challenge of integrating the two campuses and supplying services across the two campuses.

I will finish on this note: it always amazes me how critical the Opposition is about positive moves within Health. The Deputy Leader of the Coalition asked a question about urology services in Redcliffe. The reason for a lack of services in many parts of Queensland and, in particular, rural areas, is that we do not have the specialists who are needed to meet the growing demand in Queensland. Part of my response to that on behalf of the Government was to put in place competitive packages so that we could attract and retain specialists for rural areas. What do we hear from the Opposition about those positive steps, which are supported by doctors, and which I have negotiated with the specialists, the med. supers. and others in Queensland, to keep specialists in the system? I will refer to an article written by one member of the National Party about the initiatives to give doctors telecommunications equipment and vehicles—something that they never received under the National Party Government, which created an anomaly in this State and made Queensland less competitive than other States. The article stated—

"The Qld Opposition revealed last week the Queensland Health Department is spending \$20 million on . . . luxury cars fitted with mobile phones.

Apparently the money is to buy luxury model . . . top-of-the-range—"

referring to cars—

". . . from the Government's recently announced \$181 million health package."

Yes, I announced that doctors and specialists would be getting vehicles and mobile phones, because I appreciate the work that they do. Obviously, the Opposition does not. The article states further—

"None of these vehicles will go to rural doctors."

Wrong. What does the member call a medical superintendent? What does he call a senior medical officer? The article states further—

". . . the so-called incentives should be directed to get doctors to the country."

How does the member think he is going to retain those doctors? The member who made those comments is none other than Mr Mitchell, who represents Charters Towers, which just happens to have a medical superintendent.

A Government member: Who?

Mr ELDER: That is a question. Who? The member is sitting somewhere up the back of the Chamber. This year, the Government's

constructive initiative was to keep doctors in the system. It negotiated with the doctors to provide the vehicles and the mobile phones, yet that initiative was criticised by members of the National Party. That is how petty they are when it comes to retaining and looking after doctors in our system.

Telemarketing Companies

Mr NUNN: I ask the Deputy Premier and Minister for Consumer Affairs: is he aware of concerns in the community that telemarketing arrangements between charities and marketing companies put more money into the hands of the marketing company than the charity? Can he intervene to ensure that the charity and people making donations are protected?

Mr BURNS: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am aware of these concerns, because they are raised fairly regularly. Recently, there has been a lot of national publicity about fundraising and whether the money that is raised by charities is really spent on charitable works or whether it is spent on other things.

Recently, under section 33 of the Collections Act, which provides for a written agreement to be entered into when a commercial enterprise on behalf of a charity conducts fundraising activities for profit, I refused to approve two telemarketing arrangements between a charity and a company called Century No. 32 Pty Ltd. Both agreements provided for the payment to the company of 70 per cent of the funds raised. So 30 per cent—30c in the dollar—was going to go to the charity and 70c in the dollar was going to go to the telemarketing company. The initial agreement provided for the company representatives to contact the public and collect donations on behalf of the charity. For this, the company would be paid 70 per cent of the donations.

The second agreement provided for the sale of personalised labels for \$42, of which the charity would receive \$12.60, or 30 per cent of the sale. A price of \$5 was obtained by the Office of Consumer Affairs from a commercial printer as a reasonable cost of the labels. So the company was going to pay \$5 for the labels, it was going to receive \$42 when it sold a label, and it was going give the charity \$12.60.

I am sure honourable members would agree that when considering those arrangements the interests of the charity and the public are paramount. It was my view that

the public would react in a negative fashion if it became aware that only 30 per cent of the donations, or the price of the label, would reach the charity.

I have put on notice that we will continue to take that stand. The charity was a good charity. There was nothing wrong with it. Representatives of the charity said to me, "We really need to raise the money." However, 30c in the dollar is too little to receive from such activities. If members of the public find out about this, they will not give money. The dollars will just dry up. The message has been getting to the public through national publicity about national telemarketing arrangements, and that has made it very hard for charities to raise money. Most of them do not have the necessary fundraising expertise, and it is a good idea for them to hire experts to do the job. However, it is also a bad idea if the experts are going to get 70c in the dollar and the charity is going to get only 30c in the dollar.

Sunshine Coast Blood Bank

Mr TURNER: I refer the Minister for Health to his answer to my question in this House on 31 May, in which he indicated he was unaware of the position of the Sunshine Coast Blood Bank, advised me to write to him and said that he would look into it. This was despite the fact that the member for Maroochydore and I had made numerous representations to the former Health Minister on the issue. In particular, I refer the Minister to a letter written to him by my colleague the member for Maroochydore on 18 May 1995 on the subject, to which his office replied on 23 May stating that the Minister was having the matter examined. That was eight days before I asked my question. I ask the Minister: first, did he deliberately mislead the House in reply to my question of 31 May; or, secondly, is it simply a case that the Minister is completely out of touch with correspondence emanating from his office? Was the Minister attempting to show how coy and clever he could be in response to a genuine question from me concerning an issue of tremendous importance in the provision of health care in my electorate?

Mr ELDER: No, no, and no.

Gold Coast Institute of TAFE

Mrs ROSE: I ask the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations: what progress is being made on the latest extension to the Gold Coast institute of TAFE?

What impact will this have on vocational education and training services on the Gold Coast?

Mr FOLEY: I can inform the House that work is under way on a multimillion dollar refurbishment of the former Stewarts building in Southport. The first stage is due to be completed in July for an intake of the first 800 students. This facility is close to local businesses and represents value for the public dollar. It is more cost effective than trying to buy land in the prime area and build a new facility.

Recently, I approved a contract for around \$1m worth of the latest information technology to assist students at the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE in this facility. That will provide almost 200 personal computers and software for the use of those students. I am pleased to say that the Queensland company Rosh-Tech has won the major contract for the supply of that technology.

This initiative will provide training opportunities for 800 students on the Gold Coast. That number will expand to almost 2,000 full-time places by 1999. It will relieve pressure on the three northern Gold Coast campuses of the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE at Ashmore, Broadwater and Southport. The Stewarts centre will specialise in flexible delivery. For example, high-tech materials and computer-aided learning will enable students to progress at their own pace and undertake study on a flexible basis. Training opportunities have to be tailored to the lifestyle demands of the local clientele.

The funds for this project are part of the \$19.3m budget of the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE in 1995-96. The funds from the State Budget this year will buy some 2.7 million student contact hours worth of training. This represents an effort by the Goss Government to give vocational education and training on the Gold Coast the support that it deserves—support which was so sadly neglected by years of National and Liberal Party rule.

Community Facilities Grants

Mr FITZGERALD: In directing a question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, I refer to claims by the Minister that grants from the community facilities pork-barrelling program had been advertised to the public at the time when she visited schools in her electorate to draw up funding applications on their behalf. I table the public notice that was not inserted in local newspapers until just before the school

holidays on 7 and 14 December last year. Given that the Minister's approach to schools in Springwood occurred between August and November, when neighbouring schools were still blissfully unaware, I refer the Minister to the proposed second round of funding, and I ask: when and where will this second \$5m round be advertised? When will it be open to applications and when will the successful applicants receive their money?

Ms ROBSON: The fund to which the honourable member referred at the beginning of his question does not exist.

Regional Services, DBIRD

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I ask the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development: in view of the importance placed on regional access to Government services, can the Minister explain what his department has done to promote that concept?

Mr PITT: I am pleased to answer the question of the honourable member. I am proud to be able to say that the record of this Government and my department is in stark contrast to the record which existed prior to 1989. As to regional service delivery—prior to this Government coming to power, there were only six regional offices in my department. Fewer than 20 personnel were operating from those offices and the activities emanating from them were limited, to say the least. They were really front offices for referring information back to head office in Brisbane. The offices had very little capacity to deliver services. Handing out brochures was one of the major activities undertaken at the offices at that time. Lip-service was paid to the whole concept of regionalisation.

Since 1989, the department has extended its activities. We now have 12 regional offices spread throughout the State. Up to 80 personnel are in those offices and they are moving into the community and doing what should be done through the regionalisation process, that is, making services accessible to our regional client base. Those officers are far more pro-active than ever before. They have some real decision-making powers, which was not previously the case.

Only this week, my department announced the use of the 13 prefix for DBIRD telephone numbers throughout Queensland. By dialling the number 13 26 50, no matter where people live in Queensland they will be able to contact a DBIRD office for the same

price as a local call. This initiative is just part of the Government's process of providing equal access to services throughout the State. By using the Statewide number, business people will be put in contact with the nearest DBIRD office. The provision of that telephone number enhances the regionalisation process that DBIRD has undertaken. Other initiatives introduced by the Government that are producing much-needed services for regional business people in Queensland are GOBIS and QBLIC. Those programs have been well received. I am sure that people now realise that the Government is serious about providing services to regional Queensland.

The success of regionalisation in this State, in particular in relation to my department, can be measured to a large degree by the way in which the NIES program has been taken up. Some 50 per cent of the funds that have been disbursed through the National Industry Extension Scheme go to regional clients, that is, people outside the south-east corner of Queensland. We are delivering services to those people. On a global basis, a further indication of not only the department's but also the Government's attitude to regional Queensland is that in this year's Budget some 50 per cent or more of capital works went outside the south-east corner of Queensland.

Koala Coast Communities Facilities Fund

Mr SPRINGBORG: I refer the Minister for Environment and Heritage to her claim that the Koala Coast Community Facilities Fund was very well advertised, albeit not until the eve of the Christmas school vacation. Given that the school most affected by the tollway, Carbrook State Primary School, which is to lose 30 metres of its frontage to a tollway exit ramp, was unaware that such grants were available, I ask: was the Department of Education officially advised of the program so that all schools in the area and not just those in the Minister's electorate could apply?

Ms ROBSON: I do not know the answer to that question. As I have said repeatedly in this House, I distanced myself from all of that process. A committee was in place that was in charge of doing that.

Education

Mr SZCZERBANIK: I ask the Minister for Education: is he aware of recent statements in this House by the Leader of the Opposition that "the coalition will deliver a

dividend to the people of Queensland in the form of better opportunities for Queensland kids"? Can the Minister inform the House about the opportunities that this Government has made available to Queensland students and how its record compares with that of previous Queensland Governments?

Mr HAMILL: I am aware of those comments by the Leader of the Opposition. I am also aware of some material published in the *Sunday Mail* newspaper last weekend which indicated that the people of Queensland who had been approached in a survey of public opinion had indicated that education was a vital issue for them in their consideration of the position of political parties in this State. I can understand that. We have repeatedly made the point that education spending in this State is one of the most significant investments that we as a community can make for our future because it is an investment in the welfare of our young people and in their ability to avail themselves of opportunities in the future.

That is why it is important to reflect upon the achievements of this Government with respect to education. A number of questions spring to mind. We could well ask: who has brought down six successive record budgets for education funding in this State?

Government members: Labor!

Mr HAMILL: Labor. We did that. Who has brought down record financial support for the non-Government schools sector in this State? Labor has. We have been responsible for that. We have introduced needs-based funding to make sure that those moneys go to the communities that need that investment. Who has been responsible for a \$300m package to reform the school curriculum? We have done that. That is another major commitment to the welfare of our kids and their future.

Who has been responsible for a \$52m program to help P & Cs with the basics? We have done that. Again, that is another important initiative of this Labor Government. Who has been arguing the case with the Commonwealth Government to get more higher education places in this State? Again, the Goss Labor Government has been at the forefront. Who has been funding regional campuses to ensure that young people in regional Queensland can access higher education? Again, that is an important initiative of this Labor Government. Who has brought computer technology into the primary schools? Who has been responsible for

providing schools with access to information technology?

Mr FitzGerald: The National Party.

Mr HAMILL: Again, that is an important Labor initiative. By the tenor of the interjection of the member for Lockyer, we can only construe that he should go to the bottom of the class. When we are looking at the record, the Government's achievements with respect to education funding speak for themselves.

It is also important to contrast the position of the Opposition; that is, if the Opposition has a position. In that regard, I was very interested to learn that the Government is not the only body having trouble finding an Opposition policy on education. The people who have a great interest in education on a day-to-day basis seem to feel the way that we do. I refer to the parents of the hundreds of thousands of kids in Queensland schools. They are searching for some indication from the Opposition that it has some education policies. For the information of the House, I will read an important extract from a letter sent by the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Associations to Mr Borbidge as Leader of the Opposition. In that letter, the QCPCA seeks assurances not only that the Opposition has a policy but also that it is interested in—as this Government is committed to—the importance of children's education. The president of the QCPCA has written to Mr Borbidge in these terms—

"Mr Borbidge, the QCPCA has seen little in your education policy"—

perhaps it has not seen much at all, because I do not believe that it has the Opposition's policy—

"to suggest that your government would be committed to furthering the opportunities available to all Queensland school students and to Queensland's move towards the development of a quality public education system."

I table that letter. Talk about a want of confidence! When the QCPCA is saying to the Opposition, "Where is your policy? What are you committed to?" it is a pretty sad indictment of the state of preparation and the state of commitment of the Liberal and National Parties to the most significant area of social spending that any Government can undertake.

Carbrook Primary School

Mr DAVIDSON: I refer the Minister for Environment and Heritage to the Carbrook

Primary School, which is losing 30 metres of its frontage to the south east tollway but which has the misfortune to be located in Redlands instead of Springwood. When the Minister took the Administrative Services Minister and the manager of Q-Build doorknocking to hand out \$915,000 from the Koala Coast Secretariat to schools, she did not visit Carbrook. I ask the Minister: will she now take Mr Milliner to Carbrook, or is that a job for John Budd?

Ms ROBSON: Great question! I think that I might leave the management of the Redlands area to Mr Budd.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas Industry

Mr DAVIES: I ask the Minister for Minerals and Energy: can he explain to the House the current status of the liquefied petroleum gas industry in Queensland?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for the question. Let me say from the outset that all the evidence we have indicates the existence of a strong and robust LPG industry in our State. Latest statistics show that there are now over 200,000 users of LPG in Queensland with consumption at about 10 petajoules per year. This equates to 22 per cent of total Australian LPG use. In recent years, the industry has invested \$1 billion in Queensland and employs about 2,000 people right around this State. As well, improved and expanded terminal facilities—notably at Lytton in Brisbane and in Cairns—have led to greater involvement of competitive suppliers over the past few years. This healthy competition has displayed itself particularly in the pricing of LPG for consumers. One LPG terminal extension for Brisbane is already in the final stages and others are, shall we say, in the pipeline.

There has been a heartening increase in reticulated LPG use in many areas of the State, including Cairns, Townsville, Port Douglas and parts of Brisbane. This has led to a steady growth of LPG being used for domestic, commercial and industrial purposes—now over 60 per cent of Queensland's LPG consumption—and in automotive applications. Increasing competition within the industry is now exerting a tremendous impact on the industry.

Micro-economic reforms which are currently focused on electricity and reticulated natural gas would no doubt have an impact on the LPG industry. For example, requirements under free and fair trade agreements for open access to gas transmission pipelines could

flow over into distribution networks covered by gas franchises. This open access means that any person may, for a fee, have access to a gas pipeline or network for the purposes of transmitting gas to consumers. The concept of open access is already being introduced in some Australian States. Changes affecting natural gas distribution will naturally and surely have some flow-on effects to LPG distribution networks.

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

RACING AND BETTING AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (11.17 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Racing and Betting Act 1980."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Gibbs, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (11.18 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

This Bill will allow bets placed overseas to be included in Totalisator Administration Board of Queensland—TAB—pools and also allow the TAB to amalgamate net pools with overseas totalisator operators. Overseas activities will represent a rather marginal contribution when compared with the TAB's core business activities in Australia. However, it represents an opportunity which cannot be realised or developed without the introduction of this Bill. Under current legislation, the only overseas opportunities afforded to the TAB have been in the area of technical advice and sale of totalisator systems to other countries. This amendment will allow the TAB to pursue significant export opportunities available in the fast-growing Asia-Pacific markets.

With international telecasting of Australian racing and the globalisation of betting, TABs Australiawide will be looking towards expanding overseas operations. The future will hold challenges, with other TABs providing an

expanded array of services in a highly competitive economic environment. Queensland needs to be prepared to meet these challenges. This Bill will enable Queensland TAB to compete directly with Australia's other major TABs—Victoria's TABCorp and the NSW TAB—for the overseas gambling dollar. The Queensland TAB must keep pace with other States to ensure that its service standards remain high.

Proximity of time zones, the Sky Channel international racing service and major advances in communications are factors which suggest that there is potential for significant market expansion outside Australia. Increased overseas interest in betting on Australian racing provides opportunities for the TAB to export its technical services and retailing expertise. Amalgamation of net pools would lead to large and more stable betting pools. This would provide greater revenue for the TAB and, through totalisator taxes, for the Queensland Government. The racing industry will also be a winner. Increased profitability of the TAB results in higher prize money for meetings and greater returns to the three codes of racing through profit distribution, incentive schemes and the Racing Development Fund. Any arrangement or agreement entered into by the TAB with an overseas operator will be subject to close scrutiny. Betting sourced outside Queensland will be transacted in Australian dollars, thereby eliminating any risk in fluctuations in the foreign exchange rate. Betting will also be in accordance with the rules of the Queensland TAB.

Also included in this Bill are amendments of a minor and administrative nature pertaining to changing the name of the body controlling greyhound racing in Queensland and amending some obsolete references contained in the Act. The new Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland will now be known as the Greyhound Racing Authority. This is in line with a recommendation in the greyhound racing industry strategic plan, which aims to improve the image of greyhound racing and broaden its appeal to the greater public. The name change will be part of the marketing plan and will signify to the industry that this organisation will be spearheading the process of change that is so vital to the future success of the greyhound racing industry.

I commend this Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Veivers, adjourned.

BUILDING UNITS AND GROUP TITLES AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. G. N. SMITH (Townsville—Minister for Lands) (11.22 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Building Units and Group Titles Act 1994."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Smith, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. G. N. SMITH (Townsville—Minister for Lands) (11.23 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

This Bill seeks to amend the Building Units and Group Titles Act 1994. It protects lenders who have provided finance for body corporate management/service contracts by allowing the lender to take over the contract if there is a breach. By-laws which give body corporate managers or service contractors the exclusive right to carry on their business will automatically be repealed on the termination or expiry of the contract. Most by-laws of this type relate to letting agent businesses. The amendment will ensure that, at the end of any contract with the body corporate, the contractor will not be entitled to restrict the body corporate from entering into a similar contract with another person. As a result, owners will have greater control over their community titles scheme.

The Bill will, however, repeal section 224 (10) of the Act, ensuring that no property rights of owners are removed. The Bill also details the basis on which information must be disclosed by a vendor to a purchaser of a lot or a proposed lot in a community titles scheme. It also provides for the rights of a purchaser if that information is inaccurate or the provisions of the legislation have not been complied with. In addition, the Bill clarifies the transitional provisions that apply to body corporate management or service contracts.

Contracts that have been signed before 24 October 1994, or that have been disclosed in a contract of sale signed prior to that date, will be subject to the 1980 Act. That Act will continue to apply when those contracts are transferred or varied or have an option in

relation to them exercised. However, the variation cannot be an extension of their term.

The Bill ensures that, if a body corporate management or service contract is entered into between 24 October 1994 and the date of commencement of the 1994 Act for a longer period than is allowed under the Act, it will be taken to be for the period allowed under the 1994 Act. This Bill does not include all the proposed amendments. Some additional amendments will be introduced after they are finalised.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those people who, as representatives of organisations, gave freely of their time, knowledge and expertise to officers of my department to ensure the increased effectiveness of this legislation.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hobbs, adjourned.

STATUTORY AUTHORITIES SUPERANNUATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (11.25 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend provisions about the superannuation provided by statutory authorities."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr De Lacy, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (11.26 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The purpose of this Bill is to introduce amendments to legislation governing the superannuation schemes of statutory authorities in recognition of new Commonwealth Government superannuation legislation. The amendments will, firstly, remove the requirement for ministerial or Governor in Council approval for superannuation arrangements entered into by statutory authorities.

Since the early 1980s, many Acts establishing statutory authorities provided for them to establish superannuation schemes

with the approval of the Governor in Council or Minister. This approval process gave the State Government some oversight over the operation of these schemes. Under the Commonwealth Government's Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993—SIS—all superannuation funds will come under a new Commonwealth supervisory regime. The trustees of public sector schemes, other than the central public sector funds, need to elect to be regulated under SIS to retain concessional taxation treatment. As the SIS legislation holds the trustees fully responsible for all aspects of the fund, it is now unnecessary for the Queensland Government to continue its supervisory role, and may even be in breach of the Commonwealth legislation.

Secondly, the Bill amends the Electricity Act 1994 to provide that the approved industry superannuation scheme which is currently being established is a continuation of the existing scheme. The approved industry scheme is a scheme which is essentially the same as the existing scheme but structured in such a way as to meet the new Commonwealth Government superannuation standards under SIS. The amendments are necessary to protect the existing benefit conditions and taxation treatment of the fund. This amendment is to be operative from the date the Electricity Act 1994 received assent.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Sheldon, adjourned.

MOTOR ACCIDENT INSURANCE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (11.28 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994 and the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr De Lacy, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (11.29 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

In February of last year, the Government introduced new legislation in the form of the Motor Accident Insurance Act which commenced on 1 September 1994. This date heralded the start of a new and fairer compulsory third party scheme in Queensland, especially in the delivery of benefits to injured parties. The need for reform in the compulsory third party scheme was highlighted by the delay in settlement of claims; four and a half years was the average time from date of injury to settlement.

Rehabilitation provision, regrettably, was not a feature of the previous scheme. However, under the Motor Accident Insurance Act it becomes the focus of personal injury management. This must be of particular benefit to those severely injured and of course there is the long-term reduction in financial and social cost to the community. Although we are only nine months into the new scheme, I am informed that very favourable comment has been received from injured parties, the legal profession representing both injured persons and insurers, the medical profession and allied health providers as well as from underwriting licensed insurers.

The Goss Government is totally committed to the continual review of this important social justice legislation to ensure that it meets the community's needs. The Government believes that it is appropriate now to introduce the Motor Accident Insurance Legislation Amendment Bill. The primary aim of the Bill is to ensure appropriate coverage by the Nominal Defendant. Also, the opportunity is taken to introduce amendments that will address any ambiguity or omissions in the original legislation.

I would like to elaborate firstly on the Nominal Defendant situation. The legislation, as it currently stands, involves the Nominal Defendant in cases where the accident, involving an uninsured motor vehicle, occurs on a road. By definition, the term "road" is given broader application but there is some conjecture that the definition may exclude from Nominal Defendant cover places like beaches where people frequently use motor vehicles. The Motor Accident Insurance Legislation Amendment Bill addresses this issue by including a "public place" in the scope of cover and as such affords persons injured, as the result of the negligence of an uninsured motor vehicle driver, much wider protection. It certainly extends the cover to our beaches.

The definition of a "public place" is aligned to the Motor Vehicles Control Act 1975.

By adopting this definition, it means that if an uninsured motor vehicle is involved in an accident at a place where the vehicle, at the material time, would have required registration and therefore compulsory third party insurance, the Nominal Defendant Fund will stand in place of a compulsory third party insurer.

However, the proposed amendment does not broaden the cover to the degree that an uninsured motor vehicle involved in an accident on private property can come within the scope of the Nominal Defendant scheme.

Section 5 of the legislation is subject to further amendment by inclusion in sub-section (1) (b) the words "in respect of the motor vehicle". The purpose of this amendment is in no way to alter the application of the Act but to make the intent clearer and reinforce the policy of insurance wording that cover is limited to the motor vehicle.

I would like to refer to the various amendments relevant to the change in name of the hospital and ambulance levy to the hospital and emergency services levy. The concept proposed in this Bill is to alter the component in respect of the ambulance levy to generally cover emergency services. By broadly referring to emergency services it allows the Treasurer greater flexibility in the allocation of the levy funds to the various public emergency services, reflecting their involvement with motor vehicle accidents.

Another area for comment is the extension of the offence of driving an uninsured motor vehicle on a road. The Bill takes into account the public place situation now covered by the Nominal Defendant and also brings in the added offence of permitting the driving of an uninsured motor vehicle. The owners and drivers of unregistered/uninsured motor vehicles need to take heed that the Government is committed to detecting these vehicles on our roads. In recent months the Department of Transport has upgraded its detection activity, resulting in an increase in prosecutions, both for being unregistered and uninsured. With better technology now available to officers of the Department, this activity will be continuing and no doubt will become more effective.

As an added warning to owners and drivers of unregistered/uninsured motor vehicles, they are playing Russian roulette with their finances, because if a person is injured and a claim is paid by the Nominal Defendant, the negligent driver and/or owner will be

required to repay the amount paid under the claim. Many of these claims amount to several hundred thousand dollars.

The final aspect of the amendment Bill to mention is the proposed amendment to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. As I have already stated, there is a very clear obligation for motor vehicles to have compulsory third party insurance. Officers of the Department of Transport are entitled to carry out necessary inquiries and to bring prosecutions in respect of compulsory third party insurance but again by the adoption of the proposed amendment it makes the intent and authority quite explicit.

There was extensive consultation prior to the introduction of the Motor Accident Insurance Act and there has been ongoing dialogue with the various stakeholders subsequent to the commencement of the scheme. At this point, I must particularly acknowledge the efforts of the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland, the Insurance Council of Australia, the Bar Association of Queensland, the Queensland Law Society's Accident Compensation Committee and other legal groups such as the Australian Plaintiff Lawyers' Association who have assisted the Motor Accident Insurance Commission in identifying any possible problems in the operation of the legislation and the scheme generally.

Finally, Queensland is now one of the few jurisdictions that affords motor vehicle accident victims unfettered access to common law and at a reasonable cost to the motor vehicle owner. I believe we have the best compulsory third party common law system in Australia.

The Goss Labor Government is committed to keeping our compulsory third party scheme fully funded, with benefits at a level that meet community expectations. In this regard, the Motor Accident Insurance Commission will continue to examine avenues for improvement.

We as a Government are cognisant of the unfortunate incidents that occur in which injured people do not have recourse to common law, but at the same time we are equally conscious of the cost of providing compensation schemes. In the future we could very well be looking at some form of compensation opportunity to seriously injured drivers or other parties who due to the circumstances of the motor vehicle accident are unable to bring a common law action.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Sheldon, adjourned.

SUPERANNUATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 March (see p. 11228).

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.37 a.m.): The purpose of this Bill is to bring legislation on superannuation schemes for Queensland Government employees and members of Parliament into line with new Federal legislation. The Bill is necessary and covers a transfer of Queensland Government superannuation schemes to the Queensland Investment Corporation, QIC, for management. Legislation affected by this Bill includes the Public Service Superannuation Act 1958, the State Service Superannuation Act 1972, the Police Superannuation Act, the Superannuation (Government and other Employees) Act and the Acts relating to the Governor and judges. The Bill also removes references in legislation establishing the State service, police and parliamentary schemes for compliance with the soon to be superseded Commonwealth legislation.

The takeover of the management of the superannuation funds covered by this Bill by the QIC is a welcome move and should benefit members. The Bill also introduced a retrospective top-up provision for the judges' and Governor's pension legislation to ensure that employer-provided benefits are sufficient to meet the level of employer support required by the Commonwealth Government's superannuation guarantee charge legislation. The administrative amendments include the treatment of unclaimed superannuation moneys currently under the Federal legislation.

The Coalition does not oppose this Bill, which also accommodates administrative amendments. I received a letter by fax from the Treasurer yesterday regarding amendments to this Bill. I have not had time for any briefing on it, and I note we have had amendments circulated. I ask the Treasurer to guarantee that the amendments so circulated are covered by the matters raised in his letter to me.

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (11.40 a.m.): I rise to support this Bill. Superannuation has been one of the great reforms of the last decade in terms of looking after the interests of working women and men. Until approximately 10 years ago, superannuation

was the preserve of the few, and most people in the work force relied totally on the old age pension for sustenance in their retirement and to ensure that they could pay their bills. Superannuation was something for well-paid workers and people in the mainstream public service.

I am very proud to say that reforms in superannuation were led by the trade union movement in this country. Gary Weaven is still very active in the superannuation industry. After he left the ACTU as the assistant secretary, he was involved in organising joint investments for superannuation funds to ensure that working women and men get the best out of their investments. When the superannuation campaign started it was put together by Gary Weaven, an industrial officer of the ACTU and a person who had the vision to know what needed to be done for workers. The building industry unions—and I am sorry that the member for Bulimba is not here—were the first to really kick that campaign off for what became the first round of 3 per cent superannuation movements, and that is now building to 5 per cent and 6 per cent. Statements presented by the Federal Government this year reveal a level of compulsion that will be brought in over a period to make people contribute to their own superannuation benefits for the future. But that 3 per cent reform—and I know, Mr Deputy Speaker, that you will indulge me, because this is a Bill about bringing the State Government's funds into line with the national standards—has been evolving over that entire 10-year period to make sure that people are not ripped off by those who manage their superannuation.

It is very important that the funds in this State are consistent with the national standards. Certainly the Treasurer, in his second-reading speech, acknowledged that there are to be yet further changes to the national standards, but this Bill will accommodate them. It will allow the great superannuation funds in Queensland to meet that evolving and changing national standard.

Those standards have come about because of the campaign that I mentioned. Over a period there have been continuing negotiations in the Accord process between the ACTU at a national level and the Federal Government for continuing improvements to superannuation—continuing standards to make sure that people's needs are accommodated. It is a pity that there is no-one sitting on the other side to bait me today, but I acknowledge the fact that historically Queensland has always had very good

superannuation schemes for its public servants.

The old State Service Superannuation Fund was one of the better schemes in this country. It was certainly fully funded. It was not being paid for on the never-never scheme, and I acknowledge the fact that that is what this Government inherited when it came to power in 1989. But what that fund was not capable of providing was superannuation to Crown employees, to railway employees and to the lower paid people who were employed by the State Government of Queensland. Historically, the people who now reside on the Opposition benches had ensured that mainstream public servants were well provided for but again only in the context that they stayed in the public service for their entire working lives. There were very poor vesting arrangements. Prior to the running of a campaign by all of the State public sector unions in the mid to late 1980s, the provisions of the scheme were such that the opportunities for public servants to leave before they reached retirement age, or an early retirement age, were very restricted.

I make this comment because those funds very much reflected the nature of superannuation in this country. Superannuation was there for the very well paid people in the private sector, and it was there for the mainstream public servants—and I am not being critical of public servants, I think they deserved every cent of superannuation that they got. When I was a union official the people that I looked after in the blue collar area, the Crown employment area and in the railways had very, very poor—if any—superannuation. In fact, they did not have superannuation. The railway people had a retirement allowance that built up over a period. Even that did not provide them with a very good package on their retirement—

Mr Bennett: When I joined the electricity industry you used to have to stay 12 months to get approval before they even let you enter the scheme.

Mr BARTON: That is correct. I certainly accept that interjection from the member for Gladstone. There were restrictions on people joining the funds. When those people reached that qualifying period, as I recall, they had a one-off option to join. If they did not exercise that option, they were locked out of the fund forever; they could not get back in. That raises another aspect that I would like to comment on. Many people in their younger years with young families, mortgages, and high financial commitments simply could not afford to

contribute to the funds. In many cases they had to say "no" to that one-off option. They did not join the fund and were effectively locked out of superannuation for the rest of their working lives.

There was very poor vesting. That also reflected the national position. I forget the raw figures—and I am sorry I did not bring them with me today—but in the order of 78 or 80 per cent of the highly paid people in this country had superannuation. But less than 10 per cent of low paid wage earners did not have access to any form of superannuation at all—not only did they not have access to superannuation that was not good, that could give them a decent retirement, they had access to no superannuation at all. Something in the order of only 10 per cent of those people had any superannuation.

When I got to my feet I deliberately mentioned women before I mentioned working men, because women were even more disadvantaged. In the order of only about two to three per cent of working women had access to superannuation. Again, in the public sector in Queensland it was basically accepted that working women would work for a period and then leave the work force. If they came back they were very seriously disadvantaged because the superannuation standards in the early funds reflected the era in which they were set up, when it was understood in our society that when women married they left the work force and did not return. As a result of the campaigns of the union movement and then the further reforms that were enacted by this Government when Q Super was negotiated and put into place, the superannuation reforms in this State addressed all of those issues. They are the sorts of issues that are encompassed by the national standards. This Bill will ensure that the State superannuation funds are able to comply with future national standards.

I will take honourable members on a nostalgia trip. Back in the mid-1980s, as a result of Accord Mark IV, I think it was, the 3 per cent superannuation came in. There was a pretty heavy set of negotiations with the previous Government and the then Under Treasurer Leo Hielscher to ensure that State Government employees were able to pick up that 3 per cent. It was partially submerged into the State Service Superannuation Fund for those who had State super, but for the first time it gave a great many Crown employees and railway employees some superannuation—the 3 per cent superannuation, which went into the Gosuper fund when it came into place.

I know that in recent years Gosuper has been a declining fund because the funds of those people were rolled into Q Super when it came into place, but Gosuper was literally the largest superannuation fund in Australia at one point. It had in the order of 230,000 members and it was a reform that gave superannuation for the first time to Crown employees and railway employees in this State. Up until then only public servants had that benefit.

I will return to the point about the superannuation funds being fully funded. They were fully funded under the National Party Government before this Government came to office, but what this Government has been able to do in the last five and a half to six years is continue to improve the superannuation benefits for all of its employees—for mainstream public servants, for Crown employees, for railway employees, and for people who work for statutory authorities that are under the control ultimately of the Government. That highlights what is occurring in every other State.

I know that sometimes the Opposition say, "All you have done is inherited a great scheme off us." That is really not true. We inherited schemes in very good shape but have continued to improve those schemes at a time when in other States Liberal Governments are slashing superannuation benefits to their employees.

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr BARTON: I hear the shadow Treasurer heckling, but she knows that Mr Kennett in Victoria and Mr Brown in South Australia have slashed superannuation benefits. That has occurred at a time when the Government of this State is continuing to improve the superannuation benefits for employees of the State Government, the State railway system and statutory bodies. This Government is certainly bringing home the bacon to its employees through superannuation and it is doing that in a way that is to their benefit. I know that they understand and accept that we are doing a great job on their behalf, compared with what is happening interstate where, if a person is lucky enough to have a job because public servants are being sacked in great numbers, that person knows that, at the end of the day, his or her superannuation benefits are going to be less than what they were when those States were under Labor administrations. In this State, we have improved the benefits.

There is very good vesting in those schemes. Back in the era when people had to

stay to the end of the day, to retirement age, to receive their benefit, the schemes did not acknowledge the changes that are occurring in our society. People are much more mobile; they do not necessarily enter the public service or Government employment with a view to being there until retirement. The superannuation funds now give people flexibility. People can come back into the funds and pick up where they left off. They have a number of flexible options.

I spoke earlier about low-paid employees who used to be given a once-only option to join up or not join up. At that time, many made an economic decision, saying, "I simply cannot afford to pay out of my pay packet that increased amount of money, because all of the dollars that I get every week are accounted for." The Q Super fund gives people the option of three different levels at which they can buy into the scheme. It allows low-paid people to enter the fund and pay at a lower level. Once their mortgage is off their hands, or their children grow up and their expenses are lower, they can increase their payment into the fund to a much higher level and gain the same benefit that they would have received had they been contributing at the moderate level all along. So those options make the scheme user friendly to the employees of the State Government. That reform was brought in through negotiations between this Government, the trade union movement and the public sector unions in this State.

I note that the Bill confirms the Queensland Investment Corporation as the funds manager for the Government investment. I will talk a little about the Queensland Investment Corporation because, although many people hear that term, I do not think that many people understand it.

Mr D'Arcy interjected.

Mr BARTON: Some people have had very distinguished careers there.

Mr Beattie: Who went on to bigger and better things.

Mr BARTON: Who went on to bigger and better things. The Queensland Investment Corporation has a balanced fund of over \$10 billion. It is the fourth largest funds manager in this country. It is one of the top 100 in the world. It resides in Brisbane, which brings a range of people, from the European banks to the funds managers of the United States, to Brisbane to talk about their investments, joint activity or to consider a joint activity. If the Queensland Investment Corporation did not exist, those people would

not be coming to Queensland and they would not be seeing our great potential and the opportunities that exist here. When the National Party was in Government in this State—I know the fund was not over \$10 billion at that point; I think it reached approximately \$3.5 billion—all the money was in fixed-interest investments. They were very poor investments and all the eggs were in one basket. I know that it started the move to a balanced fund by forming the Queensland Treasury Corporation Investments Advisory Board, but it was achieved during the period of Labor Government.

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr BARTON: I hear some prattling from someone who simply would not know what occurred, and I think that she should do some research. When the Queensland Treasury Corporation Investments Advisory Board was corporatised to be the first Government owned corporation, that is, the Queensland Investment Corporation, it turned what was a large, fixed-interest investment into a balanced fund with investments in property, equities and with offshore investments in the proper proportion, to ensure that all the eggs were not in one basket. I believe that it deserves great congratulations on the job that it has done since it was formed. It has been consistently right up in the top quartile, which is the economic term. In other words, it has been in the top quarter of funds managers in this country. It has consistently held that position through prudent investments and through the professionalism of the team led by Jim Kennedy as the chairman and now with Henry Smerdon as the chief executive officer. The great work was done initially during the period that Ian Macoun was the chief executive leading that team.

With Suncorp, the Queensland Investment Corporation is the core of a great financial base in Queensland. They are two of the largest funds managers in this country. The move in this year's Budget to bring to Queensland a lot of the services and staff of the Australian Stock Exchange will strengthen the move to ensure that Queensland becomes a much more important financial powerhouse in this country. I am very confident that Queensland will rapidly overtake Melbourne's position. People think that Melbourne is the major financial centre in Australia.

Mr Beattie: Shrinking.

Mr BARTON: It certainly is a shrinking financial centre. I will speak briefly about the importance of this Bill to the trustees of the

State Government schemes, Q Super, Gosuper and the others that are mentioned, which share common trustees. This Bill assists the trustees with their very onerous responsibilities, because the trustees are the people who are ultimately responsible for the money that is owned by the members of the fund. The trustees have responsibilities under law to those members. If there were to be inconsistencies among our State law as it applied to the trustees, the national standards and national trust law, those trustees would be put in an extremely invidious position. When a person is a trustee of a superannuation fund of billions of dollars, that person needs to understand precisely what his or her responsibilities are to the members who own the money. This Bill, by ensuring that the State law complies totally with the national superannuation standards and the national superannuation standards as they are amended over the period, will certainly put the trustees' minds at rest a little. They need to know that, if they are prepared to take on the job of acting as the trustees and ensuring that members' superannuation funds are looked after, they will be protected.

This Bill is very good legislation. It ensures that the big improvements that have been gained for working women and working men are protected and advanced over the next decades, because a great deal has been achieved.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (11.59 a.m.): I acknowledge that significant contribution from the honourable member for Waterford.

A Government member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Indeed, it was very learned. I rise to support the Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill 1995. The objectives of the Bill are to amend the legislation governing the major public sector superannuation schemes primarily in accordance with developments in Commonwealth prudential superannuation, to ensure the judges' and Governor's pension schemes pay minimum benefits in all circumstances and to appoint the Queensland Investment Corporation as the internal funds manager of the major superannuation schemes.

In addition, the legislation achieves a number of other things, to which I will return shortly. I am particularly interested to see that the legislation refers to the specialist complaints body for the conciliation and arbitration of disputes concerning

superannuation. I think that that is a healthy move.

Clause 10 of the legislation omits section 2 in recognition of a new Commonwealth superannuation supervisory regime. The requirement in the Act to comply with the superseded Commonwealth legislation will be replaced with the State agreeing under an intergovernmental agreement to meet Commonwealth retirement income policies.

Clause 12 replaces the existing section 12 and provides for the appointment of the Queensland Investment Corporation as the investment manager. I mentioned that before. The QIC is to invest the funds in accordance with the investment policies and objectives of the trustees and to report to the trustees on the QIC's performance.

Clause 13, which amends section 19, corrects a drafting error to ensure that a minimum pension of 50 per cent of a backbencher's salary is payable where a member retires on the grounds of ill health. I might say that that is something we all assumed to be the case. I will refer to that a little later. However, let me make it clear that I am not suffering from any ill health.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: As the interjector said, some people would like me to suffer from ill health. However, they will have to be patient.

Clause 15 of the legislation replaces section 34 to introduce consistent procedures across the major superannuation schemes for dealing with unclaimed benefits. The trustees will manage unclaimed benefits, taking into account the rights of beneficiaries to certain minimum amounts such as interest.

The whole issue of superannuation is one of considerable debate within the Australian community, particularly since the recent Federal Government decision to make provision for employee contributions as part of the guarantee levy. I think that move is very healthy in the long-term interests of this country. I will deal with that later. Before doing so, I want to refer to those provisions that deal with members of Parliament. From time to time, members of Parliament—who are fair game in the media and elsewhere—are criticised for their pay and conditions. Indeed, recently the *Courier-Mail* three times ran a story relating to the pay rise that members received. I wish we were paid that pay rise three times. Fair go! The community is entitled to be aware of the pay and conditions of members. As we all know, our conditions are linked to the pay and conditions of Federal

members. However, I thought that it was a bit rich for the *Courier-Mail* to run a story about members' pay rises on three occasions.

Mr Welford: It would be nice if they ran their own three times.

Mr BEATTIE: Indeed. Let me deal with the issue of members of Parliament. Recently, I was undertaking some research into State Parliament in the 1890s. I discovered that in July 1889, for the first time, elected members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly were granted a salary of 300 pounds a year. That decision was to be a landmark in parliamentary representation in Queensland. In addition to the salary, a travelling allowance was paid. As members would appreciate, the payment of members was an important prerequisite before Labor men could enter Parliament in the 1890s because, up until that time, they could not afford to enter Parliament. However, that extra payment of members was not fully supported by the already entrenched parliamentary interests. The pastoralists, who ran the Parliaments in the 1890s—

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right. Within three years, the annual salary was halved to 150 pounds, and it remained at that level until 1896.

Mr Laming: The Depression.

Mr BEATTIE: Depression my foot! That is not true. The actual debate in *Hansard* was about reducing the pay to discourage people entering Parliament. It was to keep the workers out. That is exactly what the debate was about. The member should not misrepresent what the debate was about. I have read the *Hansard* record. However, the change to the salary and political allegiance of the members was indicative of the mood of social change that was about to unfold.

Because we are dealing with the issue of superannuation, I researched some of the other Bills that were passed in the 1890s. It was interesting to note that in 1899 there was an amendment to the Succession Act, which gave relief to widows whose husbands died without leaving a will. If the value of the property was less than 500 pounds, the surviving widow had absolute and exclusive entitlement. If it did not, she did not have that entitlement. In 1897, a Bill was introduced to upgrade the amount payable on claims for workers' compensation. However, by increasing the payout on accidental death equal to that of three years' salary, the Bill was regarded as too benevolent and it was not proceeded with. There was a private members'

motion in 1899 seeking to empower the Government to pay pensions to the old-age poor, but it was confronted with the argument that it would cause hardship to decide if a person was needy or not. So the motion failed to gain the support of the majority of the members.

I am happy to say that we have come a long way since the Parliaments of 100 years ago. It is appropriate that not only members of Parliament but also public servants, police, judges and those other people who are covered in this legislation be treated appropriately so that in their old age they are entitled to the dignity of a reasonable income.

Australia's population is ageing, and that is why superannuation is so important to all of us. In fact, recently I read an article titled *Attitudes to superannuation in Australia: the need for consumer education* by Nigel Patterson, who works for the Social Policy Division of the Commonwealth Department of Social Security. By way of background, he stated—

"As with other OECD countries, Australia will experience a significant ageing of its population in the early part of the 21st century. The reasons for this ageing of the population include a lower birthrate and increased life expectancy. A consequence of the ageing of the population will be the retirement of the 'baby boomer' generation born in the years following the second world war.

The proportion of the population aged 60 and over is expected to increase from 15 per cent to 26 per cent between 1991 and 2031."

That is extraordinary! Between 1991 and 2031, the proportion of the population aged 60 and over is going to increase from 15 per cent to 26 per cent. That is an increase of 11 per cent—a significant increase. The article states further—

"The major increase is likely to occur following 2011. Over the same period the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over is expected to increase from 12 per cent to 20 per cent.

Obviously, the ageing of the population has significant implications for the development of social policy by Commonwealth and State Parliaments, which is why legislation such as we are debating today is so important.

As part of that paper, a table was annexed titled "Attitudes to and Awareness of Facets of Retirement Incomes". It reported some surveys that had been carried out about

community attitudes towards superannuation and pensions. It is interesting to note some of the survey statistics because, again, they show the need for appropriate amendments such as those contained in this legislation and, indeed, the Commonwealth Government's employee contribution to the superannuation guarantee levy, which is being phased in until 1997 and beyond. Without that, this country will face difficult social and economic problems.

The details of the survey are contained on page 31 of the article titled *Attitudes to superannuation in Australia: the need for consumer education*. A question asked for a comment on the proposition—

"It's the Government's responsibility to provide for us in our old age."

People were asked to either agree or disagree. People who had no opinion were registered as well. In answer to that question, 32 per cent said, "That is right; we agree"; 56 per cent said, "We disagree", and 13 per cent had no opinion. That is an interesting statistic because that says that over 50 per cent of Australians accept that they have a responsibility to provide for their own retirement or make a contribution towards their retirement and their old age. Since the honourable member for Caloundra and I will no doubt benefit from these things in years to come, it is important that the majority of Australians support us in this view. I know that she agrees with me.

The majority of the answers given by the respondents to that survey question indicates that we have made a significant degree of progress in educating Australians about the need for superannuation. The next proposition that was asked about in the survey was—

"You pay taxes all your life so you should receive the pension without having to pay for superannuation."

Again, the alternatives were, "I agree", "I disagree", or people had no opinion. In answer to that question, 44 per cent of the people asked said, "I agree with that. I have paid taxes all my life. Therefore, I should get a pension." Forty-five per cent said, "No, I disagree", and 11 per cent had no opinion. Although it was not the majority of the people questioned who disagreed with that statement, 45 per cent—a significant percentage of the Australian population—said that just because they have paid taxes all their life they were not automatically entitled to receive a pension. In other words, they should make some contribution themselves towards superannuation. I am simply repeating the

results of that survey. Discussion of the results is healthy to community debate about superannuation and the move by the Federal Government towards compulsory employee contributions.

Another proposition asked about in the survey was—

"Greater superannuation coverage will lead to abolition of the age pension."

The four alternative responses to that statement were true, partly true, false or not sure. In response to that question, 52 per cent responded that the statement was true. So 52 per cent, or a majority of the population, accept that that is the direction in which we are heading. I am not saying that that will happen.

Mr Bredhauer: That is the perception.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right; that is the perception. Some 14 per cent responded that the statement was partly true. So 66 per cent said that the statement was true or partly true. Only 15 per cent said that it was false and 19 per cent were not sure. That response indicates a very healthy attitude. People understand that, with the ageing population, the tax base is becoming narrower. Provision for retirement has to be made during people's working lives so that they can have a good quality of life in retirement. That is why superannuation contributions and the move by the Federal Government towards compulsory superannuation are so important.

Let us deal a little further with the issue of the ageing population and associated problems in relation to superannuation. The economic circumstances of any individual, irrespective of age, are influenced by income, expenditure and asset levels. We all know that. Older people, as with people of all ages, exhibit considerable diversity in their economic circumstances. However, older people generally have lower levels of income and expenditure and higher asset levels than younger people. Higher asset levels basically result from a lifetime of work, and lower levels of income and expenditure generally reflect the retired status of older individuals.

Men are now retiring from full-time work at younger ages than ever before. In 1968, 80 per cent of men aged 60 to 64 were still working. However, by 1987, that figure had fallen to 45 per cent. Women generally leave the work force at younger ages than men. In 1992, 22 per cent of men and 6 per cent of women aged 60 and over were still participating in the work force. Of those working, 74 per cent of men and 6 per cent of women were still in full-time work. Because

most older people are in retirement, they tend to have lower income levels than younger people. That is why superannuation is so important. People must make provision for their retirement during their working lives. That is why the union movement has over the years been such a strong advocate of making provision for superannuation, and particularly portability of superannuation, a subject with which the honourable member for Waterford dealt very articulately earlier.

In the 1991 census, 71 per cent of people aged 65 years and over stated that their income was less than \$12,001 per annum. This compares with 50 per cent of people aged 55 to 64 years, 32 per cent of people aged 45 to 54 years, 28 per cent of people aged 35 to 44 years, and 29 per cent of people aged 25 to 34 years. Only 3.5 per cent of people over 65 years of age stated that their income exceeded \$30,000. That is a very small percentage.

Mr Bredhauer: Modest.

Mr BEATTIE: That is very modest.

Older people are a diverse group who derive their income from a variety of sources. That is stating the obvious. At retirement, 44 per cent of retirees of all ages stated that their main source of income was a pension or benefit of some kind. Some 16 per cent relied primarily on someone else's income. Some 12 per cent relied primarily on retirement schemes such as superannuation—only 12 per cent. Some 11 per cent relied on returns from investments, interest, stocks and debentures, and 7.2 per cent relied on savings and on the sale of assets.

Whether superannuation will provide an adequate retirement income depends on the length of time over which the contributions are made, the level of contributions and whether the contributor is a part of a compulsory scheme, which is the Commonwealth Government's suggested position for the long term. Anybody who thinks seriously about the sorts of statistics that I have cited today will realise that superannuation is the way for people to provide adequately for their retirement.

There are a lot of difficulties in this area. Honourable members would all be aware that last September a Senate committee was established to examine superannuation. The terms of reference set for the inquiry addressed whether current superannuation policies meet the needs of anyone whose working-life pattern falls outside the traditional 30 to 40 years of full-time employment.

Obviously, the terms of reference cover women, whose superannuation coverage is improving, but more so those women who work.

On 21 March 1995, an article by Michelle Gilchrist appeared in the *Australian* titled "Super problems for unconventional work". In that article, she set out some of the problem areas. The Australian Taxation Office's submission to the Senate inquiry said that Australian Bureau of Statistics figures showed that superannuation coverage for women had risen from 47 per cent of full-time employees in 1988 to 87 per cent in 1993, while coverage for women working part time increased from 19 per cent to 65 per cent over the same period. But no figures were provided for women not in employment.

While the inquiry's terms of reference specify women, the committee is finding that many men now fall easily into the category of an unconventional working life. Just one hearing in Melbourne by the Senate committee was enough to show that problems have emerged common to anyone unemployed or working on a casual, part-time or contract basis. The working patterns that have hampered women's ability to save for retirement are becoming more common among men, including long-term breaks from paid work to care for children or other family members.

The inquiry heard that superannuation held little attraction for these groups. Only workers in paid employment are granted tax concessions for superannuation, although some concessions are available to those not working but who have an ability to save. Anyone leaving the work force can contribute to superannuation for up to two years regardless of whether he or she returns to work. From 1 July last year, a further concession was introduced for those leaving work to raise children, but apparently not for other family reasons such as caring for sick or elderly relatives.

People raising children can contribute to superannuation for up to seven years, with one significant proviso, that being that they retain the right to return to their original job. The Senate inquiry was told that, although the new rule was helpful, its application was limited. Encouraging saving for retirement is the main focus of the inquiry, but it is also investigating the situation of those women for whom superannuation has come too late. The Federal Government is gradually raising the pension eligibility age for women from 60 to 65.

I fully support this Bill. I hope that the debate on superannuation over the next two years will be more constructive than some contributions I have heard recently. Only two days ago, I heard a person purporting to represent an employer talking about doom and gloom with respect to the Federal Government's initiatives. These initiatives are the only way in which to protect the quality of life of seniors.

I hope that we do not go down the path which America took recently. The Republican-dominated Congress recently wiped out as many as 45 social programs begun in the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt. We can do without those sorts of fundamental, hardline, Right Wing policies in this country. In Australia, we are about quality of life, fairness and making certain that at the end of the day people are not on skid row. In the 1980s, when I visited Washington, I remember seeing beggars in the streets. The capital of the wealthiest country in the world has beggars on its streets! Being naive at that time, I was appalled by what I saw. We can do without those sorts of things in Australia and one of the ways to make certain of that is to have adequate superannuation provision. I congratulate the Treasurer on this legislation.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (12.19 p.m.): I rise to support the Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill. Provision for superannuation is one of the positive features of having Labor Governments in power, particularly in Queensland, because we have always supported superannuation. On many occasions in this House, I have heard members opposite slate superannuation and claim that it was not necessary. The two excellent speakers from the Government side, who canvassed the provisions of this legislation very thoroughly, outlined the reasons for Australia's move to establish superannuation provisions for all employees. Admittedly, the train is driven by the Commonwealth Government, but there are many reasons for legislation such as this to be enacted by the State Government. The anomalies which exist and which will continue to exist must be addressed until we have the best possible superannuation model. Mr Beattie and Mr Barton outlined some of the trends in that sector.

I witnessed the long-serving National Party Premier rail against superannuation and state that he believed that it was not necessary. It was a National Party plank to oppose superannuation, and for many years it thwarted the establishment of superannuation funds.

Mr Bredhauer: A socialist plot.

Mr D'ARCY: The National Party believed that superannuation was a socialist plot. In reality, superannuation is about good financial management. If superannuation schemes are properly controlled, life will be better for future generations of Australians. Reference has been made to the diminishing financial base. Through superannuation, we are attempting to widen the available financial base and prevent some members of our ageing population from becoming beggars. The Labor Party can take pride in the fact that it has started this country down that path by enacting appropriate legislation.

This Labor Government is noted for its positive achievements in economic reform. I referred previously to the Bjelke-Petersen regime. I want to remind the House of some of the horrendous actions of that regime when superannuation schemes were first established and started to become the way of life that they are today. The QIC has been spoken about at some length. It is an excellent manager of State Government superannuation schemes, and it is gratifying to note the size of the portfolio that it currently manages. In the early days, superannuation schemes were often managed by small entities, many of which went broke or did not pay interest.

Over time, the Government established its own superannuation schemes. I want to refer to one of those schemes in particular in relation to which an anomaly still exists. When the National Party was in Government, it treated women—particularly those in the public service—very unfairly. When women got married, they had to resign from their superannuation schemes. Some women teachers had to resign when they became pregnant. Because of the superannuation policies of the National Party Government, to this day some women teachers are severely disadvantaged. That is a black mark against that administration and can be attributed to Joh Bjelke-Petersen's lack of belief in and failure to embrace superannuation schemes. The former Premier stuck to his principles, in that he never joined the parliamentary superannuation scheme, although I believe that—

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr D'ARCY: He did regret that decision, and I believe that in his latter years as Premier he made some moves to rectify that position.

Mr Bredhauer: Senator Flo was a contributor to the Senate scheme.

Mr D'ARCY: I believe that that certainly made a difference to the former Premier's lifestyle!

Times have changed, and we should be endeavouring to correct some of the anomalies that still exist. As I said, the Commonwealth is largely driving the train. Changes are regularly occurring to the management and administration of superannuation schemes in this State, and those changes must be reflected in State legislation. In Queensland, the QIC is the mandatory manager of most Government superannuation schemes. We have an excellent manager in the QIC. Its record is second to none. The member for Waterford referred to the record of that body. He was a director of that organisation at one stage, so he is well aware of its credentials and the manner in which it has diversified its interests.

I want to refer briefly to some of the smaller superannuation schemes. The Commonwealth is addressing some of the problems that exist in those schemes. I was one of the supporters of the Australia card. I believe that it should have been introduced; it would have alleviated the current problems involving a large number of transient and casual employees who are members of various superannuation funds—some of them successful, some of them unsuccessful. Today, many young people contribute only small amounts of money to superannuation schemes. I refer in particular to young university students who have part-time jobs. They may contribute to four or five different schemes. My daughter contributes to the paper war. She receives reports from four or five different funds because she has worked in casual jobs in various industries. The contributions made to various funds should be streamlined. The Commonwealth recently decided that those smaller amounts will be transferred to a fund controlled by the Australian Taxation Office, but those contributions are still largely wasted. The Australia card would have enabled such contributions to be placed in a central fund. It is essential that those types of anomalies be addressed, otherwise when those people come to collect their entitlements they will be faced with the same predicament as women teachers and other public servants, whose contributions were decimated by the policies of the National Party.

One positive step by the Commonwealth is the move away from lump-sum payouts. The honourable member for Brisbane Central referred to the mentality that superannuation is only insurance; that it provides a lump-sum

payout when people retire. That is true in the case of some older people who still might have a mortgage on their homes or another type of mortgage that must be paid out. Given our ageing population and increasing longevity, in the future superannuation will largely take the place of the old-age pension. That measure is necessary to maintain the standard of living of all Australians. In this country, wages do vary. Although people in some other countries may receive higher wages, the standard of living in this country is one of the highest in the world. We have achieved that position because of the way in which Governments have been able to control the financial base of this country. Superannuation funds have played and will continue to play a major role in that. I support the Bill.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (12.28 p.m.): I will speak only briefly on this Bill, because the members who spoke before me have covered many of the issues. I want to follow up on the comments by the member for Waterford about the push in the eighties by the trade unions, particularly the ACTU, for general superannuation provisions to cover all Australian workers. I often hear employers complain about the fact that they are the ones who have to pay superannuation on behalf of their employees. There is an element of truth in that. However, it must be remembered that the first general superannuation provision for employees was the result of a negotiated agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the Australian Council of Trade Unions to trade off a wage increase against superannuation benefits. Although the employers paid 3 per cent into superannuation schemes on behalf of their employees, it was in lieu of a wage increase which they would have paid to their employees under a national wage decision in any case.

I applaud the moves by the Commonwealth to increase the employee contributions to national superannuation. I believe that that is a wise move. However, it is not true to say that at this point in time employees do not contribute to their own superannuation schemes at the national level, because they do. Since 1984 or 1985 when that national wage case decision came down, they have in effect contributed towards that superannuation scheme.

I want to follow up on some of the comments that have been made by previous speakers about State schemes. I believe that State public sector superannuation schemes have come a long way in recent years. Only 10 years ago, when I first worked for the

Queensland Teachers Union, for about six months I was the secretary of the Combined Public Sector Unions Superannuation Committee, which consisted of representatives of all the public sector unions that had members contributing to the State Service Superannuation Scheme as it was in those days. As the member for Woodridge pointed out, at that time there were many inequities, particularly regarding women, who often had broken career patterns, and the superannuation scheme really was an abject failure for those people. There are still people in the work force who suffer the results of those inequities because they were not able to preserve their benefits in the fund for when they returned to service after child raising or whatever the reason was for their broken career patterns. Women were not the only people affected by those inequities, but they were the dominant group. The superannuation schemes have been substantially improved, but we should never forget that those people suffered those inequities and we should always strive to eliminate those inequalities wherever they exist in the schemes.

The member for Woodridge spoke about people choosing to take lump sum superannuation payments. I concur with him that the move towards taxing lump sum payments to encourage people to take a pension rather than a lump sum is not only desirable but also a necessary step. Superannuation should not be seen as some type of Gold Lotto for people's latter years; it should be an attempt to provide income for people when they reach the end of their working career. Many people who have taken lump sum superannuation payments in recent years have actually regretted that because, as interest rates have declined, the earnings on their lump sums—which they put away as a bit of a nest egg for their retirement—have also declined to the point at which some people are experiencing great difficulty in maintaining a reasonable standard of living on a weekly basis. I think that, if those people were given the choice again, they would actually prefer to take an indexed superannuation pension rather than a lump sum, or perhaps part and part, as a number of people have.

The member for Waterford referred to the fact that our superannuation fund benefits are fully funded. That is an important legacy and one of the few good things that was left to us by previous National Party and coalition Governments. It is one of the reasons we were able to claim in 1994 that we were net debt free and that we continue to be so, and that situation is likely to improve. It is important that

State public sector employees appreciate the sorts of problems that have beset workers in States such as Victoria, where the Government stuck its hands into superannuation funds. Due to the fully funded nature of our schemes, we are unlikely to experience problems of that type.

Superannuation is also important at a national level. There has been a lot of talk about increasing national savings, and that is an important issue. In my view, one of the best ways to ensure that people save a proportion of their income is through superannuation. I think that, as the Commonwealth proceeds with its moves to increase contributions to national superannuation schemes, the growth in national savings over coming years will be important in providing a pool of investment funds for development of infrastructure and a range of other initiatives domestically.

There has been criticism of some of the fund managers, particularly the managers of trade union funds, and the way in which they invest the funds that are available to them. One needs to be careful before making that sort of criticism. I sympathise with those who argue that superannuation funds should be invested in productive areas of domestic infrastructure or whatever it happens to be. However, it should always be remembered that the managers of those funds are charged primarily with the responsibility of increasing the return or getting the best possible rate of return for the members who are contributing to that fund, and that is why they seek to invest in a range of areas. That is why they may not do what we think is the logical or desirable thing to do when investing domestically. Whilst I have some sympathy with the argument, we should be careful in suggesting that that should happen.

The member for Brisbane Central spoke about the number of people who will be on pensions in time to come. No doubt with our ageing population and increasing longevity, there will be increasing numbers of people of pensionable age, so it is necessary that we encourage people who are in employment to save for their retirement. However, in the future, we will need to look at the position of independent retirees. An increasing proportion of the retired population will not be receiving pensions, particularly Commonwealth pensions. That means that we need to look carefully at the benefits currently made available to people on the basis of their eligibility for pensions, such as health concessions and Seniors Card concessions. We need to review the eligibility for those

concessions of independent retirees, because some independent retirees who are not receiving a pension are not wealthy by any means. Some retirees have had reasonably well-paid jobs during their working lives, often in the public sector, which means that they receive a reasonable retirement income which makes them ineligible for pensions, but they are not particularly wealthy by any stretch of the imagination. We need to continue to review the criteria for access to a range of those concessions.

In conclusion, the only thing that worries me about superannuation is that it is a bit like tax law in Australia. It has been around for some time now and we keep adding to it, amending it and making changes to people's entitlements. It is an area that is becoming quite complex. I know that the Treasurer has had a longstanding interest in superannuation. I remember one morning back in 1988 having a discussion with him in his Cairns office, when he was a "shadow" of his present self, about changes to the State public sector superannuation scheme. At that time, I felt pretty switched on to the issues of superannuation in Queensland, but a relatively few short years later, I must admit that there are many areas which I find confusing and complex, and I think that the average person who is contributing to a scheme probably experiences the same difficulties that I do. The member for Woodridge talked about workers contributing to a number of schemes and those sorts of things. I think we must continue to strive to make the superannuation schemes as simple and as understandable as we possibly can. Maybe at some stage in the future there will be a need for some sort of consolidation of the changes that have occurred into a more simple form.

Mr D'Arcy interjected.

Mr BREDHAUER: I understand the acronym to which the member for Woodridge is referring. With those few comments, I support the Bill before the House. Superannuation is a most important area and the attempts by the Queensland Government to continue to update our schemes to make sure that they are consistent with national legislation is an important initiative.

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (12.39 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. Government members spoke at length about superannuation schemes generally. There are few things more important to the Australian work force than superannuation entitlements and the way in

which they are supervised. I think it is fair to say that there have been many changes emanating at a Commonwealth level regarding the supervision of superannuation in recent years, and most people are a bit shell-shocked and find it very difficult to understand. To be fair to the Commonwealth, it is an area of tremendous importance. The superannuation industry is probably the fastest-growing industry in Australia; there are many funds tied up in it and it is important that everybody's superannuation investments, that is, the contributions that they make and the contributions made on their behalf by employers, be protected.

Queensland is the only State in which defined benefits schemes are not under threat. Public servants in Queensland can be thankful for the fact that this Government has managed the superannuation schemes so well for many years, and we have the only public sector fully funded superannuation schemes in Australia. I guarantee that defined benefit schemes, in other words Q Super, will be available to all public sector employees in Queensland.

The shadow Minister asked for an assurance that the proposed amendments are consistent with the explanation which I sent to her yesterday by way of letter. I give that assurance, except that there is one point not included in the letter, simply because it was a technicality. That point is referred to on page 2 of the Explanatory Notes. The amendments fix a date for the commencement of the provisions relating to the appointment of the QIC as the investment management of Q Super, State super, police Gosuper and parliamentary superannuation funds. Under current legislation, the appointment of the QIC as investment manager of the Q Super scheme expires on 14 June 1995. In order to avoid this appointment lapsing and to provide consistency between the schemes, the amendment provides for the QIC to manage the funds from that date. That is a technicality and so not included in my letter to the shadow Minister. The amendments to change the legislation which are before the House are fairly simple and straightforward, although largely technical.

Mr FitzGerald: Simple and straightforward, but technical?

Mr De LACY: Perhaps that is a contradiction in terms. They are technical and non-controversial. They are supported by the trustees to the schemes, which includes the trade union representatives. Basically they ensure that people's superannuation

entitlements are not affected by award restructuring, and it is important that that be the case. If superannuation entitlements are artificially changed upwards, that has an impact on the viability of the scheme and on all other contributors. Obviously, if they are artificially changed downwards, people who have entitlements are adversely affected.

The amendments I am proposing relate to a new industrial award for teacher aides, certain Education Department staff, and other Crown employees who work 30 hours per week. The new award varied the full-time hours for those employees, essentially making them permanent part-time. Their take-home pay was not affected and, because of the wording in the legislation, it would have impacted on their superannuation. The amendments that I propose to move clarify that issue. I thank honourable members for their support for the legislation.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. K. E. De Lacy (Cairns—Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—

Mr De LACY (12.42 p.m.): I move the following amendments—

"At page 6, line 7, 'and (3)'—

omit, insert—

'to (6)'.

At page 6, after line 12—

insert—

'(4) Section 45A is taken to have commenced on 11 November 1993.

'(5) Section 63A is taken to have commenced on 30 June 1994.

'(6) Sections 9, 11, 12, 21, 24, 25, 37, 42, 50, 52, 53, 60(1) and 62 commence, or are taken to have commenced, on 14 June 1995.'"

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 45, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr De LACY (12.43 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 23, after line 5—

insert—

'Insertion of new pt 4, div 8

'45A. After section 48—

insert—

'Division 8—Miscellaneous

'Benefits payable to certain members

'49.(1) Despite divisions 1 to 7, benefits payable from the Fund for a contributor who is a relevant officer are—

(a) for employment before 12 November 1993—the benefits calculated as at 12 November 1993; and

(b) for employment on and after 12 November 1993—the benefits payable under divisions 1 to 7.

'(2) The Actuary must calculate the benefits under subsection (1)(a).

'(3) However, the benefits under subsection (1)(a) must not be less than the benefits to which the member was entitled under the scheme on 11 November 1993.

'(4) In this section—

"relevant officer" means a person who—

(a) was employed by the State on 11 November 1993 under the Miscellaneous Workers Award—State Government at a rate of pay for not more than 30 hours a week; and

(b) continued to be employed by the State after 11 November 1993 under the Employees of Queensland Government Departments (Other than Public Servants) Award.'"

Amendment agreed to.

New clause 45A, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 46 to 63, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr De LACY (12.44 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 30, after line 31—

insert—

'Insertion of new s 3.6

'63A. After section 3.5—

insert—

'Benefits payable to certain members

'3.6.(1) Despite part 7 of the deed, benefits payable under the scheme for a member who is a relevant employee are—

- (a) for employment before 1 July 1994—the benefits calculated as at 1 July 1994; and
- (b) for employment on and after 1 July 1994—the benefits payable under the deed.

'(2) The Actuary must calculate the benefits under subsection (1)(a).

'(3) However, the benefits under subsection (1)(a) must not be less than the benefits to which the member was entitled under the scheme on 30 June 1994.

'(4) In this section—

"relevant employee" means a person who—

- (a) was employed by the State on 11 November 1993 under the Miscellaneous Workers Award—State Government at a rate of pay for not more than 30 hours a week; and
- (b) continued to be employed by the State after 11 November 1993 under the Employees of Queensland Government Departments (Other than Public Servants) Award.'."

Amendment agreed to.

New clause 63A, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 64 to 67, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr De Lacy, by leave, read a third time.

REVENUE LAWS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 25 May (see p. 11904).

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.49 p.m.): In his expansive one-page speech on the Revenue Laws Amendment Bill, the Treasurer finished with a glowing reference to his plan to halve the rate of stamp duty on transfers of marketable securities. Everyone in this House will recall last month and the way in which various news organisations leapt into print with headlines and breathless predictions about Mr De Lacy's proposal. To believe those reports would be to think that Queenslanders were

about to experience some kind of major boom. One would think that across Brisbane dozens of unemployed brickies, builders and subbies would be practising with their mobile phones and looking to retrain as screen jockeys.

"State Lures Asian Billions" was the headline. In an otherwise bland prescription of more big spending and backdoor taxation, this was the bauble intended to catch the eye of the media. As a result, we had days of speculation about the interstate reaction. We had plenty of Mexican bashing by the Premier, coupled with bleating complaints from New South Wales and Victoria. It was a fantastic sideshow that succeeded in diverting public attention from the important nuts and bolts of the Budget. While Queenslanders marvelled at this fantastic gimmick, other budgetary initiatives, such as the serious decline in the State surplus or even the loss of 60 national park rangers, were pushed to one side.

Now, in the cold light of day, I wonder how many who rushed to the phones are beginning to wonder about the pup they were sold by Treasurer De Lacy. Among the many claims made about this proposal was that it would create a flood of interest from the financial community, with the northern relocation of part of the Australian Stock Exchange to be shadowed by stockbrokers themselves. According to the Treasurer, something like half a dozen top broking firms were going to pack their bags and head north on the strength of his plan to cut rates. We were going to have a big slice of the southern financial market and, according to the Treasurer, the impact was going to compare with the decision by the Bjelke-Petersen Government to abolish death duties. Try as they might to ape the former Premier and the former coalition Government, Mr De Lacy and Mr Goss just do not know how to deliver when it comes to initiatives of real economic worth. I have said it before, but given the strong financial position built by the former National and National/Liberal Governments, a drover's dog could have produced results with the Queensland economy that would have been sufficient to please Premier Goss.

The impact of this change to stamp duty on shares in Queensland evaporated in a matter of days, when every mainland State moved to match the new Queensland rate of 0.3 per cent. The only person in Queensland who still believes otherwise is Treasurer De Lacy. I do not know who had this idea in the first place. It may be that Mr De Lacy was taken in. Perhaps he spent too long smoking big cigars and listening to big talk at the big

end of town. Despite all his big talk, the facts are that at the end of the day the big beneficiaries are not average Queenslanders but stockbrokers and their clients, most of whom will remain in Sydney and Melbourne.

An important distinction has been made by the Treasurer in the preparation of this initiative. No doubt influenced by his new friends at the ASX, Mr De Lacy has confined his cut rate of transfer duty to listed shares only. So for small-business people, those Queenslanders struggling to keep their heads above water—the sort of people honourable members in the Labor Party should be looking after or reckon they are and never do—by running a panel shop, a corner store, a plumbing supplies warehouse or a nursery, their shares in their own companies will continue to attract duty at the old rate. Shares in these unlisted companies will be placed at a disadvantage. Thousands of Queenslanders, who deserved to expect that the small relief offered by this initiative would be extended to them, have been disappointed.

Given the historical strength of our economy, Queensland should be a haven to small business. Under this change, people with money to invest are being encouraged not to support small business. Under the Treasurer's scheme, they will be lured into the stock market—to transfer their investment from small business to big business. From the big business perspective, Mr De Lacy must seem incredibly generous with taxpayers' dollars. But from the perspective of the ASX, Mr De Lacy is clearly nothing more than a stalking-horse. The Treasurer was lured into the scheme with the selfish notion that he would steal away from the southern States a big slice of their business. But because of their predictable response, that significant shift will not come to pass. However, the ASX will succeed in gaining more investment than might otherwise go into unlisted shares. The ASX will get its way, but Queensland will still have to make do with the leftovers of Stock Exchange activity from the south.

It will be interesting to look back next year to see how many of Mr De Lacy's northbound stockbroking firms have actually materialised. It will be a less than perfect day in Queensland and a cold day in hell when we see this prediction realised on the strength of Mr De Lacy's initiative, and also the race to Queensland by the big financial business enterprises that were said to come as a result of this. I do hope that the Treasurer got written guarantees from these people.

Mr De Lacy: Gee you're anti-Queensland.

Mrs SHELDON: No, I am indeed very pro-Queensland. I just do not like Queenslanders being sold a pup—which he sold them. He duped them and thought that he would get away with it and that Queensland on its own would do it. I very much doubt that was the case. What really happened is that we have not gained the great benefit that we could have because the southern States predictably cut their stamp duty in half, which of course is what the Stock Exchange was after, because they are the big markets. We are a minnow in the field; they are the really big markets. I will accept any initiative that is pro-Queensland, but this initiative was a beat-up by the Treasurer. Anyone with any financial sense would know that the southern markets would have to come into the field, and indeed they did.

Mr De Lacy: I bet you barrack for the Blues.

Mrs SHELDON: Unlike many of the Treasurer's Labor mates, I am a born and bred Queensland, and I always barrack for the Maroons and the Reds.

Mr De Lacy: You never do it in here.

Mrs SHELDON: I have never heard the Treasurer doing it, by golly. I do not think he likes footy—union or league. Not long after the Treasurer launched his Budget, he must have realised the mistake he had made. As State after State matched the Queensland offer, and as his mates in the New South Wales Labor Party retaliated with plans to have Queensland's Commonwealth grants cut back, the Treasurer was left with precious little to crow about. Instead of an innovative scheme which would launch Queensland into the financial spotlight, he was left with a smoking ruin. The only spotlight trained on Queensland today is being directed by southern States which have it attached to their rifle sights. Thanks to Mr De Lacy, southerners are more united than ever in their determination to strip Queensland of our small remaining advantage when it comes to the allocation of Commonwealth Grants.

If Mr De Lacy really expected to see a northbound stampede of stockbroking companies, his heart must have sunk into his boots when he read the review of his Budget by Morgan Stockbroking. If he expected bouquets from the financial sector, he must have been brought back to earth with a thump when he read the scathing Budget report prepared on behalf of Morgans by Michael Knox. It is fair to say that Morgans panned the 1995-96 Budget. It is also fair to say that the conclusion reached by Mr Knox was closer to

my own assessment of the Budget than to the back-slapping assessments of the Treasurer of himself. Self-praise, as we know, is always the weakest.

But those comments concern the Budget as a whole and, of course, this debate is restricted to matters associated with the Premier's economic statement and the change to duty on the transfer of marketable securities. Sadly for the Treasurer, Morgans is no more convinced about the value of these changes than it is about the erosion of the State surplus and the use of dividends from Government owned enterprises to prop up the State Budget in a process borrowed from John Cain's Victoria. I quote from the Morgans' report and suggest that the Treasurer listens to this—

"The treatment of this element of stamp duty within the budget papers is intriguing. The total income generated from brokers returns and transfers in '94-'95 was only \$16 million. In spite of cutting this section of stamp duty in half in '95-'96, the Government actually estimates that the income from this duty will rise by 6.3% to \$17 million in '95-'96. This means that the Government has made the assumption that cutting of the rate of stamp duty in half will increase total turnover by 112%."

It adds the sarcastic comment—

"In the sharebroking business, we rather like the thought of an increase of total turnover in one year of 112%."

The Treasurer must be shattered that the stockbroking community should be so cynical. But if he enjoys the sensation, I suggest he reads the editorial published by the *Canberra Times* on 30 May. To kick things off, I will read a few highlights into *Hansard*.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mrs SHELDON: Before lunch, I was quoting from an editorial published in the *Canberra Times* on 30 May, which carried the headline "States stamp out Goss". The article begins—

"The Queensland Premier, Wayne Goss, has shot himself in the foot."

That is a direct quote with which, of course, I agree. The editor relates the plans of the Premier and Treasurer and then states—

"Well, that was either underhand or naive. He"—

Mr Goss—

"must have known that by lowering the Queensland rate he would attract

interstate business to the detriment of other states revenue. Indeed, that was more likely than attracting overseas business. This is because transactions overseas already attract a low level of stamp duty and so the incentive is lower to move.

The result of Goss's move was predictable. It perhaps happened faster than anyone would imagine. The other States have followed suit. It now means that in total, instead of collecting about \$600 million a year on share transactions, they will collect only half that.

The States will lose about \$300million. Money that would have gone to hospitals, roads, schools, will go instead to people who trade in shares. Well done, Goss."

That congratulations from the *Canberra Times* was for Premier Goss. He has done well in Queensland to wipe out hospitals, roads and schools, so I suppose he will be happy with applause for achieving the same result interstate. The editorial went on—

"The notion of competitive federalism is only beneficial up to a point. It becomes self-defeating when the States erode their already shrinking revenue bases and then go cap in hand to the Commonwealth. Tactics like Goss's make one wonder if the States deserve the financial autonomy they cherish."

It is a mixed metaphor, but on this occasion the Premier, who likes to talk about football, has scored an own goal, and the Treasurer has converted it. The facts are that when it comes to tax, this Government is used to playing offside. This is the Government that talks incessantly about low tax policies while it delivers an endless parade of tax rises, usually through the back door. This is yet another example of the Labor Government's big lie on taxation. Here we have the Treasurer talking about reducing taxes. Big deal! It is a big deal when the Government's tax take continues to go through the roof. I really pity the poor individual who has to concoct different ways of talking about tax cuts for the Treasurer while every year under Labor average Queenslanders pay more and more.

By now, everyone in this place is familiar with the cold, hard reality of increased taxation under Labor. After six years of this Government, every man, woman and child in Queensland pays \$1,260 a year in taxes, fees, fines and charges. That is a 60 per cent increase over six years, from the \$790 each of them paid under the former National Party

Government. It represents an overall increase for every man, woman and child of \$470.

Across Queensland, people have been swamped with propaganda from the Labor Party and selective treatment of tax issues by the Treasurer. But with the election campaign looming, these are figures that will be repeated again and again. Queenslanders will have a chance to assess the whole picture when it comes to taxation by this Labor Government. Under Labor, Queenslanders are denied the whole picture, because the Government presents us with a jigsaw in which the pieces are never unscrambled. Hearing the taxation claims of this Government is like hearing reports from blind men about the shape of an elephant. Premier Goss and Treasurer De Lacy have plenty to say, but they make sure they never address the full picture. That is the case with the Bill before the House today.

This Bill is intended to convince Queenslanders that the Government is producing reductions in payroll tax, land tax and stamp duty. Of the three, the smallest is land tax; but in this year's Budget, we do not see a decrease in land tax, even when the impact of this Bill is taken into account. What we see in relation to land tax is not a reduction but a \$9m increase of 4.6 per cent. The increase occurs simply because the exemption proposed in this Bill applies only to companies and trustees, not families. Total revenue from land tax will increase from \$190m to \$204m. In this Budget, payroll tax will break the \$1 billion mark for the first time. Even with this Bill and its claimed reductions, the total burden imposed by payroll tax will rise to over \$1 billion from \$960m, and that is an increase of 5.1 per cent. Similarly, stamp duty is headed towards the \$1 billion mark, with forecast revenue for 1995-96 of \$914m. Those are the two biggest taxes of the State Government, and they are clearly increasing.

What is more, the Treasurer intends to replace both the Stamp Act and existing payroll tax legislation later in the financial year when the election is out of the way. Queenslanders were promised a look at the new legislation by the end of the past calendar year, but the Treasurer has kept it hidden. There is only one conclusion we can draw, and that is that further rises in payroll tax and stamp duty are just around the corner. Once again, the Treasurer is misleading Queenslanders by producing this Bill while he keeps his true intentions hidden.

Today, I am returning to the whole tax picture. I will assess this Bill as it fits within the

picture of increasing taxation by the State Government. Since the last National Party Budget in 1989-90, total receipts for taxes, fees and fines have increased by 76 per cent. That is the increase to 1995-96, with the impact of this Bill taken into account. With or without this revenue legislation, the tax slug by Labor has still outstripped the combined impact of Queensland's growing population and its inflation rate over the period. The Labor tax slug has zoomed far ahead of measly increases in average weekly earnings, which in Queensland continue to fall further and further behind the national average. Over six years, the population has increased by 10.3 per cent while average weekly earnings have increased by only 19.5 per cent. That represents an increase of 19.5 per cent in the same period as—despite this Bill—State taxes, fees and fines rose by 60 per cent. Not surprisingly, the biggest increase has been in rat taxes: those secret taxes such as regulatory fees that have blown out by a massive 214 per cent under Labor and this Treasurer. Despite this Bill, regulatory fees will have increased from \$412.1m in 1989-90 to \$1.3 billion in 1995-96. That is the record of this Government, but there is much more where those figures came from.

The evidence of the tax rip-off in this State—with or without this token Bill and its token cuts—is overwhelming. Even when we take the performance of the National Party in Government out of the picture, the tax record of the ALP does not improve. I have drawn up a table in which I have measured up the impact of Labor taxes since the first Labor Budget in 1990-91.

Mr De Lacy: Come on, give it to us. I'll do an analysis on it quick and lively.

Mrs SHELDON: I would bet that the Treasurer would do an analysis on it! We would hear more of his shonky figures, which we constantly hear read out in this House, as with the interpretations of quite independent reviews from which he selectively picks the figures that suit his end. Let us have a little bit of truth from him and a little bit of unbiased reporting on the true state of the economy in this State.

Mr De Lacy: Can I ask one question? Will you answer one question?

Mrs SHELDON: No. At the Committee stage, the Treasurer can ask all the questions he likes. That is his time to ask questions, if he wishes to have a debate on them. I am currently delivering a speech.

Across-the-board the tax picture in this State is as shocking as it is dismal. The

Treasurer may well wonder why small businesses in Queensland have by far the lowest business confidence in Australia. We know that that is a fact. An independent study was conducted—unlike the studies undertaken by the Treasurer. Small business confidence is low simply because the Treasurer has his foot on their neck. Any amount of repackaging of selective taxes and talking about tax cuts, such as the Treasurer has done in this Bill, will not disguise the impact of overtaxation by the Goss Government. Here are the sorry statistics. I suggest that all Labor Party backbenchers who want to be re-elected listen.

Government members interjected.

Mrs SHELDON: That woke that lot up! All I could hear were snoring sounds, which are the usual sounds we hear from that part of the Chamber.

Since the first Labor Budget, total taxation, excluding regulatory fees, is up by \$781.3m, or 41.2 per cent. That is \$162, or 25.7 per cent, extra in tax for every Queensland man, woman and child. Adjusted for inflation, the increase in total taxation since the first Labor Budget, excluding regulatory fees, will be \$600m by 1995-96. With this Bill taken into account, that is a percentage increase in real terms of 22.4 per cent. The negative picture remains, even if we adjust the table to accommodate the Treasurer's oft-referred-to changes in population. In real per capita terms, there has been a 14.7 per cent increase in taxes, excluding regulatory fees, since Labor brought down its first Budget for the 1990-91 financial year. With inflation taken into account, that represents an increase of \$102 for every man, woman and child.

Leaving regulatory fees to one side for a moment and speaking in real per capita terms, there have been solid increases over the past five years of Labor mismanagement in most areas of taxation. Casino tax is up 90.1 per cent, debits tax is up 259.7 per cent, the Gold Lotto tax is up 24.2 per cent, payroll tax is up 7.5 per cent, stamp duty is up 11.9 per cent and the TAB tax is up 7.8 per cent.

This Government does well with the gambling that goes on in this State. It rips off in big hunks of Government revenue money that a lot of Queenslanders can ill afford to spend and that a lot of families could well do with in their pockets. I remind members that these are figures for 1995-96 compared with 1990-91, and they include the full effects of this Bill. Although the Treasurer is happy to waste the time of Queenslanders with a Budget that is "delivering savings of around

\$40m over three years", I can quite properly inform them that, thanks to Labor, they are paying much, much more.

When regulatory fees and other revenue sources are included, the net result after five years of Labor mismanagement under this Treasurer is an actual increase in total Government revenue per capita of 17.5 per cent in real terms. Thanks to Labor and no thanks to this Bill, every man, woman and child in this State pays \$193 more in State taxes, fees and fines than they paid in 1990-91. That figure is fully adjusted for inflation. I say to my friends on the Government side that these calculations are on the Treasurer's own figures. I know that that lot opposite cannot count but these calculations are on his figures.

Here are the facts on regulatory fees: in 1990-91, Queenslanders paid \$806m in regulatory fees. Remember, these are the rat taxes that the State Government uses to boost taxation through the back door. In 1995-96, thanks to Labor and no thanks to this Bill, the total for regulatory fees will be \$1.296 billion. That is an increase of \$491m, or 61 per cent. It is an increase for every man, woman and child of \$91, or an increase of 30.8 per cent with inflation taken into account. Under Labor, in five years since 1991 a whole range of these sneaky taxes have been increased significantly even when population changes and inflation are taken into account. On these indices, auctioneers and agents fees are up 6.3 per cent, rego is up 7.1 per cent, tobacco is up 146.4 per cent—I hope the Treasurer is listening—traffic fees are up 67.6 per cent, construction notification is up 64.8 per cent and freehold title fees are up 36.2 per cent. These are the fees that affect the average man and woman—the average worker whom that lot opposite are supposed to represent—and whom they are ripping off. The fees for business names registrations—the businesses that the Government is supposed to be helping—are up 20.5 per cent. Supreme and District Court fees are up 24 per cent.

Those are the increases with every possible variable taken into account. So in stating those figures we are being on the kind side to the Treasurer. Add this sorry increase in taxation to the fact that, under Labor, average weekly earnings in Queensland have continued to fall further behind the rest of the country and we have a dismal picture. That picture is of an overtaxing Government that is failing to provide Queenslanders with an equitable return on the State's continued growth and development, which continued growth and development has absolutely

nothing to do with the Labor Party or the Labor Government.

This Bill is an insult to Queenslanders, who are entitled to expect so much more by way of better services, infrastructure, opportunities and prosperity. Queensland is a great State. This Government has not used the great potential it had; it has not put that potential to its greatest use. This Bill is an insult to Queenslanders who, when it comes to taxes and the delivery of services and infrastructure, have had five years of hot air from the Labor Government. Despite all the rhetoric, under Labor there remain two certainties: taxes will increase and so will the bureaucracy.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (2.45 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise to support the Revenue Laws Amendment Bill 1995. This Bill is related directly to the State Budget. After listening to the member for Caloundra, one could not believe that the member and I heard the same Budget Speech delivered by the Treasurer. The latest Budget is probably one of the best Budgets in Queensland's history. It is based on sound financial management, and it is one of the strongest financial Budgets ever delivered. I must congratulate the Treasurer on the Budget.

The Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill 1995, which was debated earlier today, referred to Queensland's fully funded State superannuation funds. That is a reflection of Queensland's net debt free status, and it is an important element of this Budget. The Revenue Laws Amendment Bill enables us to change the regulations and legislation to allow payroll tax, land tax and stamp duty to be lowered.

During her speech the Deputy Leader of the Opposition forgot about sound financial management when she put forward her figures. In recent times, Queensland—and the rest of Australia—has locked into the user-pays system. In doing so, we have supplied a far better and more comprehensive service to Queenslanders, and I think that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has totally neglected to mention that. Government services are now far more efficient than they ever were under the National Party Government. They are far more extensive, better prepared and better delivered. In most cases, the fees to which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to as "rising taxation" relate to the improved service delivery that Queenslanders have now come to expect from this Government.

Under this Bill, the payroll tax threshold has been increased from \$700,000 to \$750,000—an increase of \$25,000 as at 1 July 1995 and a further increase of \$25,000 as at 1 July 1996. Overall, that represents a 50 per cent lift in the payroll tax threshold by the Goss Government since it has been in office. The other point that is very important, which people like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition forget to mention, is the fact that that levy has remained at 5 per cent whereas in other States it has increased dramatically.

Under this Bill, the land tax threshold has also been lifted, particularly for companies and trustees, from a threshold of \$40,000 to \$60,000—an increase of \$20,000. Another area that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition did not refer to was the unfair tax that had been levied on hire businesses. That tax has been changed to a threshold of \$100,000, which means that small hire companies will no longer have to pay that tax. That will certainly help consumers of businesses in that growing industry.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred in some depth to the Government's decision to lower taxation on share transfers. The point that seems to be lost on most people in Queensland—and in Australia—is that this was a tremendous move. Despite the reaction of the other States to this move, the fact is that most share transactions were not being conducted in Australia, and this initiative will bring that business back onshore. That business was being conducted in Asia. For example, at present Hong Kong has no tax on share transactions. However, through this initiative we are now competing with Asia for the share transfer business. That business which, previously, was being conducted offshore will be returned to Australia. It is a nonsense that this move will have a negative effect on Queensland. It is going to have a tremendous effect on the Australian industry, particularly in relation to equities. There is a very large trade in equities. We were talking earlier about the QIC and similar bodies having investment portfolios of \$10 billion, a lot of which is in equities. The transaction of share investments overseas creates an unnecessary delay. I am reminded of the days when everyone transferred titles in Canberra because the tax was lower in the ACT. It is wrong that trading can be conducted in that way in Australian States.

The other furphy that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition fed to the House was that this move would somehow affect our Commonwealth grants. Queensland receives no favours in that regard, because it is on a

level playing field. Some other State Governments had to adjust their budgets and severely increase taxation in sectors where this Government has not. Those States have been disadvantaged by their budgets. Queensland is net debt free; therefore, we have more room in which to manoeuvre. It is to the benefit of the whole of Australia that some of the other States are coming into line in relation to the stamp duty charged on share transfers. It is something that should have happened a long time ago.

If more Australian companies conduct share transfers in Australia, the potential for investment in Australian companies is increased, and this leads immediately to a greater number of jobs in this country. This measure also gives us the potential for increased exports, particularly secondary and tertiary treated exports. Our capacity to export more sophisticated and tertiary treated products from primary industry, including minerals, is improving. Those trade sectors are making a tremendous difference to our economy.

Whilst on the subject of finance and interest rates—it is interesting to note the current conjecture on interest rates. Most economists accept that at the moment there is an upward trend in the Australian economy. For some time, I have predicted that there will be a four-year upward trend. We are already on the threshold of the first year of that upward trend. There are many doom and gloom merchants out there. Some areas will be affected directly or indirectly by downturns during that period. However, in relation to the overall economic clock, we are at the stage of seeing equity increases. That share prices go up or down in one day, or that there is a short-term change in interest rates, will not affect the general trend. The country and the State are on a sound financial basis, and that upward trend has at least three years left in which to run. That trend will not be affected directly or indirectly by overseas economies; most of their interaction with the Australian economy has been taken into consideration for that period. Through sound management in many areas we have been able to look at the longer term. We have gotten rid of middle management and those areas that were not necessary. In Australia, we are becoming more efficient and leaner and meaner. That is happening with Governments and business. Australian business expects Governments to react to that need, and it is good that the Queensland Government is doing that.

As to conjecture on interest rates—for far too long, the banks have had a negative

outlook in their dealings with society. I have spoken about bankruptcies and the reaction of banks. The negativity of banks is still having a tremendous effect on the economy, even in this State. For example, it is inconceivable that interest rates in varying sectors are not able to be adjusted to take account of risk. For example, a bank might nominate a variable rate of 10 per cent, yet the risk factor is not comparable with the risk taken. In Australia, mortgage rates on housing loans should be far lower than for commercial and other loans for the simple reason that the failure rate in lending for housing is lower than 5 per cent. That figure varies substantially in other countries, such as the United States. It is disgraceful that banks cannot adjust interest rates for home buyers in this State to a suitable standard for that type of lending. That is something that will change. We are starting to see changes; banks are being brought to heel by some of the smaller banks that were once building societies. We are starting to see mortgage rates for housing loans being adjusted according to the comparable risk. As I said, the risk factor for housing loans is a lot lower in Australia than it is in other countries. It is time that the banks started to adjust their interest rates to reflect their true commercial value.

This is obviously an excellent Bill, because it achieves positive outcomes with respect to taxation, raises the thresholds on payroll and land tax and provides the proper perspective for what should be charged for equity transfers. The Treasurer has presented a very sound Budget, which will be of benefit to Queensland's economy.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (2.57 p.m.): I support the Revenue Laws Amendment Bill before the House. As members have said, this Bill will implement some of the provisions contained in the Budget. Therefore, we are dealing with the capacity of this Government to raise revenue.

The honourable member who preceded me in this debate spoke in particular about the decrease in stamp duty charged on the sale and purchase of listed marketable securities. He also mentioned the rights in respect of shares being reduced from 30c to 15c for every \$100 or part thereof. That is a substantial reduction. The honourable member would remember what the Treasurer said when he spoke about this matter rather glowingly in the press. The Treasurer's hope was to make Queensland a much bigger player in the world market. He said that he was not after the capital being traded on the southern stock exchanges; that happened to

be a consequence. He stated that he was after the 20 per cent of trade in Australian shares that is conducted offshore. That appears to be a very admirable goal for which to aim. If we could see the return to Queensland of the 20 per cent of shares being traded on the Hong Kong and other stock exchanges, particularly in Asia, that would be a commendable objective. But what is the reality?

The reality is that New South Wales and Victoria had to quickly cut the size of their take from the sale of marketable securities on their stock exchanges. That has meant that Queensland will no longer have a competitive edge over New South Wales and Victoria. I understand that the Treasurer believes that he has a deal with the Australian Stock Exchange which will see it move certain trading houses to Queensland to accommodate the expected increase in trade in Queensland. Do honourable members honestly believe that all of that overseas trade will come back to Queensland now that we have exactly the same rate as Sydney and Melbourne?

Mr Robertson: Yes.

Mr FITZGERALD: Does the honourable member honestly believe that business will be attracted to Queensland from Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore and that none of it will go to the southern States? If that is the member's rationale and reasoning, I can understand why electors in his electorate of Sunnybank have said that they bought a dud in sending him into this House. Quite frankly, that will not happen. We have seen a very slight decrease in the take to the Queensland Treasury.

The trade in marketable commodities should not have been taxed to the extent that it was in the past, so I welcome this move. However, the hype that has gone with it will mean that we will not achieve the objective of attracting trade to Queensland. The honourable member for Woodridge is well versed in the dealings of the Stock Exchange. He would know that the money going into the Stock Exchange is not always new money. The Treasurer has hyped up the issue by saying, "It will mean more jobs and investment in Queensland. More companies will be floated in Queensland. More Queenslanders will be able to invest in Queensland", and so on. Have honourable members ever thought what difference a change of 15c per \$100 will make to an investment? That will not have an enormous impact in people's decisions to invest in particular companies; it helps those companies—particularly the overseas

companies—to flood money onto the Australian market and pull it back offshore as soon as the tide starts to ebb. Those companies come in and out like a monthly tide. They will invest in Australia and then go back offshore. They are the major beneficiaries of this measure.

If people are investing and investing to stay, they invest once and then they sell their shares and pay another 15c per \$100 in stamp duty—so 30c all told—but they invest once and sell their shares once. They are the real stayers. They are the people who are investing in Queensland. I note that BHP shares have suddenly dropped another 28c today because investors are pulling their money out, but they will bring their money back at an opportune time.

Mr Ardill: You are ignoring the fact that we are getting the revenue.

Mr FITZGERALD: This measure is merely allowing those types of investors to trade at a much lower rate. It is not helping BHP or any other company to invest more money in plant, equipment and jobs.

Mr Ardill: No.

Mr FITZGERALD: The member for Archerfield must realise that that is the story being told by the Treasurer throughout the country. I want to put the record straight. It is a positive move to impose lower stamp duty on those who want to trade in shares, but we should not expect that it will bring new investment to the State, it will merely assist those investors who go in and out of the marketplace at their financial whims.

This legislation makes changes to land tax, payroll tax and stamp duty. As to payroll tax—I note that the take still increases from \$960m to over \$1 billion a year. So although there has been a reduction, the increase has actually been greater than the level of inflation. The Treasurer's own Budget documents refer to that fact. Those documents state that the reduction in other areas is more than offset by the increase in the payroll tax threshold. So we are getting an increase in payroll tax, although it is a reduction.

I believe that it is quite dishonest for the Treasurer to claim that the payroll tax exemption threshold is now \$750,000. That does not apply until 1 July 1996—after the next Budget. The Treasurer is forecasting a reduction for the next Budget. I know that the law is being amended now—it is l-a-w, law—but it can be amended at any time. It is quite dishonest to claim that level this year when it

does not actually apply until next year. As I said before, it becomes l-a-w, law, and we know all about that because it can be amended at any time in this House. The Treasurer cannot take all the credit for that amendment.

I turn to the Stamp Act. I want to highlight a concern of a constituent of mine relating to the stamp duty payable on vehicles. The amount of stamp duty payable on vehicles is \$2 per \$100. From advice received from a dealer, I understand that that is paid on the Brisbane list price of a vehicle. That may be an advantage to people in the country, because they do not have to pay stamp duty on the dealer fees and the freight on a vehicle. On an ordinary car, that is a substantial amount. A constituent of mine purchased a Kenworth truck last year. It was a bare truck with no turntable and no bullbar and for which he paid \$210,000. He paid the stamp duty on it, which everyone has to do. However, he has now received a letter from the State Government claiming that the stamp duty on that vehicle was underpaid by \$842. That fellow paid the full duty that he had to pay at the time. The dealer deducted the stamp duty and sent it in. However, that fellow now finds that he owes a rather substantial amount—\$842 plus a late-payment penalty of \$25, making a total of \$869.20 to be paid. Postage charges and an assessment fee of \$2.20 were added to make the final figure.

When it is worked out, that means that the truck was undervalued by \$42,100. Of course, that means that the truck was worth much more than the price that that fellow paid for it—\$252,100, according to the assessor. I would like to know how the assessor arrived at that price for a Kenworth. Some models of trucks are custom-made. People buy the cab and chassis, but they can choose the suspension or the engine that they want. They might choose a Detroit diesel, a Caterpillar diesel or a Cummins diesel. People can choose from various gearboxes, including the Kenworth, the Mack or the Western Star. A range of differentials can be fitted, and people can choose different ratios for different makes. There are different wheel assemblies and even different tyres. As I said, the truck in question was bought without a turntable and without a bullbar. The owner is wondering how the price was calculated. He was told that for that deal he would pay \$210,000. He paid the stamp duty at the time. Now the assessor has claimed—and I believe that the assessors have been going back up to five years—that this truck was worth \$252,100 and that this fellow therefore owes nearly \$900 in stamp duty. He is not too happy about that.

It is all right if one happens to buy virtually a standard truck such as a Ford Louisville, a Mercedes, a Volvo or an International, all of which have their own equipment on board—although various motors can be chosen—so that one pays a standard price. Today's *Courier-Mail* contains a large ad for a 1994 plate stock clearance. It advises of a limited offer on a Louisville LTS 9000—\$10,000 cash back. Obviously, the price is \$10,000 less than one would expect to pay for a similar truck with a 1995 plate. The ad lists all the identification numbers of the trucks. Although nearly all of them have the same suspension, two of them have different suspensions and there are three or four engine options. The question is: what is the price of the vehicle?

Everyone agrees that stamp duty must be collected. We cannot provide hospitals and schools unless we collect some taxation. However, it appears that stamp duty is being assessed unfairly. A Holden Commodore usually sells for around \$33,000, but certain models may be run out and sold for \$31,000. Generous trades may be offered or cash-back offers may be made. Those deals are often offered when the new model is to be released in a couple of weeks' time. The value of those run-out models has definitely decreased. I cannot believe that a model that is being run out is worth the same as it was 12 months before. So people go in and say, "I will pay \$31,000 for this Commodore with certain options on it." Under the current assessment laws, people are paying the stamp duty applying to the \$33,000 vehicle. I believe that that is wrong, because people are buying a \$31,000 car. The same applies to the chap who purchased this truck. He says that he would not have bought a \$252,000 truck; it just was not economical for him to do so, so he bought a brand-new truck for \$210,000, but the Treasurer still collects the stamp duty on the higher amount.

This may have been the case for some time, but I do not believe so. I believe that the legislation was amended not that long ago, but I stand corrected on that. There must be a more equitable way of collecting stamp duty from people. I know that there are certain ways that people can get around it with regard to accessories. If people fit a bullbar, a radio and a tow bar to a vehicle before taking delivery of it, they pay the stamp duty on that amount of money. If \$1,000 worth of accessories has been fitted, an amount of \$2 per \$100 is payable in stamp duty. Therefore, the stamp duty is paid on the accessories. However, if the vehicle is purchased and those

accessories are fitted the next day, stamp duty is not paid on them, which means that the Treasurer misses out on that stamp duty. Sales tax may be paid, if necessary, but I am talking about the stamp duty that goes to State Treasury. When it comes to purchasing a car, most people are not bothered with that. They want the vehicle and all the accessories as one package; they do not want to be dodging and fiddling around over a couple of dollars of stamp duty. However, when it comes to purchasing a truck, because of the large amounts of money involved, the story is certainly different.

This matter needs to be addressed. It is not fair for truck owners, whose vehicle purchases involve large amounts of money. The trucking industry is a very important industry. People have the right to buy vehicles at whatever price they can. They should be paying stamp duty on the price for which they purchase the vehicle. At an end of model sale, we all know that a car dealer gets a generous amount of money to allow for trade-ins. We often see cases of dealers paying \$12,000 for a trade-in and that vehicle is then listed for sale for about \$12,000. People think that the dealer is selling the vehicle at that trade-in price. He cannot afford to sell it at that same price. He has to get a mark-up on it. He has to pay his way; he has an extra vehicle on his hands. If he is going for a clean skin, he can always get that much shaved off what he has to allow to resell that vehicle, including the service of the vehicle and any necessary repairs. That matter needs to be addressed because it is quite unfair on those who are being taxed for something that they are not getting.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (3.12 p.m.): I rise to support the Revenue Laws Amendment Bill 1995 which does four things: firstly, it increases the land tax exemption threshold for companies and trusts by 50 per cent to \$60,000; secondly, it increases the payroll tax exemption threshold from \$700,000 to \$750,000 in two stages, the first increase of \$25,000 becoming effective from 1 July 1995 and the second increase of \$25,000 becoming effective from 1 July 1996; thirdly, it halves the rate of Queensland stamp duty applying to trading and transfers of marketable securities listed on the Australian Stock Exchange; and, finally, it increases the rental duty exemption threshold from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

So far in this debate, it has been interesting to hear the comments from members of the Opposition.

Mr STEPHAN: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the numbers in the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr BEATTIE: I was saying that there are four major aspects to this legislation and I had just quickly gone through them. I had already mentioned the third objective of this legislation and I was about to turn to the Opposition spokespersons—the honourable member for Caloundra, and the honourable member for Lockyer—who talked about the decision to halve the rate of stamp duty applying to trading and transfers of marketable securities.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Opposition Treasury spokesman made big play of an editorial in the *Canberra Times*. She said that that editorial had said that the Premier had shot himself in the foot. Of course that paper would whinge. What else would the *Canberra Times* say? It is like the New South Wales and Victorian Treasurers whingeing. Of course they were going to whinge; we stole a march on them. It is like Canberra coming up here and supporting the Broncos in a home game.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: They whinged almost as much as Mrs Sheldon.

Mr BEATTIE: Not quite that badly. What a nonsense! Of course the *Canberra Times* will take issue in its editorial, because Queensland took the initiative. The Treasurer and the Premier had enough initiative to introduce this measure, so of course Canberra would whinge and moan. I have never seen such squealing from the New South Wales and Victorian Treasurers, and all because they did not have the incentive to do what we did and because their financial position is not as good as ours.

The honourable member for Caloundra wanted to know what we have got out of this now that the other States have followed our lead. What we have out of it is what the Premier said at a luncheon held recently that he and the Treasurer attended. The Premier talked about the psychological advantage of this initiative—a psychological advantage which says that Queensland is the place to be, that Queensland is the place with the initiative, that Queensland is well managed financially and that Queensland is prepared to take initiatives to encourage business. That is what the message was, that is what the message is, and it does not matter that the other States have followed our example. We provided that psychological lead—that psychological edge—which was a message that went around the

whole of Australia and overseas. What do the investment houses and companies overseas think? They know that this State took the initiative. It was the best PR exercise imaginable.

The honourable member for Caloundra made some disparaging remarks about the State's economy, and I want to dwell on that for a little while. We have to remember that the Queensland economy is strong and that it outperforms the other States. The forecast economic growth is 4.3 per cent for 1995-96 compared with the national average of 3.75 per cent, so we lead the country. We have maintained Queensland's AAA rating, we have continued the financial performance which delivered a surplus budget—and I will come back to that—and we have further improved the Government's negative net debt position. In addition to that, of course, we have maintained Queensland's status as a low-tax State.

This Bill is about a \$40m tax relief package for business. It includes, as I said earlier in more detail, increasing the payroll tax exemption threshold, increasing the land tax exemption threshold for companies and trusts and providing concessions on lease stamp duty and rental duty. They are the sorts of initiatives that will continue to provide a strong economy.

Let us debunk the nonsense that we have heard from the Opposition speakers on this Bill. Let us look at the real position of the Queensland economy. As I said, in 1995-96 the Queensland economy continues to have a high rate of growth—higher than the rest of Australia. Indeed, the position is such that, as a result of the previous Budgets—last year's in particular—business investment in recent years has showed a growth in 1994-95 of around 18.7 per cent.

The honourable member for Caloundra can make whatever disparaging remarks she likes about the Treasurer, but let us look at how good the Treasurer's figures are. In last year's Budget papers he predicted that business investment in this financial year would be at 19 per cent and it turned out to be 18.7 per cent. That is an impressive prediction in a reasonably difficult area, and I think that it is indicative of how good a Treasurer Keith De Lacy is. If we look at a comparative basis, which is what the honourable member for Caloundra tried to do, based on the latest Grants Commission data for 1993-94, which is the latest available, the tax burden in other States is one-third higher than in Queensland.

The member for Caloundra trumpets about what is happening in other States, but the position is that the tax burden in other States is one-third higher than it is in Queensland. If that is what she wants to support, she should tell the people of Queensland, as should the honourable Leader of the Opposition, in the countdown to this year's State election that that is what she supports.

Compared with the revenue policies of other State Governments, the Goss Government leaves a massive \$1,280m each year in the pockets of Queenslanders, which minimises business costs and maximises private sector activity. That is what this Government does. We leave that amount of money in the pockets of ordinary Queenslanders. That does not happen in the States with conservative Governments in the rest of Australia.

Let us look at the low-tax position. Despite what the honourable member for Caloundra says, Queensland remains the low-tax State in Australia with per capita collections in 1994-95 estimated to be \$552 per person less than in New South Wales. We take \$552 less from each Queenslanders than the Government in New South Wales. Crossing the border means paying an extra \$552 a year. That was the legacy of the Liberal Government in that State under John Fahey and Nick Greiner—\$552 less in Queensland than next door. Opposition members can say what they like: Queenslanders pay \$552 less a year than they do next door. Those figures speak for themselves. There are further tax concessions and no new taxes in the 1995-96 Budget, which is why this legislation is before the House today.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I will return to the honourable member and his rock-throwing exercises in Gympie in a minute. In 1993-94, Queensland could have raised an extra \$1.3 billion in revenue if it had applied the Australian average revenue rates—that is, tax and other revenue.

Mr Ardill: That is from the Federal tax authority.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right; they are independent figures. The growth of 5 per cent in total receipts largely reflects improved tax receipts due to a stronger economy and higher GOE returns. Queensland business investment is expected to increase in 1995-96 from the very strong position it had in 1994-95. Net interstate migration is high, whereas other States are losing population.

Queensland is in this sound financial position because the Treasurer has pursued a trilogy of financial commitments. Firstly, the Government has maintained Queensland as a low-tax State. Secondly, it has fully funded all liabilities, maintained financial assets sufficient to meet the Government's future superannuation liabilities, and provided full actuarial funding of workers' compensation and motor vehicle third-party claims. Thirdly, the Government has borrowed for income-producing assets only; that is, funding social capital assets such as schools and hospitals from the recurrent revenues and borrowing only for assets that effectively generate income streams sufficient to meet debt-servicing costs. Consequently, we have been able to introduce legislation such as the Revenue Laws Amendment Bill 1995.

The Queensland Government now earns more interest on its financial assets than it pays out on borrowings. The other States pay on average 13.4 per cent of State Government revenue in net interest payments. Queensland's ratio is minus 1.1 per cent. Prior to this Budget, Queensland had \$1.7 billion a year to put into service delivery, keeping taxes low and providing infrastructure, while other States had to service their debts.

Mr Bennett: The National Party never bothered about service.

Mr BEATTIE: Of course. The Opposition Treasury spokesman tried to misrepresent the position of Queensland as the low-tax State. The average tax collection per capita in other States is one-third higher than it is in Queensland. That is why people are flocking here. In 1988-89, the margin was 32 per cent. So the gap is now widening and we are actually doing better than before. In 1988-89, the gap between collections was 32 per cent; now it is 40 per cent. In that short period, there has been an 8 per cent variation in the State tax paid by Queenslanders. That is an impressive record. Despite what members of the National Party say, when they were in Government, they were nowhere near that.

We argue about taxes, and from time to time the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy coalition partner ask questions about taxes. Queensland has no petrol tax, no financial institutions' duty and lower payroll taxes. New South Wales and Victoria have a 7 per cent payroll tax. In Queensland, the threshold for exemption from payroll tax is \$750,000; in New South Wales, it is \$500,000; and in Victoria it is \$515,000.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: What is the member doing—throwing rocks at him? The member should not get too excited, or he will dribble on his shirt.

Queensland's debit tax is about half that in New South Wales and Victoria. Queensland has the lowest workers' compensation premiums of any State. One does not hear the Opposition talk about that. People moving to Queensland have lower set-up costs. For example, in Queensland, the stamp duty on a \$250,000 house is \$2,500, compared with \$7,240 in New South Wales and \$11,000 in Victoria.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Look at Opposition members get excited! They hate the truth. It really attacks their soul, because they know that with an election around the corner they have to explain how they are going to fund their promises, and they do not have a clue. We never hear about Opposition policies; they have not even been costed. Why would Opposition members not get excited and throw rocks on the roof?

I went to Gympie on Saturday night and Mr Stephan and his mates were throwing stones on the roof. The National Party in Gympie did not want to hear the truth and it does not want to hear it today, but I am not finished. All the taxes that I have listed apply in other States, but they do not apply in Queensland.

The stereotypical view of Queensland is that it is a State of farmers and miners. In fact, manufacturing comprises a bigger part of this State's economy than do agriculture and mining combined. As is the case throughout Australia, the services sector—retail, construction, tourism and so on—dominates our economy. We have a broad economy and the manufacturing sector is growing. The Queensland economy is bigger than the New Zealand economy, and it is nearly as big as both the Western Australia and South Australian economies combined, and the economy of Singapore as well.

From time to time, comments appear in the press about how much the economies of our Asian neighbours have grown in recent times. This Government has made a considerable effort to improve trade relations with Japan, one of our traditional trading partners, and Hong Kong, China, Vietnam and Thailand.

When people talk about strong, growing economies they tend to think automatically of the Asian tigers such as Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. In the 1990s, Queensland has been close to matching the Asian tigers in growth. In the past three years, the Queensland economy has grown by 16.7 per cent, compared with 6.6 per cent growth in the other States of Australia. Without the drought, Queensland's growth would have been more like 19 per cent. Over the same period, the Asian tigers recorded growth of around 20 per cent. Queensland's economic growth is very comparative to the economies in the Asian area. It is simply untrue and dishonest on the part of the Opposition to try to misrepresent the state of the economy.

I give the Opposition a very gratuitous word of caution: Queenslanders know what a good job the Treasurer and this Government have done in job creation, keeping taxes low and ensuring that the growth in Queensland continues.

Mr Bennett: And improvement in services.

Mr BEATTIE: And an improvement in services; that is exactly right, because in many ways this is a services budget. If the Opposition continues to whinge and moan and denigrate Queensland as it has done, it will suffer the consequences at the election. Anyone who is serious about the future of Queensland would have been supportive about the decision to halve the rate of Queensland stamp duty applying to the trading and transfers of marketable securities. That was a very sound initiative. What if the rest of Australia followed Queensland? It has been following us for the last six years and will continue to do so.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The member nearly got excited. It is all right. I knew we had been here for the last six years! For the last six years, the other States have been following our lead, and they will continue to follow our lead. Any suggestion to the contrary by the honourable members opposite does not do them any good and certainly does not help this State. I support the Bill before the House.

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (3.31 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their support for this piece of legislation. I shall make a comment about the shadow Treasurer who, when there is a piece of legislation to be debated, makes a habit of coming into this House and making outrageous and insupportable claims and then

running for cover. She is never here when I stand up to put the true facts on the record. I can only assume that it is deliberate. She is prepared to stand up here and say anything at all, unprepared to take an interjection and not prepared to remain around and to hear how she has misused the facts.

Mr Fenlon: She's gone back to hide under the bed.

Mr De LACY: That is what she has done, gone back to hide under her bed. Perhaps if I could just make a few comments about what she said about the halving of stamp duty on share transactions. I have never heard of such a narrow, inward-looking attitude in my life. It is about time members of the Opposition got a little bit of vision. If they started to look outwards instead of increasingly looking inwards—

Mr Johnson: You're the one with no vision.

Mr De LACY: Talk about vision! The joke after the Budget is that headlines all around Australia were talking about the vision of the Goss Government, and Mr Borbidge is running around town saying there is no vision. I assume Mr Johnson was running around western Queensland saying that the Government has no vision. But I can assure honourable members opposite that our initiative in respect of stamp duty on share transactions was a lot more visionary than the response that we heard from these characters over there.

All Mrs Sheldon could talk about was what New South Wales and Victoria did, the way in which they trumped us a week after the event by being forced kicking and screaming into reducing stamp duties to the level of the Queensland rates. We knew in the end that they would have to do that, but we had a couple of objectives in mind. Talk about looking outwards! The fact is—and this is something totally missed by the editorial in the *Canberra Times*—that we had a tax rate on share transactions in Australia which was no longer internationally competitive. Because the share market these days trades electronically, traders can do their trading where they like. What they were doing was increasingly trading offshore. Our objective was to bring that business back to Australia.

Speaking as a parochial Queenslanders, it would have been great if we could have maintained that competitive advantage for another year or so, but speaking as an Australian, every State has done the right thing. What benefits do we get? The first benefit is that as Australians we can now bring

all of that business that was being transacted offshore back to Australia. That is number 1. Number 2—

Mr FitzGerald: Are you going to get the Hong Kong market back?

Mr De LACY: We are competitive with Hong Kong. We have exactly the same rate as Hong Kong now. So those Australians and Australian companies and those big investors that were using the Hong Kong stock market will now do it in Australia, because we are competitive. But there were two other benefits to Queensland. One is that the Australian Stock Exchange has undertaken—and it will honour the undertaking—to shift a sizeable part of its activities here to Brisbane and to incorporate its activities here in Brisbane. That is a tangible benefit.

The second thing is that we have got that symbol out there again once more that Queensland is the low-tax State of Australia. Honourable members opposite could not have bought the kind of publicity that we got. Businesses are talking about it everywhere. Right around Australia and indeed overseas businesses are talking again about how Queensland stole a march on everybody else. That is not unimportant. I might say that in the end they took a decision in respect of other taxes which will inevitably have beneficial flow on effects to our Budget. At the end of the day for Queensland it was win, win, win. Yet Mrs Sheldon gets up there in her normal, negative whining way trying to create the impression that somehow it did not work. It worked and it unfolded exactly as I predicted that it would, with great benefit to Queensland, I might say, and Australia.

In her speech to the Budget, Mrs Sheldon got up and said the same thing. Had she hung around till the end she would have learnt how improper it was to make the kind of allegations that she did. But for the record, because it was raised again today, I will point out how wrong it was. Mrs Sheldon said that the per capita tax collections have increased by \$470 per capita or 60 per cent. The analysis is flawed because it does not compare like with like.

The fact is that the tax base or accounting changes in the composition of the Consolidated Fund have changed over time. In 1990, the base year with which she is comparing revenue, there is a whole of range of trust funds that were not included in the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The best example is motor vehicle registration. We collect something like \$450m a year from motor vehicle registration, which in 1990 was

separated out in a trust fund. We abolished the trust fund and brought the money into the Consolidated Fund. We still dedicate it all to road funding but it is in the Consolidated Fund. The reason it grows is the increase in the number of vehicles being registered. We have not increased the rate. This is the other thing—

Mr Johnson: But up 5.9 per cent. Up 5.9 per cent. Be honest. Admit that, Treasurer. Just tell the people it's up 5.9. They should know that.

Mr De LACY: I will accept the interjection. There has been no increase in the motor vehicle registration rate, but each year we get an increase in revenue because we have a growing population, a growing economy and there are more cars registered. It seems so difficult for people in the Opposition to get that into their thick heads. Mrs Sheldon was up there talking about the way in which we have increased revenue from payroll tax. Surprise, surprise. We forecast an increase this year. It is nothing to do with any rates; it is because there will be an increase in weekly earnings and there will be an increase in employment over the year.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: The only thing that would make them happy is if we went into a slump, by the sounds of it.

Mr De LACY: Yes. Maybe if we went into a recession, then the revenue would go down, and I suppose honourable members opposite would say that we had cut rates to be consistent.

Mr Johnson: No, I wouldn't say that at all.

Mr De LACY: No, because one thing honourable members opposite could never be accused of being is consistent. So when we are comparing 1990 with 1995 we need to compare like with like. If we did a fair analysis we would either put the motor vehicle registration in on both or take it out on both—either way. The bank accounts debit tax is another one. It was a Commonwealth tax. It was given to the States. We did not actually ask for it but it was given to us. So it is now part of our revenue. But they also deducted an amount from our financial assistance grants. Mrs Sheldon conveniently stands up and says, "We have increased our tax revenue. Look at this." But it has an offset account. That is why it is so flawed and so fraudulent for Mrs Sheldon to get up here and quote the figures that she did. But of course, if she is telling a lie, she should not listen to anybody. If someone is trying to promulgate a lie, do not listen to what anybody else says

because that person might understand that you are out there promoting a lie. She comes into this Chamber, tells everybody that and then races out in case somebody might disprove what she said. It is very easy to disprove.

Mr Johnson: I can tell you, I won't race out. I'll sit here and listen to you. I've never run away from anyone in my life.

Mr De LACY: Seeing that I feel well disposed, I would have to say that that is why the honourable member has a much deeper understanding of these issues than Mrs Sheldon.

The member for Lockyer used the opportunity to introduce the subject of stamp duty being calculated on the list price of motor vehicles. That is true and I believe that there is a good, supportable reason for it. That is one of those policy positions that, firstly, is made on the basis of equity and, secondly, tends to favour people in country Queensland. People pay the same stamp duty for the same vehicle. If a person obtains a good deal, that person does not obtain a benefit in stamp duty; if a person obtains a bad deal, that person does not pay more in stamp duty. However, most of the good deals are in the city areas, where there is a lot more competition. In country areas, people pay more for their vehicles because freight is added and, usually, the environment is less competitive. However, they pay exactly the same stamp duty as people in the cities pay. I have considered this issue on a number of occasions and sometimes I think that maybe we should change it but, on the basis of equity, I am convinced that what we are doing is the best approach.

As to optional extras—again, that is an issue about which I have had many discussions with motor traders and others. The fact is that stamp duty is payable on the vehicle, that is, the whole of the vehicle. The definition of a vehicle and optional extras changes over time. Twenty years ago, airconditioning was a true optional extra. Now, it is not an optional extra; it is part of the vehicle. That is all that has changed. The policy has not changed; the definition of optional extras has changed. From time to time, we receive representations from the motor traders about this matter. That policy is not something that is new, because it has always been there; it is something that I am re-examining from time to time but, on the balance of all the arguments put to me, I think our policy is supportable.

Mr FitzGerald: How do they determine the list price for a custom-built vehicle?

Mr De LACY: The only way to determine that is to consider the list price and all of the additions to it and come to a final price. But, if it is custom built—

Mr FitzGerald: It has to go to the Supreme Court, doesn't it? If you want to appeal, you've got to go to the Supreme Court.

Mr De LACY: Yes.

Mr FitzGerald: You cannot go to the Supreme Court for a \$900 bill.

Mr De LACY: So, pay your tax.

Mr FitzGerald: As you assess them.

Mr De LACY: Everybody has to pay their tax. We administer the taxation legislation as fairly and equitably as we possibly can. There is no question or suggestion that the Office of State Revenue would unfairly interpret the taxation legislation. They interpret it as they believe it is written and as they believe it was intended. Of course, from time to time, there is controversy. There is never any question about that; they do not make changes to rulings, all they do is update their rulings in the light of circumstances, and they change from time to time.

I thank all honourable members for their support for this legislation. I am pleased that everybody has supported it. I expected that, of course, because it is all about reducing taxes.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 14, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr De Lacy, by leave, read a third time.

HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 May (see p. 11838).

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South) (3.48 p.m.): We resume this debate after it was adjourned on Budget day. A few moments remain in which to conclude the speech that I was delivering. At the time the debate was adjourned, I was talking about regionalisation and the paralysis that it has

caused to Queensland Health. One of the fundamental reasons we have a health crisis in Queensland is the problems of regionalisation. In particular, I was saying that this Government has recognised that the National/Liberal coalition is right in its assessment of one of the fundamental reasons Queensland Health is in turmoil. We have identified the problems of regionalisation and in our policy we have announced that, if we are elected to Government, we will dismantle regionalisation because it creates an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy. Two extra layers of bureaucracy were introduced with regionalisation: the sector level where administration is carried out and payrolls are prepared, and the additional layer of the regional health authorities and the entire offices and empires that go with that.

As I said at the outset of this speech, the legislation is about litigation, indemnity for Queensland Health employees and putting in place a mechanism to assist in recruitment of people to Queensland Health because it has removed a small area of risk in which people felt they may not have been fully indemnified against negligence. I believe that it is also about properly valuing health employees. If some things have been missing in Queensland Health in the past six years, they are valuing employees and respecting employees.

We have seen fundamental issues of mismanagement in Queensland Health, such as regionalisation, misdirection of budgets, unfunded or partially funded wages rises and getting rid of all the good, experienced administrators. It has been one thing after another that has led to the health crisis that has caused the reduction in rosters and working conditions that have caused people to no longer want to work in the system. It is not simply a matter of saying, "We are going to give you indemnity." That is not going to bring those people back because that is not the reason they left. It is not the reason the nurses have left the PA Hospital, the Royal Brisbane Hospital or other hospitals throughout the State. The reason is the conditions under which they work. It is conditions such as those that exist in the accident and emergency area that has been in the news so much lately. I talk to the staff, and they tell me that there is no room to put anyone. The Royal Brisbane Hospital is one of the most classic examples of mismanagement by this Government that one could ever possibly imagine. The 120-bed Caboolture Hospital on the north side of Brisbane was started by the National Party Government. The National Party Government

had bought the land for that hospital so there would be a new, additional hospital for the growing population.

Mr Elder: Swamp.

Mr HORAN: It bought the land, which is on a beautiful site. Government members know that, strategically, it is a magnificent site. The National Party Government allocated that site to provide additional services for the new, growing populations, not to decimate the hospital in the inner city—a tertiary hospital that provides services for at least 40 per cent of Queensland's patients from all areas of the State. So what we have seen—and this is a good example of what is happening throughout the State—is about 120 new beds, but 400 beds closed down. But those 400 beds have been closed at a hospital that, in many cases, has the specialists to provide the services that are not available elsewhere in the State. So what has happened to the people? Where do they go when they turn up at the hospital? Government members should go to the hospital any morning they wish and from 7 o'clock or 8 o'clock they will see elderly people waiting for a bed. For three or four weeks, they have been booked into a bed, yet they sit there and wait. Come 5 o'clock, or 5.30 p.m., some of them get a bed, but some do not because there is a capped elective surgery rate of 30 beds a day. That is all that is available. So these people sit and wait to get their bed.

However, the other part of the problem lies with the accident and emergency section. People are lying on trolleys in the accident and emergency section because they cannot get from that section into a bed in the hospital. There is no bed for them to go to, so the staff are forced to use all the cubicles and all the trolleys, which jam the entire area. If there was a fire, a most dangerous situation would be created. Those patients have nowhere to go, so they lie around waiting until the afternoon or late at night, hoping that they might get a bed.

That is the microcosm of what is happening in Queensland Health. Once upon a time, the demand, whatever it was, could be met by the hospital system. It was the proud boast of the Royal Brisbane Hospital and all who worked there that whoever turned up at the door could be treated and given a bed. However, that is no longer the case. Instead, people are turned away.

Just last Monday afternoon at the accident and emergency section of the Princess Alexandra Hospital a similar situation occurred. Because all the trolleys and all the

cubicles were full there was nowhere to put patients. Why? Because through this Government's brilliant planning, it has closed down the accident and emergency section, the intensive care ward and the medical ward at the QE II Hospital so major operations cannot be conducted at the hospital and sick people cannot be treated. The paediatric section and the maternity section of that hospital have also been closed, yet the Government has the hide to say that two or three floors of the hospital are empty. Of course they are, because the Government has ripped everything out of the hospital. The Labor Party pulled out those services.

In 1989, the dental service was located at one end of the third floor and the rest of that floor was vacant. Until this mob moved in and ripped everything out of the hospital and shifted it down to Logan, that was the only part of the QE II Hospital that was vacant. A similar situation exists in Caboolture. When the National Party Government bought the land for the Logan Hospital and built Stage 1, it was built to be able to cope later with new and additional services. It was well planned by the National Party Government to cater for the booming population in those areas. Instead, this crowd has opened those hospitals, but it has closed down the QE II. So we have chaos. The 230,000 people who live around the QE II Hospital have nowhere to go because the services that they once had at their community general hospital have been closed down or decimated.

At the Greenslopes hospital, 70 public beds were used every day, yet this Government turned its back on the offer of that hospital—worth about \$250m, plus full operational costs for 10 years, plus \$6m for a cardiac surgical unit—for free. Why would the Government turn its back on such an offer? What did the member for Greenslopes do? Those people who had chosen to live in that area so that they could be near a hospital lost that magnificent facility. It had one of the best theatre complexes in Australia. Now it is gone forever. Like the closure of the QE II, the closure of the Greenslopes hospital placed extra demands on the PA Hospital.

So we have seen this mismanagement creating a domino effect of one closure or one downgrade after another until we have reached the stage at which the remaining facilities are overcrowded and cramped. Because of the state to which the Government has reduced the system, because of the paralysis that has been caused by the regional health authority system, a large number of

good, experienced Queensland nurses have walked out.

I turn now to the question of liability and the situation that exists in the other States. In most other States of Australia, employers indemnify their employees. The method by which this is achieved has varied greatly from State to State. Under the Employees Liability Act 1991, employers in New South Wales are obliged to indemnify their employees. In addition, as an incentive to country doctors, the New South Wales Government will not only indemnify doctors for all public patients but also provide a \$5,000 extra payment for private medical insurance. Hospitals in South Australia self-insure most medical officers. The Western Australian and Northern Territory Governments indemnify their employees. The Victorian Department of Health maintains a comprehensive private professional indemnity program to indemnify all doctors who provide services to public patients.

It is worth mentioning the recent professional indemnity review that was undertaken by the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health in 1991. In February 1994, an interim report was produced. The review was established because there were a number of concerns, and those concerns included the fact that few people suffering adverse health outcomes were compensated. The common law system is costly and involves delays. The operation of a fault-based compensation scheme can conflict with broader public health policies. The current indemnity, legal and compensation arrangements do not prevent adverse patient outcomes. The existing indemnity arrangements for health providers may be inadequate. Indemnity subscriptions have been rising rapidly, and the vicarious liability of employees is inconsistent between States and may be inadequate.

One of the reasons for this amending Bill has been that the definition of "indemnity" has widened. Once upon a time a duty of care was one of the main bases of the definition. It all revolved around the doctor/patient relationship. However, recent cases have really widened the scope of the indemnity ruling. I refer in particular to a case in Australia in which a GP had told a person to see a specialist. That GP made the arrangements for making the appointment and so forth. As it turned out, the patient did not see the specialist. Some time later, the patient suffered adverse effects from the illness and ended up suing the doctor. The doctor was held responsible and not the patient. So it would appear that under

this definition the doctor not only has a duty of care in the way he treats the person but also, according to this court ruling, a duty of care to ensure that the person goes to see the specialist that the doctor has recommended.

I have referred to a large extent to negligence and people being indemnified against negligence provided that they have been acting in the best interests of the patient. My concern is also about the negligence of this Government in some of the actions that it has taken. I would like to specify one in particular: the gynaecology ward of the PA Hospital. That hospital had one of the best gynaecology wards in the State. This Government is always talking about what it does for women's health—putting posters on the wall, and all the other things that it does. However, when it comes to real things, the gynaecology ward—which was one of the best in the State—was closed down and those beds dispersed throughout the rest of the hospital into the ear, nose and throat ward, the renal ward and so forth. As a result, that hospital lost some of the best nursing staff it had—good nurses, experienced in the area of gynaecology. Since then, I understand that the hospital's post-operative infection rate for gynaecology has doubled. That is the sort of result that we have from the mismanagement of and poor planning for our public hospital system by this Government. It all comes back to regionalisation and senior executive staff who have no idea of the health system, no idea of the Queensland system, no idea of how the system ran or how it should run and no idea of the decentralised system. The system is being clogged up with all of these additional layers of bureaucracy—13 centralised bureaucratic empires and a total paralysis in decision making.

The Opposition's plan provides for decentralisation. It provides for community-based direction and strategic planning. The Opposition's plan will see that Health gets on with the job and that millions of dollars are saved. Those millions of dollars could be used to provide the service. The Opposition is about providing the service, not plan after plan after plan, or conference after conference, or review after review. We will spend every dollar we can to put beds back into the system and employ staff to get the job done so that people can once again have confidence in the health system.

One of the problems is the time taken by the Crown law office to make decisions on litigated matters. I understand that it has taken up to six months to decide whether jurisdiction applies in these cases, whereas employees

have 28 days in which to reply to a writ. Hopefully, the amendment contained in this Bill that will provide for a reliance on policy will circumvent that delay. It is wrong for people to be at the mercy of delays within the Crown law office. By supporting this Bill, we hope to assist the litigation process. As part of the Act, section 3.35 took precedence over policy. That section has to be removed so that policy can once again be at the forefront in determining whether someone will have adequate indemnity in a particular case.

In conclusion, we support this Bill. However, we will not let it pass without bringing to the notice of this House the six constant years of failure that we have seen under this Goss Government. Health has now received record increases in funding. The people of Queensland have now woken up to the Government. There is seething discontent among the staff. The wheels are falling off the Goss machine. Everybody knows that now. They do not believe in the Government any more. The Government cannot keep throwing money at a problem and think that people will believe it when it says that that will fix the problem. People believed the Goss Government for two or three years, but they have stopped believing it now. People now treat promises of funding increases as a joke. They say, "Here is another couple of hundred million—another promise."

The Opposition is pointing out the shortcomings in the system. We are saying, "Jump", and the Government is asking, "How high?" It is Government by remote control. However, once we get into Government, we will fix up the system, offer a decent service and value for money. We will provide a service that is decentralised, community based and one which operates at the direction of the people. People no longer believe the Government's promises of more money. They have been hearing the same promises for the past six years. Record amounts are now being spent. What do we see? An even bigger health crisis!

The front-line health services such as accident and emergency and intensive care have been neglected. For example, people can no longer obtain a bed in the biggest hospital in the State. That is the real crux of the problem. That is the basis on which people will pass judgment on the Government. I refer to the people on the north side who can no longer be admitted to their hospital. There is hardly a person in Queensland who does not know someone who has had an operation cancelled. There is hardly a person in Queensland who does not talk to nursing staff

and who does not know about the problems of the health system, including the interference in and the cost of the regional bureaucracy. There is hardly a person in Queensland who does not know someone who has not been able to be admitted to hospital. We will restore confidence in the system and give Queenslanders back the great health system that they had under the previous coalition Government. People know that that is what they will get under a coalition Government.

Mrs EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha) (4.05 p.m.): I have to admit that I do not understand the real need for this amendment. It really does not change anything at all in terms of indemnity cover and offers no change to the existing conditions for indemnity. However, I do accept that this amendment is a goodwill gesture to the AMA, which voiced concerns and reservations about Government legal opinions on this matter. I am a great believer in the line that, if it harms no-one, it costs nothing and it makes someone happy, then why not do it. Certainly the amendment will make the medical defence organisations happy. They are the ones who stand to gain the most from this amendment.

However, I am concerned that the previous speaker in the debate on this Bill seemed to be advocating that we should remove the onus for health professions not to be negligent. That really is going too far in kowtowing to his mates in the AMA and the medical defence organisation. It throws into question the integrity of every public hospital professional at every level—technicians, nurses, doctors and so on. As a health professional who maintains private professional indemnity insurance, that statement seriously concerns me—as it should concern all health workers—because of the implications of cost rises in the future.

There were other matters that the member for Toowoomba South raised that I must comment on. He spoke about the increased numbers in administration. I have lobbied persistently for administrative assistance for medical and technological staff. While members opposite wallow in ignorance about health workings, I believed—and I still do—that it was ridiculous to see senior medical officers and researchers and technologists making appointments and fiddling around typing reports with two fingers on aged typewriters. Surely that was not their role. I believed then, and I believe now, that it was a ridiculous waste of resources and expertise.

I lobbied strongly for an increased number of administrative assistants to perform these

clerical duties and free those medical experts to spend more time with their patients and their clinical work. I also lobbied for computers to allow research data collection and improved recordings—something that was made impossible by the hypocrites opposite. A senior intensive care specialist told me that in 1989, in order to gain access to a basic computer for his research and patient monitoring, he had to prostitute himself to a drug company when his research may end up recommending against the use of that drug company's product. What a position in which to place a researcher and senior medical practitioner! That is the sort of ethical dilemma that Opposition members want to go back to. They want to go back to the bad old days when senior medics and researchers had to beg, steal or borrow the equipment they needed for their daily office work.

I am proud of the fact that these needs have been recognised, in spite of the Opposition's constant harping opposition to providing researchers and medical staff with administrative assistance and necessary office equipment. I reject the Opposition's constant criticism. This recognition was needed and welcome. The community of Queensland has grown used to the constant negative harping of the Opposition. Not once have we heard mention of a positive policy. All we hear is whingeing, harping and negative moaning. I am disappointed in the member for Toowoomba South, who seemed a decent chap when he came into Parliament. However, at that time he was a new boy in the National Party. And, boy, how a few years have changed him! At that stage, he was just a new Johnny in the National Party.

The Opposition has consistently tried to beat up the number of so-called bureaucrats by simplistically adding the number that it had when it was in Government to any number that it thinks might be in the regions. What the Opposition has never accepted, and what it does not like to hear, is that during regionalisation we moved hundreds of administrative positions out of central office in Brisbane and into the regions, that is, into the country towns. We thought that the Opposition would welcome that move. Now the members opposite want to send these administrators and their families back to Brisbane. For the life of me, I cannot understand their logic. I thought that the Opposition would have supported the idea of having a greater say, more control and easier access to health workers in the regions close to the medical coalface. But what is the reality?

There are now 550 administrators in central office—just over half the number there were in 1989, when there were 994. Back then, everything, including stethoscopes and toilet paper, had to be ordered through central office. There are now 216 administrators in the regions. Even members opposite should be able to see that there has been a 20 per cent cut overall. As I said, I cannot for the life of me understand how the so-called party of the bush can turn its back on the bush and want to return to the old days of running everything from Brisbane.

Under the former Government, an application had to be sent up the ladder through 25 layers of bureaucracy to central office and one had to wait for a week or a month for the answer to come back. Nothing could be done without going through that process. There could not be a change to the way in which appointments were made or the way in which materials were ordered without it taking two months, three months or a year for the decision to come back from central office.

A Government member interjected.

Mrs EDMOND: Tell me about it. I had to live with that system. The Opposition knows that it is turning its back on the people in the bush. It is doing that because of its pig-headed opposition for the sake of opposition. It does not know what else to do, so it opposes everything that the Government does.

The previous speaker raved on about a health system in crisis. I accept that part of the health system is in crisis, and it largely affects the prime constituency and the major supporters of members opposite. The system that is witnessing an exodus that is creating problems is the private health sector. This is due to the increased recognition of members of the community that the care, service and quality of health in the public health system in Queensland is every bit as good as that in the private sector. That is where the crisis is. Obviously, members opposite are not talking to some of the people in the health insurance business, or they would be aware of that fact. People in the health insurance business are concerned, because the number of privately insured people is dropping to non-viable levels.

When one asks people why they are dropping out of private health insurance, they say that it is because specialist fees are totally unpredictable; they are often many times the recommended fee. These factors plus all the add-ons leave patients with no idea of how much out of pocket they will be. People know

that they can now access those very services through the public system. Services that previously were not available under the public health system are now available. The public system now offers CAT scans and cardiac scans. Those procedures are now performed just as well in the public health system as they are in the private health system.

Members opposite ask why people are waiting. I inform them that people wait in the private system, too. My mother had to have a cataract removed. She would have had to wait 12 months under the public system. On the other hand, she would have had to wait 10 months under the private system, and she would have had to pay through the nose for it. All those unquantified add-ons for a procedure that Fred Hollows could have performed for \$3! My medical friends always advise me that if people are having their haemorrhoids repaired or an ingrown toenail removed, they should go to a private hospital; that if it is anything more serious, people should go to a public hospital—and that has never been truer.

But what about the waiting lists? There are waiting lists. There always have been waiting lists. If members opposite did not know about them before, that was because management was so poor that it did not have a clue that they existed. They were there, all right! Cancer patients had to wait six months to have a bone scan at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, even though they were meant to be having three-monthly check-ups. There will always be waiting lists for elective surgery, but I have not met one person with an urgent or serious medical condition who was not treated in the appropriate time frame and who was less than delighted with the care that he or she received. Every time that Mr Horan makes a statement in a newspaper, people become very upset and ring me up saying, "How dare that man! I was in such-and-such hospital, and the care they gave me was outstanding." Those people do not know why the member for Toowoomba South persists in attacking the professional staff in the public health system. What people do know is that the member for Toowoomba South is a political opportunist.

Many of the people now on waiting lists are waiting for procedures that were not even performed in public hospitals before 1989. Now such procedures are commonplace. In 1989, only 20 angioplasties a year were performed. We now hear screams of complaint when the number performed at one hospital is reduced to 20 a week! Most lengthy waiting times are a result of specialist shortages.

Mr Nunn: Who controls the number of specialists?

Mrs EDMOND: That is a good point. The numbers of specialists coming through is controlled by the colleges. There is a strong vested interest in keeping the number of specialists down and maintaining a shortage in Queensland and Australia. Of course, the existing specialists do not want anyone coming in from overseas, because that just might reduce their incomes to only half a million a year! But that is a side issue. The lengthy waiting times are a result of specialist shortages, and we as a Government are introducing new packages to address that. But waiting times occur also in the private system for that very reason.

The one thing that sticks in my throat more than anything else is the claim that, under the National Party Government, Queensland Health was more efficient. It was not; it was just cheaper. It was cheaper because it was 20 years behind the other States in terms of services. It was cheaper because it paid its workers peanuts. I know; I was there. When I went back to work in Queensland in 1984, I was paid \$100 a week less than I had been earning in Victoria in 1979. Nurses, technologists, doctors—everybody in the system was treated with contempt and paid contemptuously. The equipment was decrepit. How could health workers seriously do a cardiac scan on 20-year-old equipment that could not even find the bleeding heart? The equipment was absolutely rotten. Most of the diagnostic equipment in the major teaching hospitals in 1984 was at least 20 years older than anything that I had ever seen in Victoria. I kid you not!

When I was a student in the sixties, wards and buildings at the RBH were condemned, but when I came back in 1984 they were still there; they were still crammed full with patients out on verandahs, and they had not even been painted in those 30 years. The biggest cockroaches I have ever seen crawled out of the cracks in the plaster. Yes, the most wonderful staff that I have ever met put up with that. I still remember the gruesome sight of the neurological wards: old iron beds with patients crammed out on old verandahs. It was a case of Florence Nightingale, bring back your lamp! But still there were those dedicated staff who made the difference.

At repeated intervals, there was talk of bombing the whole site and rebuilding the RBH, but the quotes of hundreds of millions of dollars scared off the National Party

Government, and no-one complained publicly because to do so meant instant dismissal. Of course, nurses, technologists and doctors did not march on Parliament House, because that was not allowed; the Government of the day would set the police on people! We all remember how people were bashed in the sixties and seventies if they dared to march in the streets. We did not see doctors participating in rallies outside hospitals, because that would have meant that the police would be called in and they would all be sacked or bashed. That type of activity was totally illegal.

Mrs McCauley: Rubbish!

Mrs EDMOND: The member should refer to history and read about this matter. People could not voice their dissent; it was illegal.

When members opposite hear of this Government's economic good news, they try to claim all the credit on the grounds that they were in Government for 32 years. But when members opposite hear about the problems in the health system that resulted from their 32 years in power they say, "But the Labor Government has been there for five years. It should have fixed all of that. It would only take a few billion dollars." Why five years? Why not five months! Members opposite claim that, in five years, this Government should have magically rebuilt, modernised and re-equipped our hospitals to the tune of a couple of billion dollars—wave a magic wand, why don't you?

It will take us at least a decade to recover from the malaise of underfunding of several decades. However, we are prepared to do it, and we are committed to doing it. We have accepted the challenge. We have provided funding, and we have now started rebuilding and re-equipping our hospitals. But people do not have to take my word for all of this; they should take the word of another former health professional: the Deputy Leader of the Coalition, the leader of the Liberal cluster, the member for Caloundra. She worked at the coalface, and she should know. As Mrs Sheldon so aptly put it on Cairns radio last year—

"The Labor Government knew in 1989 that the health system was in crisis and that they had to deal with it."

I repeat that last year Mrs Sheldon said—

"The Labor Government knew in 1989 that the health system was in crisis and that they had to deal with it."

That is true. We knew—just as Mrs Sheldon knew—that the Queensland health system

was in crisis in 1989. It is now in recovery, but it needs careful nurturing and monitoring for some time yet before being fully cured. Its prognosis is excellent, as long as it is not reinfected by members opposite.

Mrs McCauley (Callide) (4.20 p.m.): That could well be the last speech made by the member for Mount Coot-tha in this House. All I can say is hallelujah for that. The issue of indemnity for professional people in Queensland's hospital system was first raised by Dr Alan West of Mundubbera, which is in my electorate. I am rather surprised that the member for Mount Coot-tha said that she felt that this was unnecessary, because in a letter to the Regional Director of the Wide Bay Health Region, Dr West said—

"The type of indemnity that is currently provided by Queensland Health is as I am sure you are aware totally unacceptable. It appears that Queensland now is the only state in Australia that does not fully indemnify their Medical Personnel when dealing with public patients."

Dr West is the only doctor in that town. He is the hospital doctor, but he has the right of private practice. He services a huge area. Babies are not delivered in Gayndah, Biggenden or Eidsvold, so mothers go to Dr West in Mundubbera to have him deliver their babies. If they did not go to Mundubbera, they would have to go to Maryborough or Bundaberg, which would take them a long way away from their families. At least Mundubbera is not that far away from those other towns. It is only half an hour or so from Gayndah and a bit further from Biggenden and Eidsvold. The service that Dr West has provided and still provides to that area is excellent.

The member for Mount Coot-tha had a lot to say about the services to the bush. We are pretty basic in the bush; all we want are a few doctors and a few nurses. All that we ask for is some service. We do not want to be fancy; we just want some doctors and nurses. All we want is some fairly basic facilities, and we are not getting them. When we get doctors such as Dr West who are prepared to come to the country to practise obstetrics, the Government will not professionally indemnify them. That is what this Government is like.

I think it is important that Dr West continues to deliver babies in Mundubbera, and obviously the people in that area think so as well. In fact, in one article in the local newspaper, Dr West said—

"On the one hand Queensland Health is conducting surveys and holding

meetings to find out what specialist services we would like.

On the other hand here am I, and other doctors like me, who are willing, able and qualified to perform these services for the patients of our areas and find out that the Health Authority will not indemnify us to do so."

At the end of last year, Dr West refused to deliver any more babies unless he was professionally and fully indemnified by the Wide Bay Regional Health Authority. He was supported by the Rural Doctors Association. In relation to that, Dr Shane Sondergeld said—

"Queensland Health's approach was 'absolute false economy' as the astronomical cost of transporting patients to hospitals where doctors were fully indemnified and would treat them far outweighed what it would cost to meet the cost of indemnifying the state's privately practising medical superintendents.

It was also discriminatory, as it could mean mothers being denied 'the thrill of having their children in their own community.'"

I was pleased to see that the Rural Doctors Association backed Dr West on this matter.

However, I was very disappointed at the response from Paul Kelly, who is the Regional Director of the Wide Bay Health Authority. When talking about the indemnity policy in a letter in the paper, he stated—

"The policy will provide certainty that when a doctor, including Dr West, endeavours diligently and conscientiously to carry out public duties on behalf of the Regional Health Authority, they will have indemnity cover."

I also believe from reading Dr West's letters that Paul Kelly tried very hard to shut Dr West up, even to the extent of probably saying, "Your job is on the line if you do not keep quiet." That did not solve the matter, and I am pleased that Dr West continued to mention this matter and continued to keep the pressure up. I am pleased that this matter is finally being rectified, despite the fact that the member for Mount Coot-tha believes that it is unnecessary. It is necessary. If only one doctor in country Queensland thinks it is necessary—and babies will not be delivered unless things change—then I am pleased to welcome this change.

We have a crisis as regards getting medical practitioners out into the country. In

the last six months, Biloela has lost a doctor in private practice and we cannot get a replacement. That doctor was in private practice. One partner has been gone for six months. Biloela is a nice little town. It has twice-daily air flights to Brisbane, it is only an hour and a half from the coast and it is in a good position. If it were not for the drought, it would be a fairly stable and reasonably wealthy community, but we cannot get the extra doctor that we need. What will we have to do to get doctors into country areas? There are three doctors in Biloela, but we want and need a fourth one because those doctors cover a very large area. I asked one of those doctors why there was little or no response to the advertisement in the paper for the additional doctor, and he simply said, "The figures are not there; they are not making the money." That issue needs to be addressed. This situation will only get worse before it gets better.

Biloela is not entirely without the services of doctors, obviously, but the lack of doctors puts more pressure on the doctors who are there servicing the people who are sick. I have given up trying to go to my doctor. I do not get sick any more. People simply cannot get in to see their doctors in under seven weeks, even if they are desperately ill. That is simply not good enough. That is what is happening in Biloela, and it will only get worse.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs McCAULEY: People raise these concerns with their elected members. I want to raise a matter that was brought to my attention by a doctor in the Gladstone community who was also a member of the hospital board when it was in existence. That doctor wrote to his local member—the member for Gladstone—with a couple of queries, one of which was about aerial transfers of patients from Tannum Sands up to Rockhampton. This doctor believes that the three transfers involved in that process are unnecessary when a trip to Rockhampton by ambulance would be almost as fast as transporting patients to the airport, changing over, putting them in the aerial ambulance, taking them to Rockhampton and having another ambulance meet them there, etc.

That doctor asked a question about those transfers and he also asked about the number of extra public servants in the Health Department. The local member's response was to ring the doctor's receptionist and say, "Tell the doctor not to send any more of those stupid letters." That is a really good response from the elected member to a doctor who has genuine queries!

Mr BENNETT: I rise to a point of order. I take offence at those remarks. The fact is that I advised the doctor to go to the Central Regional Health Authority because it would have the resources to find those figures and information for him.

Mrs McCAULEY: The member for Gladstone did indeed advise the doctor to go to the Central Regional Health Authority, but he said, "Don't send me any more of those stupid letters." What a disgrace that is! This is the man who wants to get elected at the next election. He said, "Tell him not to send me any more stupid letters." The doctor is entitled to ask questions, and it is the elected member's responsibility to answer those queries. If the member is too stupid to answer those queries himself, he should pass them on to the Central Regional Health Authority. He is just being extremely lazy and taking his money for doing nothing. He is saying, "It is not my problem; I cannot do anything about it."

However, that member is very quick to send letters with his photo and a photo of the Premier next to him to the people of Gladstone saying, "Vote for me." He is hanging on to his coat-tails fast and tight. If Elizabeth Cunningham runs against him, he is gone. I will answer the doctor's queries because they are simple queries and they deserve an answer. They are legitimate queries. Any decent elected member would do a bit of legwork and find out the answers and get them back to the doctor. He may even vote for the member if he had done that, but not now.

Mr Bennett: He never would have voted for me anyhow.

Mrs McCAULEY: The member does not know that.

Another constituent of mine has a problem that I would like to raise. This constituent wrote to the Minister for Health to raise the plight of a neighbour of his who is unable to afford private hospital cover. She was diagnosed in August last year as having gallstones which needed surgery in Rockhampton. Anyone who has suffered from gallstones would know that it is an extremely painful condition. It causes probably one of the worst sorts of pain. This woman was told to expect her surgery within approximately two months of diagnosis. Since that time, she has been advised of a date for her operation three times, but each time it has been cancelled at the last minute. The last occasion she was scheduled to have an operation was 23 May. Her condition has been accompanied by illness and severe pain, sometimes

necessitating visits to the local hospital for pethidine injections. She is 40 kilometres out of town. She has been on a very restricted diet and has lost a great deal of weight.

Through all this, that woman has been uncomplaining and stoic, as must be many in this unfortunate condition. Her husband, waiting 16 months for an arthroscopy for a very painful knee condition, is in a similar situation. These are public patients who cannot get the attention that they need. I think that is very sad. While I welcome this legislation, the Labor Party members can yell until they are blue in the face: they have lost it in health, and they will not convince people that the system is better now than it was in our day.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN (Chermside) (4.31 p.m.): I rise to support the legislation before the House. This Bill is about litigation and about removing impediments so as to encourage recruitment into hospitals, and in particular into rural hospitals. Even the Opposition spokesperson on Health confirms this. This Bill is also about valuing the employees of Queensland Health.

Mr Horan has claimed that the problems faced by staff in public hospitals are due to negligence on the part of this Government. I can demonstrate to Mr Horan that this Government has brought some wage justice back into the health system and has systematically increased the Health budget to \$2.7 billion, an increase of 60 per cent on the last Liberal/National Party Health Budget. The Goss Labor Government has embarked on a large capital works program to rebuild the hospitals which the Nationals and Liberals allowed to decay. This Government provides funding to treat some 3,000 patients a week more than when last the Liberal and National Parties held power. It was a Labor Government under Ned Hanlon which established this health system and the Goss Government has rebuilt it from the ruins in which it was left.

Next year's Health budget will provide a record \$2.7 billion. The fact that Health is the biggest spending item in the Budget shows the priority this Government has placed on the health system. Under Labor, Queensland Health has treated 620,000 people in the past year. That is well up from the 470,000 patients treated at the end of the 1980s under the National Party Government. Clearly, more and more Queenslanders who need medical treatment are getting it. Increased funding is leading to people receiving treatment in

hospitals and in community facilities near where they live. Some of the key initiatives in the package released by the Minister a couple of weeks ago include: \$64m to attack the waiting lists in Queensland hospitals; \$40m to accelerate the Metropolitan Hospital Rebuilding Program; \$35m for re-equipping our hospitals—my colleague the member for Mount Coot-tha has explained some of the pathetically old and dilapidated equipment that she had to put up with when she worked in Queensland Health—and \$10m to improve the pay and conditions of the medical work force.

The Queensland health system is growing quickly to cater for the increasing population growth in the State. As a result, \$50m in growth funds have been allocated in this Budget for new commissionings, service enhancements and expansions. Over the past couple of years, this Government has commissioned several major health care facilities to provide new services to regional Queensland. The Townsville Hospital cardiac unit, the development of Stage 3A of the Logan Hospital, the obstetric beds, neonatal cots, day surgery and radiology oncology services at the Townsville Hospital, and block 6 and day surgery at the Nambour Hospital are but some of them. The Budget has also paid special attention to nurses, something the National Party did not do. It provides \$6m to help with the transition to the work force of newly graduated registered nurses. It will also fund a re-entry program for registered nurses who want to rejoin the nursing work force.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. Under Standing Order 120, members cannot talk about the programs in the Budget. Members can talk about financial matters, but to debate Budget items is against Standing Orders because we have a Budget before the House. This debate was started before the Budget was introduced.

Mr ELDER: I rise to a point of order. I disagree with that particular point of order. The fact is that the sums mentioned here were those announced prior to the Budget.

Mr FITZGERALD: He is talking about programs.

Mr ELDER: No, he was talking about the actual funding in the package announced prior to the Budget.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members will refrain from talking about Budget items in the form they appear in the Budget, but certainly administration and general programs can be spoken about.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Certainly. If the member for Lockyer had heard me correctly—and because there was a bit of noise to his left he might not have—he would realise that the Skills Acquisition Program is not a Budget program item. It is an Education program, not a Budget program item.

The Capital Works Program announced some time ago provides a massive \$1.5 billion over 10 years. This is the largest project of its type ever seen in Queensland, and possibly in Australia. The \$1.5 billion will average about \$150m per year, which will mean employment and growth in the building industry in Queensland, as well as improvements to the dilapidated hospital system we inherited from the National Party. In the last year of the National Party Government a mere \$35m was spent on capital works. No wonder so much is needed to rebuild our hospitals.

I wish to place on record some of the projects that are included in the hospital rebuilding scheme announced some time ago. The Royal Brisbane Hospital Psychiatric Unit is to be completed at the end of this year at an all-up cost of about \$17.87m. At question time today the Premier invited members opposite to drive along Bowen Bridge Road or Gilchrist Avenue and cast their eyes over the grounds of the hospital in order to see some of the massive structures that are being built there. The redevelopment of the whole RBH site is one of the biggest shots in the arm that our health system will receive.

In my own electorate, the Winston Noble Unit of the Prince Charles Hospital has been given upgrading funds. A major redevelopment program has been implemented for Jacaranda House, which treats the frail aged. Both projects have been long needed and are most welcome improvements in the local area.

At the Princess Alexandra Hospital, a major refurbishment and upgrade of the laundry is taking place, and prior to the Budget the Minister announced a \$5.5m redevelopment of the accident and emergency unit. There will also be major redevelopment of the campus at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Stage 3A of the Logan Hospital will hopefully be completed in July 1995 at a cost of \$6.5m.

In the regional areas, the Hospital Rebuilding Program will provide funding to the Rockhampton and Mackay Community Health Centres and the Rockhampton Psychiatric Unit. There will be a \$70m redevelopment of the Cairns and Barcaldine Hospitals. The Toowoomba Community Health Centre and

Toowoomba Hospital are undergoing redevelopment—we have not ignored the electorate of the Opposition spokesperson, Mr Horan. If the need is there, the Government will fund it. We have plans to redevelop the Townsville Hospital and refurbish the Mount Isa Hospital, the Cooktown Community Health Centre, the Thursday Island Community Health Centre and the Aurukun Primary Health Care Centre, which will be similar to centres on Badu Island, Boigu Island and Horn Island and at Injinoo, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Napranum, Pormpuraaw and Wujal Wujal. The Gold Coast Hospital will be redeveloped, as will the southern Gold Coast community health centre and general clinic, the Bundaberg and Maryborough development and the new Hervey Bay Hospital. This is not a comprehensive list of the work that is under way or planned.

Citizens of Queensland will note that money is being spent in all electorates and in all parts of Queensland, and we are largely targeting the growth areas or the areas where there has to be a major redevelopment because of a dilapidated site or facilities and where there is an area of great need. Some of those areas of greatest need are the result of the gross neglect of the former National and Liberal Health Ministers.

Unlike the National Party, the current Minister will not build a hospital like QE II just to save a couple of his mates. Hospitals will be built in Labor electorates because there is growth in those areas; there will be hospitals built in National or Liberal Party areas because there is growth in those areas or because there is need in those areas. Those are the correct criteria that should be followed and are being followed by this Health Minister and this Government.

I would like to touch on the Opposition's continuing claims of Budget cuts, administrative blow-outs and hospital neglect. Opposition members need to be exposed for what they are. Mr Horan and some of his counterparts are just using scaremongering tactics. The Opposition's figures are repeatedly based on a fairytale. Again and again they wave around mythical figures, doing nothing but scaring people—especially the elderly, who are the group most in need of treatment.

Let us consider the Opposition's claims that, because of Budget overruns, over Easter the Mater Mothers Hospital was going to turn away expectant mothers and that the Mater adult hospital would be closing down all services, including its accident and emergency centre. The Opposition has also claimed that

this Government is closing various country hospitals. All those claims promulgated by the Opposition, especially the Opposition's Health spokesperson, Mr Horan, are false. In recent weeks during question time, the Minister for Health, Mr Elder, has exposed those false claims one by one.

Government backbenchers have been interested to note that Mr Horan has not been on his feet as much in this House in recent days. I believe there are two main reasons for that: that Mr Elder was exposing Mr Horan's false claims for what they were—just false claims—and perhaps Mr Borbidge is also a bit envious that Mr Horan has been getting too much coverage and does not want a challenge to his leadership to occur too soon. For whatever reason, it is obvious that those claims are false, and the Health Minister has exposed them as such.

Claims by Opposition members that they would be more lean or more efficient are just absurd. Already, the vast bulk of the Queensland Health budget is spent where it should be, that is, on staff who are involved in service delivery. Only 2.3 per cent, or \$55.3m, of the total \$2.4 billion will be spent this year on corporate services for all 13 regional offices and central office. In 1995-96, that percentage will be even lower; less than 2.3 per cent will be spent on corporate services, yet Mr Horan and other Opposition members tell the old untruth that extra Health funding is simply going into Health bureaucracy. That is not true, the figures show that it is not true, and the funding proves that it is not true. Only about 1.7 per cent of all Health staff are located in the corporate services stream. Perhaps Opposition members would like to make doctors do their own typing, as they had to do in the past on old manual typewriters, or they might want nurses to make up their own pay cheques instead of having qualified people in the office do that, or perhaps they would want the kitchen staff to double up as hospital budget accountants. Their claims are patently absurd and have been shown to be such.

The Opposition's claims that there is excess fat in the regional office also need to be exposed for what they are: just empty rhetoric. In 1994, the total funding for regional health authority officers was \$21.5m, which was equal to about 1.2 per cent of the region's 1993-94 expenditure or less than 1 per cent of the total Queensland Health budget. That figure includes the full costs of salaries, leases, travel, regional health authority meetings and other expenses. What is more, the Opposition's plan to reduce the bureaucracy in

the regions would probably mean a return to hospital boards and the associated costs of administration. We would see a return of the infamous "rob Peter to pay Paul" principle, which was so well entrenched in previous National Governments.

It is amusing that the only Health policy that honourable members opposite seem to have is that of opposing regionalisation. Not even that policy could be agreed upon by all sections of the Opposition. I believe that some National Party candidates for the next election are actually applying to serve on regional health authorities, which Mr Borbidge and Mr Horan claim they would get rid of.

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I am informed by the member for Cook that the National Party candidates for Cook and Mulgrave have applied to those regional health authorities because they recognise what a good job they are doing.

Mr Bredhauer: They know what a good system it is.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I would suggest that the good people of the Cook electorate and other parts of regional Queensland would much prefer to have decision makers based in Cairns who know the region than to have people based in Charlotte Street.

Mr Bredhauer: Most certainly; and I think it is instructive that even someone from Einasleigh would apply.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I have been fortunate to travel with the Public Works Committee and the Minister's health committee to visit some of the dilapidated and run-down facilities in the Cape area. I was extremely impressed by the local knowledge of people on the regional health authority and their relationship with people in the local area. It is very impressive to see that rapport which is so obvious. Mr Horan would get rid of that; he would have much more central planning in Brisbane and then set up the old mishmash of hospital boards, which is not cost effective and leads to poor planning.

Mr Horan has also claimed that there has been an increase of some 400 people in the central office. He is wrong, and his claims are misleading. The fact is that since 1991, the establishment of 389 positions has increased by 144 temporary staff of whom 66, or 46 per cent, are Commonwealth-funded positions allocated to coordinate a range of special purpose payments such as cancer screening and Medicare initiatives. The remaining 78 State-funded positions are for the

implementation of new initiatives, including the introduction of casemix, cancer prevention data collection, the prevention of violence against women and an aged-care healthy living program. The Queensland health system is an efficient and lean machine delivering health services to more people when and where they need it.

The only other point I would like to take up in relation to what Mr Horan has said in this House over the last few months is what he has said about bed numbers. Mr Horan seems preoccupied with counting beds as the measure of a good health system rather than the more obvious criterion of the number of patients treated and the quality of care that is provided.

Just last Friday, in my electorate, I was privileged to attend a function at the Prince Charles Hospital to celebrate the one-hundredth heart transplant at that world-renowned facility. There were over 70 people at that function who are now healthy and alive because they have received hearts transplanted from other persons. The skills of the hospital staff—administrative, medical and nursing skills—were recognised by one of the heart recipients who spoke at that function.

I was privileged to hear that that young man was someone I had taught when he was a 13-year-old in the early seventies. He was there with his family, and he was alive and well because of the health-care system in Queensland—the very system that Mr Horan wants to knock, and the very system in which he seeks to find every single mistake that he can. He will not stand up in this House and say, "Isn't it great that we have now had 109 heart transplants at the Prince Charles Hospital? Isn't it great that we have some of the greatest lung and chest transplant surgeons in the world based in this very city?" No, he does not want to say that. He does not want to proudly proclaim the strengths within our health-care system; Mr Horan, Mr Borbidge, Mrs Sheldon and their ilk simply want to point out its faults. This Government is investing in the future by making the hard decisions today, and it will continue to do so.

It is easy for the Nationals to boast about the number of beds in Queensland in 1989. They say they had 12,019 beds, but we must remember that they counted all the beds, because the beds were classified as registered, even though they were unfunded. That simply means that they were unstaffed and, therefore, had no patients in them—somewhat reminiscent of a Yes, Minister scenario. Even if we accept the

National Party's figures at face value, the number of patients treated per bed was 32.9. Under this Government's more accurate recording of bed numbers, we find that the number of patients treated per bed is now 59.8—almost double. These figures put our hospitalisation rates among the best in the world; so let us end this nonsense about bed numbers being the yardstick of performance.

Let me make something perfectly clear to the House so that Mr Horan will no longer be able to continue making deliberately false claims about this Government believing that bed numbers are unimportant. This Government believes that bed numbers are important. However, it is also important that those beds are used efficiently and located close to the people who need them. To illustrate this latter point, I refer to my electorate, which has one of the highest percentages of people aged over 60 and a large percentage of World War II veterans. It makes no sense that previously they had to go to Greenslopes or RBH for treatment. They would much prefer to go to an expanded community hospital at Prince Charles, just down the road from where they live, and under this Health Minister they will be getting it. Under this Health Minister efficiency has been brought back to the health system, which is providing health services to people when and where they need it. I support the Bill.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (4.51 p.m.): I compliment the efforts of all of our health workers in the central Queensland region. They have an extraordinarily difficult job to do. Any job dealing with health matters is never easy, and quite often many of those workers do things that are well beyond the call of duty and they do not complain about it.

Our daughter Mary-Ann gave birth to three children in the private section of the Rockhampton Base Hospital, one during the term of the previous Government and two during the term of this Government. The care that she was given was absolutely outstanding. I have had many dealings with all of the hospitals in my area—the private ones and, of course, the base hospital—and every effort is made to assist people.

However, today I highlight the case of young David Perfect. He is a child who has spina bifida. Until recently, David and his mother were always given plane fares to travel to Brisbane to visit a specialist, because such specialists are not available in Rockhampton. On the last occasion that David needed to travel to Brisbane, it was decided that he and his mother would have to travel by train or bus.

During the course of that trip, this young child, who is still in nappies, would have had to go to the toilet no less than 14 times.

Ultimately, I was able to persuade two private citizens to pay the airfares for David and his mother. In Brisbane, Dr Shephard diagnosed blisters on David's feet, and that child has now been in a wheelchair for six weeks. Dr Shepherd is quite angry that David was not automatically sent to Brisbane on the plane, because it would have been awful for him to travel by train. I do not want to blow this up into a big issue. I simply ask the Health Minister to reconsider his case and refund the amount of those fares to the people who paid them. When the mother discovered that David's condition was very poor, she had to return to Rockhampton and then travel back to Brisbane. David's family does not have an enormous amount of money; they are a good family but they are battling to get by.

David will have to continue to travel to Brisbane. I would like to ensure that, in the circumstances, in future he and his mother are provided with plane tickets. I do not think it is reasonable to expect a child in nappies who has to go to the toilet frequently and who has other medical problems to travel by any means other than plane. Any other means of transport is an extraordinary imposition upon him and his mother. It could be argued that the doctor at the Rockhampton Base Hospital said that David could travel by train. I have a sneaking suspicion that that doctor was put under pressure regarding the cost of airfares and that it had been suggested that perhaps too many people were receiving plane fares. In my opinion, in his desire to do the right thing, the doctor did not make the right decision. That was backed up by the specialist in Brisbane.

I do not wish to comment further on this matter. I simply put before the Parliament a very deserving case. I would be grateful if the Minister would give this matter consideration and try to ensure such an occurrence does not happen again. This is a fair dinkum family that does not want to bludge on the system in any shape or form.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes) (4.55 p.m.): I rise in support of the Health Services Amendment Bill 1995. In doing so, I wish to compliment the Minister on introducing the legislation before the House in conjunction with the many other reforms that are now sweeping through the Queensland health system. This Bill sets out to indemnify employees, members and agents of the regional health authorities. It is very much a

part of an overall package of reforms that is being criticised constantly by those opposite.

A classic "knock, knock" joke is doing the rounds of the primary schools in my electorate at the moment. It goes like this: "Knock, knock. Who's there?" The answer is: "The Queensland coalition." Even the primary school children in my electorate know that all the members of the Opposition want to do is knock. All we hear from them is, "Knock, knock."

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr FENLON: It is still the Queensland coalition. The Queensland Opposition is running a very low-budget election campaign. It is so low that it is a campaign without policies. They have saved a lot of money: they have not had to print paper; they have not had to spend money on policy development. It is a super low-budget election campaign. All we get from them is knocking.

In contrast, the Government has policies and has set in place reforms which are sweeping through the system. The Princess Alexandra Hospital is very much a part of those reforms. It is one of the two flagships of Queensland's public health system, which provides quality care by excellent doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. Those hospitals are part of a system which this week will treat 3,000 more patients than were treated in an equivalent week during the reign of the National Party Government.

Although the Opposition continues a campaign of running down the health system, scaremongering and telling lies, the fact remains that in 1988-89, the last year of the National Party Government, the budget for the Princess Alexandra Hospital was \$131m. In 1994-95, the budget for that hospital is \$187m. That is an increase of more than 40 per cent. Again and again, and despite the real facts, members of the Opposition seem intent on telling the public that they will not receive adequate care. I am here to tell the Parliament that the Queensland health system provides excellent quality care at all of its facilities.

I will touch on a couple of more recent stories in relation to which members of the Opposition have been telling lies. One of those stories relates to intensive care. Members of the Opposition have made claims that cutbacks have been made in the number of intensive care beds on Brisbane's south side. As usual, the Opposition has it wrong. Back in 1989, Brisbane's south side had only 30 intensive care beds. Now there are 39. Overall in south-east Queensland, the number

of intensive care beds has risen from 140 in 1989 to 155.

This Government has undertaken a project to plan for future intensive care services on a Statewide basis. The word "plan" is a word that members of the Opposition do not seem to understand and with which they do not seem to be familiar. Every time any of our developments or reforms are mentioned, members of the Opposition respond by harping but they offer no response to the fundamental, well-thought-out plans that have been put in place in this State.

In response to that planning exercise, this Government recently announced a \$3m expansion of services to assist the sickest patients in the Royal Brisbane and Princess Alexandra Hospitals. The Minister announced that 10 intensive care "set-down" beds or high-dependency units would be established at each of the two hospitals. On the south side, this will be in addition to the existing 39 beds. An additional \$3m will be provided in 1995-96 to employ doctors and nursing staff at the units, along with an estimated \$1m for sophisticated patient monitoring equipment and extra funds for the refurbishment of ward space. Again, the Government is thinking ahead and planning for the future—unlike the National Party Government, which let the hospital system run down for all those years.

These high-dependency beds will relieve the pressure on intensive care. They will enable doctors to concentrate on looking after the people who need the most attention. For example, high-dependency beds can be used when a patient has had major surgery that has gone well, but that patient still needs to be monitored. That monitoring can occur effectively in a high-dependency unit with a quick transfer if the need arises. These are front-line services for urgent surgery—trauma cases—and major elective surgery. The increase in demand for both services has raised concerns about the current capacity of the intensive care units of both the Royal Brisbane and the Princess Alexandra Hospitals. I understand that these issues were discussed with the hospitals and the specialists and, as a result, a review was undertaken of the two services to identify any immediate action that could be undertaken to overcome these issues.

A significant concern was the shortage of specialists working in intensive care. The intensivists and other staff in the two units are under tremendous pressure, particularly at times of high demand. At the same time, the hospitals are having difficulty in attracting staff.

Recently, the Health Action Plan was announced. It contains incentives to attract more specialists, including intensivists. That has been welcomed very much by the users of these health facilities on the south side. They know that this plan is going to bring in reforms.

In addition, the commitment to a \$35m Hospital Specialists Equipment Program will assist in upgrading hospital services, particularly in our major teaching hospitals, while the commitment to an additional \$40m for capital works will help accelerate the rebuilding of our metropolitan hospitals, particularly the Royal Brisbane Hospital and the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Through consultation with the specialists and in making interstate comparisons, the review also identified the need for the "step-down" or high-dependency beds to ease the burden on the intensive care unit. Consequently, two 10-bed units will be established at those hospitals as a priority so that patients can be stepped down from intensive care when their condition allows that to occur. The final arrangements for the two units will be a matter for regional and hospital management in consultation with the specialists.

Arrangements also need to be put in place to ensure an adequate supply of appropriately trained critical care staff, particularly nursing staff. A number of strategies are being considered to attract and retain critical care nursing staff at both hospitals, including an expansion of specialist nurse training. Again, the Government is thinking ahead. Work will commence immediately on plans for the establishment of the two high-dependency units, including recruitment and minor capital works at both hospitals. Long-term planning for intensive care services in Queensland is due for completion in October, and that will include advice on the projected need for intensivists.

The Government has undertaken long-term planning in intensive care and it has increased the number of intensive care beds in Brisbane as well as the number of high-dependency beds. In contrast, the Opposition can do nothing except panic and follow this Government in whatever it is doing. Its sole policies, and all we have ever heard from Opposition members in terms of health, consist of them saying that they would do what we are doing. They would follow our budget. They are just going to follow along with our practices. If they are saying that they have better ideas and better advice than we are getting from the specialists and other highly qualified people at our hospitals on how to spend this enormously increased

budget—which they never provided when they were in Government—then they have not revealed that to the Queensland public. I suppose that indicates why the Opposition is not prepared to go to the Queensland public with its policies. Opposition members are frightened to go to the Queensland public with policies and to be accountable for what they say they would do if they were in charge of the Treasury benches of this State.

Another area that requires attention is that of accident and emergency. I am very pleased that, recently, as part of a \$5.5m upgrade of the hospital, the Minister also announced the redevelopment of the accident and emergency centre of the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Again, all we hear is the harping and the knocking—

Mrs Edmond: And the whingeing.

Mr FENLON: And the whingeing and the whining of those members opposite, especially about the accident and emergency section of the PA Hospital. In June 1995, Opposition members had a revelation. All of a sudden, they found out that the facilities of the accident and intensive care units of the PA Hospital are inadequate, overcrowded and basically dysfunctional. They have reached this amazing revelation. They wheel in here every bad case they can find; it is like the procession of the ghouls. Finally, they have realised that there is a problem with the accident and emergency unit. Opposition members seem to be much slower to realise the fact, as the staff at that hospital now realise, that there is going to be an enormous upgrade of those facilities.

Mr Horan would not take an interjection from me before when I asked him, "What about the fact that a major capital injection is occurring there?"

Mr Elder: He's not likely to take one from you now, either.

Mr FENLON: I take that interjection. He is not interested in continuing this debate, yet he is supposed to be the Opposition Health spokesman. The Opposition cannot cope with the fact that major change is afoot at that hospital. That redevelopment also involves the expansion of the out-patients section of the hospital by 250 square metres. The Opposition cannot cope with that initiative either. For the next six months, or however long it takes them to have another revelation, Opposition members will be saying that the out-patients section is overcrowded and that the Government should do something about it. We have the plans in place, and peace is about to be disturbed because construction

work is about to take place on that site. Yet Opposition members are still running around saying that the out-patients is overcrowded and that facilities are inadequate. The facilities have been inadequate and deteriorating for many years. The whole hospital needs major restructuring, and that is why we have the \$1.5 billion Hospital Rebuilding Program, which members opposite do not like. Mr Horan does not like it. It is the last thing that he wants to talk about. All he can talk about is his revelation that we have bad facilities at that hospital.

This Government is committed to the total rebuilding of the Princess Alexandra Hospital. However, some parts of the hospital need upgrading right now, and the accident and emergency section has the most pressing need. There is very little room in that section, and that creates problems for the doctors who work there and for the patients who need urgent attention. This work will allow for a doubling of the area of the accident and emergency section to 1,500 square metres. The Government will also be spending over \$500,000 on new equipment for the accident and emergency section. That expenditure will mean more room and better conditions for both the people who work there and the people whom they have to treat.

The accident and emergency section is not the only area in need at the hospital. I understand that discussions with the medical staff about the hospital's further priorities are planned. That is the way the Government manages things in this State—with good consultation with those involved. The master planning for the rebuilding of the PA Hospital is well under way and the hospital should be rebuilt completely within the next few years.

Again, members opposite do not like that. They do not like having the rug pulled out from underneath them. All of a sudden, they have come up with the realisation that there is a problem at the hospital. They could not come up with that realisation when they were in office for 32 years. They certainly could not come up with that realisation when they knocked back the Whitlam money in the early 1970s, which was for major redevelopment of our hospital system. At that time, it was clear that those hospitals needed redevelopment, yet it took until today for members opposite to have that revelation—June 1995.

The rebuilding will be undertaken as part of the Government's commitment of \$1.5 billion over 10 years to rebuild this State's hospitals. A Labor Government established a free public hospital system in this State. It has

fallen to this Labor Government to restore that tradition and to rebuild and re-equip the hospitals that have served us all so well. There are further areas of need at the hospital, most notably for equipment. One of the CT scanners is nearing the end of its life and it will be replaced soon. Another CT scanner will be in place before the middle of next year. At the moment, we have some further developments to undertake. However, we need to discuss these further with the medical work force because it has the most accurate and current views on what is needed.

Substantial reforms are sweeping through the Queensland hospital system. I have outlined changes that will directly benefit constituents of my electorate and of electorates on the south side. These changes are part of the Government's overall planning.

Today, we saw the same old knee-jerk reactions from members opposite. The member for Toowoomba South carped about the Greenslopes hospital. He cannot yet seem to understand that decisions about the supply of beds to relevant geographical areas are now based on sound planning and advice and nothing else. Gone are the days when decisions about the location of hospitals and facilities were based on who had the most influence and who held the green and gold card within the National Party. That system has been replaced with rational planning, which will see good services provided to constituents on the south side of Brisbane.

Mr ROBERTSON (Sunnybank) (5.13 p.m.): It has turned out to be a long afternoon for the Opposition spokesperson on Health. Speaker after speaker on this side of the House gave the honourable member a bit of a lesson in facts—something that is obviously extremely foreign to members on the other side of the House.

Mr Welford: That doesn't mean that he learns anything.

Mr ROBERTSON: That is unfortunate. The Opposition spokesperson spent some time outside the Chamber earlier. I thought that he might have been in a recovery ward at the QE II Hospital—which, by the way, is still open, in spite of what the honourable member might tell my constituents through their local paper.

Although the Bill before the House is a minor amendment to the Health Services Act, it nevertheless gives us an opportunity to provide some information to the Opposition spokesman on Health about hospitals in our respective electorates. Although the QE II Hospital is not in my electorate, it performs an

important role in servicing the health needs of my constituents. Firstly, I wish to speak about the QE II Hospital, its history, and, importantly, what is happening to it. For the record and for the benefit of the member for Toowoomba South, it is important to state what is happening at that hospital.

As we all know, the QE II Hospital was built by the former National Party Government some 14 years ago and was never fully utilised. The Opposition continued to spread rumours and partake in scaremongering in an effort to score cheap political points. It is able to do that by virtue of being a policy-free zone. It is very easy for the Opposition to knock, carp and whinge when it does not have any policies.

Mrs Edmond: That's right. It's the only thing to do when you don't have any policies.

Mr ROBERTSON: That is right. We saw a snippet of some of the Opposition's policies in relation to the QE II in last week's *Southern Star*. The Opposition has said that it is planning great things for the hospital. I became a bit confused in the debate on another Bill held earlier today when I heard the Opposition Treasury spokesperson, Mrs Sheldon, talk about how overtaxed we are and how a coalition Government would reduce tax. I am no great mathematician, but it seems to me that if income is reduced and expenditure is promised to be increased there will be some real financial difficulties.

Mr Bredhauer: No; put it on the bankcard.

Mr ROBERTSON: Put it on the bankcard.

Mr Elder: Put it on Joan's bankcard.

Mr ROBERTSON: But would that not increase debt? As I said, I am no great mathematician. However, I hope that one day I will receive a lucid answer to those quite simple questions.

Importantly, this Goss Labor Government, for the first time in the QE II Hospital's history, will make full and appropriate use of that hospital. The rumours that the Opposition spreads about people not being treated at the QE II Hospital are not only false but also disturbing. Constituents have rung my electorate office to inquire about health services. A lot of them are elderly and they become worried when they read the nonsense that the honourable member puts out about the QE II Hospital being closed. They ask me, "Why did you close the QE II? Why can we no longer go there for medical treatment?" They are in a fairly distressed state when they

phone me. It takes me some time to reassure them that 24 hours a day, seven days a week, they are able to receive treatment. Once they have been reassured, they ask, "Why is Mr Horan telling lies? Why is he spreading these untruths about the QE II Hospital?" I have no answer to that question, because I really do not understand Mr Horan's agenda of lowering public confidence in the QE II Hospital. I can only suggest that Mr Horan is frightened of change, because that is all that is happening at the QE II Hospital and in our health system. It is changing because of the population increase that Queensland has been experiencing for some time and will continue to experience in the future.

At present, the QE II Hospital provides beds in the areas of gynaecology and general surgery, including endoscopy, orthopaedics, vascular surgery and urology. The hospital also provides an Aged Care Neurorehabilitation Unit which provides neurological rehabilitation for in-patients and is supported by other allied health services, including physiotherapy and occupational therapy. There is no age threshold for admission. The unit has 26 dedicated beds, and patients are referred to it by general practitioners or by doctors at other hospitals. The unit's medical director reviews and assesses all referrals.

The Opposition has also told local residents that they cannot be treated for accident and emergency cases. Again, that is false. The 24-hour Acute Primary Care Centre, to which I referred before, is fully operational and treats sporting, industrial, household and playground injuries. It is open seven days a week and it accepts self-referrals. That means that people can walk in off the street and receive treatment at the QE II Hospital.

I was interested in the Minister's answer to a question this morning with respect to that unit. He stated that 95 per cent of all patients who enter that unit are treated by it. That means that only some 5 per cent of patients are transferred to other hospitals. To me, that does not sound like a unit that is closed or a unit that does not treat people for injuries or illness, yet the Opposition Health spokesperson persists with the falsehood that that unit does not operate. Government members can tell the honourable member opposite that that is the case, but it will go in one ear and out the other.

It would seem to me that these services do not equal no services. It would seem to me that the white elephant that the Opposition would have us believe is the QE II Hospital is

not true. That demonstrates the Opposition's ability to do nothing other than knock, carp and whinge. It delivers no policies of its own but instead knocks the fine hospital system that we have in Queensland.

Mr Horan: Why does your own hospital brochure say, "Don't send any serious patients to the centre"?

Mr ROBERTSON: It does not say that. The honourable member is wrong. I have circulated that brochure widely in my electorate to combat the honourable member's nonsense. It does not refer to that at all, and the honourable member knows that.

Mr Horan: It does.

Mr ROBERTSON: Witty repartee!

Plans are under way to use the QE II in the most efficient way possible for the benefit of the whole Brisbane south side community. We have integrated the QE II with the Princess Alexandra Hospital. It will be known as the PA/QE II Hospital and will specialise in elective surgery, rehabilitation and ophthalmology or eye services. All of those services I talked about earlier will continue to be available to anyone in the community. As well, QE II will have more surgical and rehabilitation wards and, for the first time in its history, all six operating theatres as well as the day surgery procedure room will be used for elective surgery.

The Princess Alexandra ophthalmology department, Queensland Eye Bank, university clinical and research facilities and the Prevent Blindness Foundation will relocate to QE II in the near future. This new unit will include outpatients, day surgery, operating theatres and in-patient services and will be housed on the third floor of the QE II, with research facilities possibly on a different level. That third level is one of the two that was underutilised—in fact, never opened—by the previous Government. The move has already begun and should be completed by the start of next year. Emergency surgery will remain at the Princess Alexandra while elective surgery will be undertaken at the QE II. The vast majority of eye surgery is elective surgery, so this move means that people who have eye surgery booked can be certain of their appointment and not have to worry about whether there is emergency surgery that day or not. Once again, that is obviously an efficient utilisation of resources. The move will also mean further efficiencies as all the facilities will be in the one dedicated location rather than scattered over several parts of the hospital. There will also be dedicated theatres for eye surgery rather than the general wards.

Research facilities will also be greatly improved. At the moment, the researchers at Princess Alexandra Hospital do a magnificent job under cramped conditions, but at the QE II they will have three times the space. The move will involve about 100 staff, who will occupy the vacant third floor of QE II. Ophthalmology is one of the major services at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, and last year 2,300 surgical procedures and 13,700 outpatients went through the ophthalmology department. This move will enable QE II to be better utilised and, at the same time, take some of the pressures off the Princess Alexandra Hospital. The move will cost about \$4m, but it will provide a long-term base for eye surgery—not just for the next few years.

I was pleased to note that the Minister today announced that the QE II Hospital is to be upgraded to a full tertiary hospital. This move was made possible by the work of this Government to increase the specialties such as ophthalmology and the integration of the QE II with the Princess Alexandra Hospital. There had been limited teaching undertaken at the hospital, but the upgrading of the QE II campus to a full teaching hospital will make it possible for an extended range of teaching activities to be undertaken. This will give QE II a direct link with the University of Queensland and allow both undergraduates and postgraduates to study there. It will mean an upgrading of expertise at the hospital but, just as importantly, it will mean a different classification by the Federal Government for funding purposes.

This means that the QE II's role as a specialist hospital will be enhanced. The QE II Hospital is a wonderful hospital, but it has never been fully utilised. At one stage during the 1980s, when the Nationals were in Government, it had an occupancy rate of only 28 per cent. There are whole floors at the QE II Hospital which have never been fully utilised.

Mr Elder: What was that figure again—28 per cent?

Mr ROBERTSON: Twenty-eight per cent of the hospital was being utilised.

Mr Elder: That was the hospital he was on about this morning—28 per cent occupancy.

Mr ROBERTSON: Out of five floors—

Mr Horan: Tell them about 1989.

Mr ROBERTSON: Under the former Government, 28 per cent—

Mr Horan: You've taken everything out of it.

Mr ROBERTSON: The member is a joke. He has not listened to me. For the past 10 minutes, I have outlined what is occurring at the hospital and what is about to be added to the hospital.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the member for Sunnybank.

Mr ROBERTSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Horan has not been listening to me. For the past 10 minutes, I have set out what is happening at the hospital today and what will be happening in the future—tomorrow, next week, next year and in a couple of years. To interject the way he did demonstrates clearly, firstly, that he has not listened and, secondly, that he does not want to listen.

We are undertaking such measures as moving the entire ophthalmology department out of the Princess Alexandra Hospital to QE II, where there is a lot more room and where the staff can get a clear shot at the waiting lists that the Opposition appears so keen to remind us about. At the moment, having two flagship hospitals—the Royal Brisbane and the Princess Alexandra—operating as trauma centres means that they have to give top priority to emergency cases. This is quite correct, but it does mean that people on elective surgery lists have to be fitted in around the emergency cases. Having a hospital such as QE II dedicated to elective surgery means that people have to wait a lot less than they otherwise would for operations. QE II is tackling waiting lists—not only for eye operations but also in the orthopaedic area. I understand that further moves of specialist services are planned through the integration of the QE II Hospital with the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

I have outlined the services that are currently provided at QE II Hospital and the services that are planned to go there in the near future. It is a hospital that has a secure future under this Government. It is a hospital that will, for the first time in its 14 or 15-year history, finally be fully utilised. Importantly, it is a hospital that will make a real difference to the attack on waiting lists, particularly those for elective surgery. I support those reforms to the QE II Hospital, as I do the broad health reforms that have been introduced by this Government. The Opposition offers no alternative.

Mr SZCZERBANIK (Albert) (5.28 p.m.): I am pleased to participate in this debate. I

want to place on the record some of the basic facts that should be considered in any debate on health issues and some of the misconceptions that the Opposition has portrayed during this debate.

Reference has been made to waiting lists. A waiting list is put together by a clinical specialist based on the needs of a particular patient. The specialist examines a patient in the consulting room, orders some tests to be undertaken and subsequently assigns that patient to a waiting list on a needs basis. The member for Toowoomba South should present the true face of waiting lists rather than his perception. The perception of the Opposition is that there are all these sick people who need to have surgery or some type of treatment done today. The Minister does not compile waiting lists. It is the specialist who decides in which order people are placed on waiting lists. That is not the role of Government; it is the role of specialists.

Opposition members have referred to bed numbers. In fact, they have an obsession with beds, beds, beds. They regard the number of beds as a direct measure of the quality of service being provided through the public health system. As to beds—we should count only those beds actually being utilised and not those sitting on verandas or in fire escapes, which is something that has occurred in the past. This Government is reducing bed numbers at the Princess Alexandra and Royal Brisbane Hospitals, but those services are being transferred to where they are needed most. When I was nursing at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in 1982, most of the wards had 35 beds. However, each and every one of those beds should never have been put into those wards. There were three beds in the fire escape at the end of each ward which in winter were subjected to cold weather and in summer were subjected to heat. The Opposition accuses this Government of getting rid of beds. That is true, but the remaining beds will actually be used—and used more efficiently than they were before.

I turn now to advances in technology. Opposition members have referred to bed numbers and the length of patient stays. In that regard, they should take into account the length of time that each patient stays in each bed. It can be clearly seen that this Government has achieved higher throughput in the public hospital system. I cite the example of gall bladder operations. The member for Callide referred to this topic earlier. When I started nursing 20 years ago, patients—

Mrs Edmond: Three weeks they used to be in for. Now they are done in a day.

Mr SZCZERBANIK: The member for Mount Coot-tha is correct. Patients would have tests carried out over three days, they would be placed on a waiting list on a Thursday or Friday, then they would have their operation and be in hospital for another two weeks. Technology is moving at such a rapid pace that patients are now admitted to hospital in the morning, have their procedure carried out that afternoon and go home that night or, if they are feeling too unwell, they stay overnight and go home the next day. Those beds are being used 20 times more than in the past, when one patient occupied a bed for 20 days. That is what technology has done and that leads to efficiencies in the system. Technology is moving forward at a rapid rate. In any health debate, technology and the future have to be addressed. We have to get that technology and use it efficiently. In the past, the National Party did not do that. It did not look at technology and it did not use those bed numbers efficiently.

We have an ageing population, which will put more pressure on our health-care services. The National Party does not tell people that an ageing population will eat up more of the health dollar. As a community we need to address that problem. The community should also consider that in any health-care system—including the western areas of Queensland—many of the beds are occupied by geriatric patients. We need to address the problems associated with an ageing population.

National Party members are talking about a health-care system with a lot of self-interest groups pushing their own barrows. We need to look at all of those groups and do the best that we can for the community at large. Members of the medical profession are basically looking at their pay packets. Doctors want more money. They are looking at their salaries, and they want some benefits. We need to consider paying members of the medical profession the types of salaries that will attract them to country areas.

Members of the Opposition have spoken about the Greenslopes Hospital. I agree with them when they say that we should never have taken over that hospital. Within a 12-kilometre radius of that hospital are the QE II, the Mater and the PA. That does not create an efficient hospital service, because it is putting all our eggs in one basket—not putting hospitals into the areas which the member for Caboolture and I represent. We should be

providing those services in communities where they are needed, not where the National Party wants them.

Mrs Edmond: Not where the doctors want them, either.

Mr SZCZERBANIŁ: Yes, but we will not kick the doctors any more. We have to put those services in places where they can be used by the community.

In its policy, the National Party has outlined—and I think it is the only policy that it has outlined—that it wants to go back to the old system of the 137 hospital boards which were in place before we disbanded them and introduced regionalisation. There were 137 boards, each comprising about eight or nine members, and I would say that most of those members would have been card-carrying members of the National Party. Appointment to those boards was like a knighthood for them; being members of hospital boards made them feel special. We should not go back to that system, because it does not translate into efficiencies; it only makes sure that a board's area is covered by the views of the members of that particular board. Those boards did not look at the health-care system as a whole. I agree that the regional health authorities should stay in place, and I will be pushing for that. The regional health authority on the south coast is working well; it is doing good things.

Mention has been made of the politicisation of regional health authorities. The chairman of the regional health authority on the south coast, who used to be a member of the Liberal Party, was pressured by people in the Liberal Party to provide information to them. She resigned from the Liberal Party and got away from the party politics. She is doing a good job, and I am going to re-nominate her, because her term on the regional health authority is up. She has the skills and commitment to do the right thing. She also has the skills to look after the community, and she plays it with a straight bat. I have no problem with her; she does a good job for my area.

I have already stated that Mr Horan has no vision for a long-term plan for health-care services. This shows that he is shroud-waving for his own benefit.

Mr Nunn: Ambulance chasers.

Mr SZCZERBANIŁ: Members opposite do chase ambulances, but they see this as a chance to belt the Government. They are hoping that these issues will get them into Government.

There needs to be a bipartisan approach to the health-care system. As I said, I have worked in the health-care system, and my honest belief is that no-one could afford the most appropriate and ideal health-care system; we need look only at the problems in the American health-care system for proof of that. We have to do the best that we can with the resources that are available. I believe that this Government is doing that and doing it very well.

This Government has a proud record of dragging our health-care system into the twentieth century and planning to meet the increased demands on health-care services. The Government has developed a two-pronged plan to address the needs of our health-care system. We have developed long-term planning strategies which provide a framework for the future development of health services throughout Queensland. As I said, the National Party has no strategies to put in place; it has no vision. It just wants to belt the Government over the head. It is trying to find some arguments. A good health-care system needs vision. The National Party cannot continue to say, "Fix that, fix that, fix that", because there is not enough money in the system to fix everything; we are not living in an ideal world.

This Government has a 10-year health services plan for Queensland which will guide the efficient and effective development of Queensland's health-care system. That plan proposes the development of an integrated and networked health-care system involving acute hospital care, increased day surgery, improved clinical services and expanded community health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and mental health. This is the first time that Queensland has ever had such a plan for the future of its public health sector. The key directions outlined in that program will revitalise and rebuild the public hospital system, strengthen the primary health-care sector and make Queensland a better and healthier place in which to live. These directions will be incorporated into regional services planning, which will outline priorities for future service development within individual regions. From this will come further details on future capital works and other resource requirements.

A metropolitan health plan has also been developed to guide the reforms of the public hospital system in Brisbane. That plan involves major enhancements and redevelopment of the Royal Brisbane Hospital and the Princess Alexandra Hospital and expansion of hospital services in the growth corridor to the north and

south, into Albert and the Gold Coast. It will be the largest hospital rebuilding program ever undertaken in Queensland. Changes to the health-care system occur slowly, so it will take several years to realise the full potential of those long-term strategies.

What is this Government doing about the short-term problems which our system will face? In May this year, the Health Minister, Jim Elder, released a four-point plan for meeting the immediate needs of the health-care system: the 1995 Health Action Plan. That plan is designed to address all the health hot spots, about which we read so much in the media and about which the Opposition makes such a fuss. That plan acknowledges the need for urgent action which will flow into the long-term plans. Queensland faces problems which are common to health-care systems throughout Australia and in other parts of the Western World, and Governments everywhere are attempting to deal with them. In the six years of the Goss Government, we have treated 2.7 million public patients in our public hospital system—600,000 more than were treated under the National Party Government.

In short, the Health Minister has committed \$181.1m over three years to tackle the shortcomings of the health-care system. The first component of the plan is a three-year, \$64m Hospital Waiting List Program. Admissions to our hospitals are increasing rapidly, and we are treating over 400 patients a week more than we did last year. This Government is concerned that those people do not have to wait too long; but we need to remember that when people are on waiting lists, specialists are needed to undertake the necessary treatment. That is one of the problems that I mentioned before: the medical profession is not coming back into the system to work for us. That is another problem that this Government is addressing.

The \$9m waiting list program will be established to clear the backlog and to target the areas where people have been waiting too long. The money will be used to lift Queensland's rate of surgery for procedures such as hip replacements, prostate operations, cataract surgery and ear operations, which are areas of known backlog.

My mother went to the local GP complaining that she could not read the paper. He sent her to a specialist and the specialist said, "You have cataracts in both eyes. Come back in a week. It will only cost you \$1,000 an eye, and I can do it in the private system." I told her to get an appointment at the PA, which she got within

two weeks. The PA doctor said there was nothing wrong with my mother's eyes, and that all she needed was a new pair of glasses. People talk about waiting lists and the public system, yet that is a perfect example of how some people are rorting the private system and using it to prey on our aged population. People in the private system have abused and are abusing that system. My mother went to get an opinion from a specialist, and if she had accepted that opinion he would have treated her at a cost of \$2,000. The private system is supposed to be so good, yet that is a perfect example of how it can be abused.

The \$35m Hospital Access Bonus Pool will be established to provide additional incentives to hospitals to treat people on waiting lists and to treat the sickest people first. I hope that is done. Specialists do a good job. They take patients on a needs basis, based on their clinical observation of those patients. Funding will be paid to hospitals only after they have provided the service to the patients on the waiting list, not before.

A \$20m Home Support Scheme will be established for the development of community based health services to support the acute hospital system. Technology is changing and patients are getting in and out of hospital a lot faster. Hospitals do cost a lot of money and it is better to treat people in their own homes. It has been proven that patients get better faster in their own homes following treatment in a hospital, and they get back to work quicker. I applaud the Minister for this initiative. As the member for Mount Coot-tha said, it has been proven that people do get sick in hospital. Where possible, patients should be treated in hospitals and then sent home to their own environment, where they do get better quicker. We should concentrate on the area of pre-admissions and early discharge care, palliative care, diabetes, asthma, maternity and kidney disease.

The second point of the four point plan addresses the health work force. Our first priority is to attract and retain more medical specialists in our public hospital system, and a \$30m package of incentives has been developed to help recruit and retrain full-time specialists and medical superintendents in metropolitan, provincial and regional areas. This package includes the provision of non-award incentives such as motor cars, mobile phones, faxes and pagers. The Health Minister is also talking to medical colleges about the additional requirements for specialist training positions in the Queensland public hospital system.

Of interest to me is that nursing staff are given a priority in this package. A three-year \$6m Nursing Work Force Management Program will be introduced to improve the range and level of nursing skills available in our hospital system. This package addresses a number of emerging issues within the nursing work force. It will increase the supply of specialist nurses available in the larger hospitals throughout the State, the re-entry of nurses into the nursing profession and the transition to work of new graduates. The majority of nurses are females. Many nurses want to leave the profession to have families, but they also want to return to the system one day. When I was nursing the ratio of males to females was about 15 to 85. I believe a lot of men should look at nursing as a profession in the future; it has been a good profession to me and I enjoyed every moment of it. However, as I said to the Minister, I will not be taking up one of these positions after the next State election because we will be coming back here.

The third area of commitment of the four point plan is to rebuild our hospitals. An additional \$40m will be provided over the next two years to accelerate the implementation of the Metropolitan Hospitals Rebuilding Program, with particular emphasis on our major flagships, the Royal Brisbane and Princess Alexandra Hospitals. This Government has dramatically increased spending on our hospitals, from \$38m in 1989 to \$154m in 1995, and an estimated \$193m will be spent in 1996. The Goss Government has also committed \$650m to rebuild and upgrade metropolitan hospitals. The additional funding announced in the four point plan will allow work to commence immediately on the most ambitious Hospital Rebuilding Program ever undertaken in Australia.

The final commitment of the four point plan is to provide an additional \$35m over the next two years for the Hospital Specialist Equipment Program to upgrade and modernise hospital equipment. Technology is increasing rapidly with such things as MIRs and CAT scans. It will continue to increase, but we need to keep pace with that equipment and to replace run-down equipment in our hospitals.

Time expired.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (5.48 p.m.): I rise to support this Bill. The Royal Brisbane Hospital, which is this State's and Australia's largest hospital and the flagship of the Queensland public hospital system,

operates within my electorate of Brisbane Central. It provides a vast range of secondary and tertiary services to the constituents of my electorate, to the wider Brisbane area, and to the State of Queensland as a whole.

For the first time, Queensland Health has put in place a series of planning documents which will guide the future development of health services across the State, with the Royal Brisbane Hospital playing a key role. These planning studies include the south-east Queensland Hospitals Planning Project by Bernie Mackay and Associates in March 1993, the 10-year Health Services Plan for Queensland, the Metropolitan Hospital Services Plan and the Selected Tertiary Referral Services Plan. These planning studies provide direction for the future development of health services in Queensland.

The principles which have provided the basis for these studies are as follows: the Queensland health region should be as self-sufficient as possible in the provision of non-tertiary hospital services. Secondly, hospital services, particularly non-tertiary services, should be located as close as possible to where people live and where they will live in the future. Thirdly, where a region has sufficient population to sustain a particular tertiary service, taking into account clinical needs and economies of scale, this should be encouraged. Fourthly, super specialty services should be planned rationally across regions to avoid duplication, which is costly and dissipates clinical expertise. Fifthly, any planning for hospital services should examine the needs of the total community, whether they are satisfied by public or private hospitals. Finally, effective management of the increase in demand for hospital services will depend on adequate community support services.

The existence of these plans is in direct contrast to the haphazard approach to health service development which was the modus operandi of the previous National Party Government. When we have this debate about health, let us not forget the mess that we inherited from the previous Government. Whereas that Government spent a meagre amount of money on capital works programs in the 1988-89 Budget, this Government has introduced a 10-year, \$1.5 billion Hospital Rebuilding Program. To further demonstrate this commitment, my colleague the Health Minister, Jim Elder, has managed to increase the amount of capital moneys committed to the redevelopment of hospitals over the next two financial years. I congratulate him on that initiative.

Honourable members will note that the last planning principle relates to the provision of adequate community support services. This Government has had the task of developing Queensland Health community support services to a level which is equivalent to the level of services provided in other States. Members may ask why this situation has occurred. The reason is that in the early 1970s when the Whitlam Government offered to provide funds under the Medibank agreement for the States to develop community health services, every other State in Australia, both Labor and Liberal, took up Whitlam's offer—indeed, they took it gladly—except Joh Bjelke-Petersen's Government, the only Government in Australia that did not take up the funds. He would not take those funds because he believed they were tarnished. As a result, the people of Queensland have had to suffer from a lack of community health services which are necessary to put in place effective community health programs. I hope that the National Party in this campaign trots out Sir Joh to campaign on its behalf. When they do, we will remind them of his lack of initiative and the fact that he rejected those funds.

Mrs Woodgate interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The four point plan which has been put in place by my colleague the Health Minister, Jim Elder, in the Budget for 1995-96 outlines a number of strategies which will have a direct impact on the delivery of health services for the Royal Brisbane Hospital. Importantly, it contains a \$20m Home Support Scheme as part of the waiting list strategy which will provide important links between the Royal Brisbane and other hospitals and community health services which have not been available because of the previous Government's neglect.

This plan also outlines other strategies to relieve the pressures on the health system which have been identified by the Health Minister. These include a three-year, \$64m Hospital Waiting List Program to cut the backlog and introduce a systematic method of guaranteeing access to elective surgery according to medical need. A three-year, \$42.1m package of incentives will be introduced to attract and retain medical specialists and nurses, including remote area nurses. An additional \$40m is to be provided over the next two years to accelerate implementation of the Metropolitan Hospitals Rebuilding Program, with particular emphasis on our major flagships the Royal Brisbane and Princess Alexandra Hospitals. An additional \$35m will be provided over the next two years

to introduce a hospital specialist equipment program to upgrade and modernise equipment.

When I was first elected to this House in 1989, I took the opportunity to inspect the Royal Brisbane Hospital. The previous Government's neglect of capital works was nothing short of a disgrace. I congratulate the Minister on this initiative to finally address the problem that we inherited. There is already ample evidence of this Government's commitment and, as I have said, the Health Minister's commitment to relieve the pressure on waiting lists in public hospitals in this State.

On 16 April this year, the Health Minister announced that, through the provision of an extra \$2m, an additional 900 operations would take place in Brisbane hospitals in the next three months. This was a direct way to deal with the waiting list problem. Let me deal with the actual numbers so that we do not have the Opposition trying to distract people or ignore what in fact is being done. These operations consisted of the following: QE II Hospital, an extra 100 orthopaedic operations—this will also take some of the pressure off the Logan Hospital; the Mater Children's Hospital, an extra 170 operations, mostly for ear, nose and throat complaints; the Mater Adults Hospital, an extra 400 operations, mostly day surgery and gynaecological, orthopaedics, general surgery and plastic surgery—

Mr Comben: Don't you know about that?

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, I do have three children. I know exactly what gynaecology is all about. The Royal Children's Hospital will have an extra 68 ear, nose and throat operations; and the Royal Brisbane Hospital, an extra 200 operations consisting of 50 hip replacements, 50 knee replacements, 20 prostate operations and 80 lens procedures. I have not heard the Opposition spokesman make any reference to this at any time during this debate.

Mr Pearce: Not once.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right, not once during this debate or at any other time.

Mr Horan: We are just trying to catch up on what we have lost.

Mr BEATTIE: I would have thought that as the Opposition Health spokesman the member would have applauded an initiative that meant that Queenslanders were getting through the waiting lists and having speedier access to operations. Not a word.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Not once. Here is Mr Horan's opportunity. Why does he not say something positive about it?

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Something new! Two million dollars—all those operations are new and there is not one positive word out of Mr Horan. All he wants to do is whinge and moan and groan and carry on. Not one word. He would be better off in South Africa supporting his son. At least Queenslanders would cheer for him then. Most recently, my colleague the Health Minister has further demonstrated his commitment to action to attack these waiting lists by announcing on Tuesday of this week, 6 June, a further \$5m to re-open two theatres at the Royal Brisbane Hospital which will specifically undertake elective surgery. Did I hear anything from the Opposition spokesman about that? Not a word.

Mr Horan: Did we hear anything from you when they closed?

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, we sure did, and the Minister did something about it. Not one positive word has Mr Horan said about the Minister's initiatives. The Minister has bent over backwards to do what he can. Money is poured into health, things are happening and all Mr Horan can do is whinge and moan. Mr Horan is political. He is all about politics. He does not care about people, he is all about politics—votes, not people, and he does not care. I hope that Mr Horan will take notes. I repeat that the Minister announced a further \$5m to re-open two theatres at the Royal Brisbane Hospital which will specifically undertake elective surgery. This will mean that an additional 2,700 surgical procedures will be undertaken at the hospital over the next 12 months.

These operations will eliminate 20 per cent of the backlog which the policy-free whingers of the Opposition claim to exist. Further proof of this Government's commitment to the Royal Brisbane Hospital and the entire Herston complex is the simple fact that in 1988-89 the Nationals spent a total of \$211m on the Royal Brisbane, Royal Women's and Royal Children's Hospitals. In contrast, as at 30 April 1995 this Government had spent \$284m on these hospitals. This is a 25 per cent increase over the Nationals' previous underfunding of the hospital system. The figures speak for themselves.

Mr FitzGerald: Is that real terms or raw figures?

Mr BEATTIE: Of course it is real terms. What does the honourable member think it is?

Mr FitzGerald: Does it take account of inflation?

Mr BEATTIE: Listen, take your shoes off and put them in your mouth and you might be able to count. You will have an extra tongue. I would like to emphasise to honourable members, including the honourable member for Lockyer, that the toadies opposite, that is him, have no policy. The only policy the wimps opposite have is to centralise all power and decision making in Brisbane. For the Opposition spokesman who comes from Toowoomba to support that position is extraordinary. I wonder what the people of Toowoomba or Lockyer think about his policy to centralise, eliminating any say that the residents of regional Queensland might have regarding the types of services delivered to their community.

It is the Goss Government which has brought decision making closer to the people of regional Queensland, including Toowoomba, through regionalisation. It is the policy vacuum of the so-called coalition which wants to centralise everything with the faceless bureaucrats in Brisbane. Shame on the National Party, that once great bastion of the battlers of the bush. All they are about is centralisation. Bringing the honourable member's action back to the action that this Government has taken in relation to delivery—

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr BEATTIE: Before the dinner recess, I was saying that this Government is taking the necessary action in relation to the delivery of better services to the people of Queensland. As we all know, recently the Health Minister announced his four-point plan of action to which I referred earlier, which meets the immediate needs of the people of Queensland.

The second component, which I mentioned earlier, involves a package of incentives to attract and retain medical staff and nurses in the Queensland public hospital system. That has been a problem for some time. However, it is important to note that, whereas the Health Minister has an action plan to deal with the immediate problems, the spokesman opposite has offered nothing but empty-headed prophecies of doom—no policies. We wait to see what policies the Opposition will have between now and the election. I suspect that we will wait in vain.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Like all portfolios—no policies.

Mr BEATTIE: Indeed, not just Health, it will be all portfolios. As part of the package to retain medical specialists, the Government will be providing a \$30m package of non-award incentives to attract and retain medical specialists in the system. Those include motor vehicles, a communications component and additional secretarial support staff. It is vital that we have those specialists.

The Opposition spokesman on Health constantly rabbits on about the lack of acute beds available at Royal Brisbane Hospital. What is his half-baked answer? It is to provide more beds at the hospital. Not once has he acknowledged that all the beds in the world can be provided, but without the specialists and nurses to staff those beds, those beds might as well be piled at the back of the hospital. Where are his strategies to attract and retain specialists in the Queensland public hospital system? They do not exist! There is a vast, black hole opposite from which no vision and no policies emerge. As has been said on a number of occasions, it is a policy-free zone. These days, people are too sophisticated and too well educated to allow a political party to go to an election without policies. They want to know what political parties are going to do when they offer themselves as an alternative Government and they have been sadly disappointed to date and no doubt will continue to be until the election, and even after.

The next component of the Minister's plan relates to accelerating the rebuilding of the metropolitan hospitals. Heavens above! That is so long overdue. Evidence can already be seen at Royal Brisbane Hospital that that process is under way. Heavy machinery is already on site and is in the process of clearing land to develop car parking so that doctors can have somewhere to park their vehicles. That area will provide additional car parks for visitors so that those cars are not clogging the streets around the Royal Brisbane Hospital.

Mr Fenlon: Mr Horan can't see that.

Mr BEATTIE: He has trouble getting here, let alone there. For some time, my constituents in Herston have been concerned about the overflow of parking from the Royal Brisbane Hospital. One solution is the provision of an on-site car park, not only for doctors but also for nursing staff. As honourable members would appreciate, nursing staff come off duty at all hours. They need to have security on the way to their car or public transport. That has not been available until now. Residents in my electorate

in Herston and Kelvin Grove have been angry for some time about that parking problem.

Finally we have a solution, which is two-tiered. Firstly, the Minister and the Health Department are providing on-site parking. Secondly, a two-hour parking plan by the Brisbane City Council will ensure that those car parks are used. That will mean a significant improvement in the quality of life for the residents who live nearby in Herston and Kelvin Grove. I thank the Minister for the provision of that funding.

The final component involves the implementation of a hospital specialist equipment program, which will accelerate the replacement and upgrading of equipment in our hospitals with a particular focus on the metropolitan hospitals. It is an indictment on the manner in which the previous Government ran the hospital system that the specialists had to operate with equipment that in many cases was almost 30 years old. The replacement of this original equipment that was put in place by the outdated coalition has already commenced. On 17 May the Health Minister announced that new medical equipment costing over \$3m would be installed at the Royal Brisbane Hospital and the Royal Women's Hospital. That equipment includes 21 anaesthetic monitoring machines, valued at \$1.4m; four monitoring systems for high dependency care, \$176,000; 30 patient-controlled analgesic devices, \$105,000; 17 anaesthetic machines, \$1.2m; one fibre optic incubation system, \$61,000; and 20 anaesthetic trolleys, \$39,000. We often hear members of the Opposition asking: where is the funding for equipment? That is where the funding is. That is the equipment. It is clear. It is specified. It is detailed. That is where the money is going. Again, not once do we hear the Opposition acknowledging that contribution.

Is it any wonder that the Queensland public hospital system has difficulty in attracting specialists when they have been expected to operate with outdated equipment and facilities that were suitable back in the 1960s? That was the system under the Nationals and Liberals. It should not surprise honourable members, because the pathetic, so-called coalition continues to live in the early 1960s. They have not realised that we are only five years from the twenty-first century.

Further evidence of this Government's commitment to the Royal Brisbane Hospital is the recent announcement by the Health Minister of the provision of 10 intensive care step-down or high-dependency beds at Royal

Brisbane. Those high-dependency beds will release the pressure on intensive care and enable doctors to concentrate on the people who need most attention. High-dependency beds can be used in cases such as when a patient has had major surgery which has gone well but that person still needs to be monitored. This monitoring can occur effectively in a high-dependency unit, with a quick transfer if need be. Those are front-line services for both urgent surgery and trauma, and for major elective surgery. Increases in demand have raised concerns about the current capacity of the intensive care units at both the Royal Brisbane and the Princess Alexandra Hospitals. The Government has acted to relieve this pressure, as it always acts to address issues as they arise. The Government has the policies in place to effectively provide for the future health needs of the people of Queensland. The so-called coalition has no policies, no plans and no hope at this year's State election.

It gives me great pleasure to support this Bill as it will help to attract and retain specialists at the Royal Brisbane Hospital by providing them with indemnity while carrying out their essential clinical activities in the delivery of health services to the people of Queensland.

I place on public record my appreciation of the Minister's announcement today about the commencement at the Royal Women's Hospital of the Brisbane North Acute Sexual Assault Service. The establishment of that service demonstrates a major commitment by Queensland Health and the Brisbane North Health Region to meeting the needs of women who have been victims of sexual violence. The Brisbane North Health Region, incorporating the Pine Shire, has the second-largest population of the 13 Queensland Health regions. The estimated resident population as at 30 June 1986 was 436,853 or 16.6 per cent of the State's population of which 179,114 were women 15 years and over. It is expected that the total population will reach 471,060 by the year 2001, of which 196,637 will be women 15 years and over. Given those statistics it is significant to note that it is estimated that one in four women have undergone some form of sexual assault, which is why that service is so important.

The service that the Minister announced today comprises two parts: an acute service for women who have recently been raped or sexually assaulted which offers women skilled medical attention including forensic examination, supported by information and crisis counselling, and a community-based

service offering therapeutic and community programs based in the Pine Shire. Staffed by women general practitioners, on-call crisis counsellors and nursing staff, the acute service provides 24-hour medical and forensic services. That unit is long overdue. It is soundly placed at the Royal Women's Hospital. That is another example of sensible initiatives by this Government and this Minister.

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy) (7.40 p.m.): Health is an area of great interest to all Queenslanders and the Health Services Act is the main legislation under which our health system is organised. That legislation was introduced into this House in 1991 to legislate for the future organisation, management and delivery of our public sector health services. The Act is the legislative base for the regionalisation of Queensland's public health services. When the Bill was introduced, it represented the most wide-ranging change to public health services in Queensland in over 40 years. It enshrined the principles of social justice, equity, responsiveness, efficiency and accountability within the health system. The Health Services Act repealed the Hospitals Act, abolished the State's 59 hospital boards and provided for the establishment of 13 regional health authorities.

The changeover to a regionalised system was necessitated by dramatic changes over the past four decades to hospitals and the consumer population of Queensland. The Opposition, when it was in Government, failed to respond to those changes. Today, it is recognised that health is more than hospitals, and the management of health must encompass the full spectrum of services including community and institutional care.

The reforms in the Health Services Act 1991 heralded a new era in health care in Queensland. The amendment Bill before the House will repeal the provision of the Health Services Act that provides indemnity of employees, members and agents of the regional health authorities. Section 3.35 of the Act confers a limited statute to indemnity. I understand the Act in its current form is sufficient to cover the indemnity of employees and other regional health players. However, there has been some concern from within the public health system, mainly through confusion surrounding the provision of the Act, and the Minister has agreed to repeal that section of it. People working in the public health system are doing an outstanding job in delivering health services to the people of Queensland. The health system work force should be able to do their work without fear of

being sued and they should not be obliged to take out private indemnity cover; however the repeal of section 3.35 of the Act will overcome their concerns.

Since winning Government in 1989, Labor has made significant reforms to the Queensland health system. The system left behind by the previous Government was inefficient, suffered from low staff morale and did not deliver services well. The challenge left to Labor to revive the State's health system is certainly being met, largely through the process of regionalisation. Regional health authorities now operate across the State, and they ensure that services appropriate to local communities are being delivered based on decisions made locally. Under the umbrella of regionalisation, Queenslanders are being provided with a more efficient health service more attuned to local needs.

Regionalisation has a number of advantages. It has seen the development of a health care system responsive to the needs of the people of Queensland. The regionalised system is based on the principles of effectiveness, efficiency, equity and social justice, responsiveness, accountability and autonomy. Regionalisation is providing improved clinical services and better coordination and management of the public sector health service within geographic areas of the State. Opposition members should be listening to this because this is what they are intending to take away from the people of rural Queensland, and that is where my concerns lie. The Opposition also intends to take away the improved community representations through the regional health authorities. Regionalisation also provides single-point accountability for service delivery, with the responsible officer being the regional director.

People using the public sector health system are no longer lost in the maze of hospital and community services. For the first time, these services are integrated and all of the health services of a region are working together. That means that, when someone leaves hospital and still needs assistance, that assistance is being organised, and that communities have services available to them that are appropriate to their region. Priorities for care are decided locally. Staff members are considered part of a team within a multidisciplinary setting, with the focus on the patient or the client rather than on professional imperatives. Staff members are now better trained, as they are encouraged to improve their qualifications and skills. That is leading to an enhanced quality of care.

The planning for hospitals is now done locally, with priorities for refurbishing and building stemming from local needs. I go back to that point: for the first time in Queensland, people at the local level are given an opportunity to have input into health services according to their needs. It is certainly a move away from the old idea of having the provision of hospital services in rural areas being decided by bureaucrats located in Brisbane. Hospitals are better equipped as regions are able to prioritise and purchase the equipment they need appropriate to the services they provide. Again, local people are having the opportunity to have an input into that.

I say to members opposite that, with the former Health Minister, I have travelled throughout Queensland and I have visited dozens of hospitals. Also, as a member of the Premier's northern rural task force, I have visited a lot of communities—well in excess of 100 communities just with the task force—and I can say that the responses that I have received have been overwhelming. Members of local authorities, people who served on the old hospital boards and community health workers have told members of the health committee, other members of the task force and me that the best thing that has happened to health for rural Queenslanders has been the regionalisation of the Health Department. I keep coming back and telling the Health Minister that that is the feeling of the people. People appreciate the fact that the health services are out there in the regions.

We know that the system is not perfect, and we would be fools to try to claim that it is. It is very difficult to get such a large and important service to a level at which there will be no complaints. The Opposition knows that full well, but it will continue to keep wheeling out these examples of unfortunate people who have been caught up within the system. It is unfortunate that that happens, but that will happen because the system is so large and it has to deal with a lot of people.

Mr Nunn: They are largely matters of administration, not of policy.

Mr PEARCE: I will take that point raised by the honourable member. They are largely problems that have been caused through a breakdown in the administration, or specialists not being available to perform certain operations. One cannot blame the Government for those types of things.

The 13 regional health authorities are responsible for overseeing the delivery of health services to the people of Queensland through 154 hospitals, 55 outpatient clinics, 23

nursing homes and hostels, and 323 community-based services. Again, one can see that Health is a great big organisation. We now provide a broad spectrum of services, which includes home care, oral health, mental health, services for alcohol and drug diseases, pre-hospital admission and post-hospital care as well as services for people with special needs such as women, people in rural areas, people with disabilities and Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

To do this massive job, the Queensland Government has 33,000 full-time staff operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So, as much as people on the Opposition side may try to deny it, this Government has moved to expand the services available to the people of this State. That is why the Opposition policy to abolish regionalisation is so intriguing. I just do not know where the Opposition is coming from. It wants to replace regional health authorities with 50 mini-regional offices. If this was implemented, we would lose the economies of scale for areas such as finance, accounts, information systems, planning and service development. It would be impossible to continue to supply these services locally, so those functions and many more would revert to the central office. We would go back to the old system that those guys opposite had in place. Once more, all the decisions would be made in Brisbane.

This move would go against the trends of health management in every other State in Australia. Once again, it would disempower those people who live outside south-east Queensland. It means that people in towns such as Blackwater, Mount Morgan and Dysart would have no input to improving the health services in their towns. In Blackwater, we have a councillor by the name of Murial Backhouse, who is a member of the regional health authority. She is a very strong representative for the people living in the Duaringa Shire. She understands what it is like to live in a coal community. So she is a good representative for my electorate.

Mr Horan: You will get far better representation under our scheme.

Mr PEARCE: The Opposition, by taking away the regional health authority, will take away the opportunity for the people who live in that shire and the people who live in those coal towns to have an input into the health services that they need. They want to have a say in what they need, not to have some bureaucrat in Brisbane decide what they should have. As a member representing a rural community, I can say that I have had a

gutful of people in Brisbane making decisions about what I want in my electorate for my people. If people such as Murial Backhouse, who is a strong and very respected representative, are taken away by honourable members opposite, they will take away the opportunity for people to have a say.

Mr Nunn: Centralise power in Brisbane and patronise the regions.

Mr PEARCE: I take that interjection.

This Labor Government has given people that opportunity, something which a coalition Government would take away. A coalition Government would return to the bad old days of letting people in Brisbane make the decisions for people in the regions. If honourable members opposite were fair dinkum, they would be talking to the clinical specialists who determine for whom and when a procedure will take place. This Government is not involved in the day to day running of hospitals.

The Opposition should be trying to convince its friend the AMA and the other specialist service providers to loosen their greedy grip on the control of the number of students who go through the medical colleges. The problem is that we do not have enough specialists to meet the need. If those specialists were available, we could meet those demands, which are increasing all the time. However, the Opposition wants to take the easy way out and blame the Government. The Opposition's performance is ludicrous. Health is supposed to be a major election issue for the Opposition, but what is it doing about it? Tonight, only three Opposition members contributed to a debate on a topic which they say is the most important election issue.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Has Mr Horan outlined his plan for what he would have for the representation of country areas?

Mr PEARCE: He would bring the administration back to Brisbane. He wants to take away the regional offices and the rights of people in rural Queensland and have the decisions made in Brisbane. I will not accept that. I will be back in this House after the election along with 54 or 55 of my colleagues. We will be confirmed in Government. The people in regional areas will support us, because they know what has been achieved through regionalisation. They do not want to go back to the system that the Opposition is proposing.

Mr Nuttall: Is Brisbane Central coming back, too?

Mr PEARCE: We will take Brisbane Central.

I am certainly not convinced that the Opposition is serious about its health policy. If it is serious, why is it not telling National Party candidates what it will do with regional offices and regionalisation? Two National Party candidates who will be running for the seats of Mulgrave and Cook at the next State election have applied for positions on regional health authorities. What a joke! If I were not such a serious person, I would probably start laughing about that. The other thing that amazes me is that many of the members of regional health authorities, who are trying to get the message across on behalf of people in rural communities, have a National Party background. There are also good Labor Party people on those authorities. The Opposition is proposing to take away the jobs of some of its own supporters. I cannot understand where it is coming from. I am sure that the electorate will not understand or accept that.

Mr Beattie: I think a regional member like that wouldn't do that. That is most extraordinary.

Mr PEARCE: What upsets the National Party regional members is that a member of the Labor Party is standing in this place arguing as often and strongly as possible for keeping services in rural Queensland, yet the Opposition will take those services away. I am a Labor Party member and I am trying to stick up for those people out there who do not support me!

Queensland has maintained a free hospital system for the past 50 years. The political architect of this system was the Labor Premier and Minister for Health Ted Hanlon. The member for Chermside touched on that earlier.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Ned.

Mr PEARCE: Okay, it is Ned. Mr Hanlon was a great Queenslander and was successful in retaining our free health system against the wishes of the Federal Liberal/Country Party Government which tried to reintroduce charges for public ward treatment. If the coalition happens to get into Government at the Federal level and members opposite do an amazing thing and shock everybody by getting back into Government in Queensland, that is probably one of the things that will be looked at again.

Following the change of Government in 1957, a free public hospital system was maintained, but with severe limitations on growth in expenditure compared with other

States. The commitment from the conservative Government was not really there. It knew the system was too popular to tamper with but never allocated a proper level of funding to match the level of services and expenditure on health enjoyed by other States. This was the system we inherited in 1989. It had been allowed to run down and was desperately in need of capital injection and revitalisation. I am proud to say that this Government has taken on that challenge.

With the regionalisation of health services in Queensland, proper planning now occurs to meet the demands of our growing population. Regional health authorities supply local input into the health needs of the region. Administrators have moved out of central office in Brisbane and into the regions, in which they now live and work. The advent of regionalisation has meant that we have expanded services in the growth areas north and south of Brisbane and in north Queensland. We have worked hard to expand specialist services outside the south-east corner. The establishment of cancer and heart surgery in Townsville is an example of that.

This Government has significantly boosted funding to Health to cater for these expanded services. The next financial year will see a record increase of \$2.7 billion. This funding will go directly into increased health services for all Queenslanders. The firm financial footing of this State means that record funding is now going into rebuilding and modernising this State's free hospital system.

I turn to central Queensland in more detail. The very large area of central Queensland is covered by the Central Regional Health Authority. It is the fifth largest of the 13 Queensland health regions. It covers an area of over 100,000 square kilometres. It includes 11 local authorities. It extends from the Capricorn Coast to Gladstone and to Emerald. It is expected that the population in this region will grow to more than 192,000 by the year 2001. The current population stands at more than 167,000. Some 25 per cent of the population are under the age of 15. Some 12 per cent are over 60 years old. Some 6 per cent are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and 10 per cent are from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Under regionalisation, the people of central Queensland are getting the services they need. This is recognised by the Government's commitment to the region in the Health Action Plan. Central Queensland health services are set to benefit from a \$4,180,000 State Government boost to the public health

system. The plan targets waiting lists, working conditions, hospital buildings and medical equipment. Although the majority of funding for the central region will benefit major hospitals such as the Rockhampton Base Hospital, equipment and service will assist patients from across the region who go to Rockhampton for treatment. It will also provide added incentives for medical staff to work in the region. The incentive packages for rural staff will make it easier to attract medical and nursing staff and, in particular, specialists.

I for one know how difficult it is to employ doctors and nursing staff in the regions. In my electorate, we have had some difficulty in employing nurses at Mount Morgan. We had to advertise in England to find a medical superintendent for the Blackwater Hospital. He is doing an excellent job and is worth every dollar being paid to him.

Time expired.

Mr DAVIDSON (Noosa) (8 p.m.): I am pleased to make a contribution to this debate. I want to refer in particular to the proposed new hospital in the Noosa electorate. For some time now, the delivery of health services in Noosa has been an issue for many people in my electorate. I was interested to hear the member for Fitzroy sing the praises of regional health authorities and the purpose for which they were established. I am delighted that the member reinforced the fact that the purpose of regional health authorities is to identify the need for health services and facilities in regions. At a Public Works Committee inquiry some time ago, the acting director-general stated quite clearly that that was the purpose of regional health authorities. I thank the member for Fitzroy for those statements and his endorsement of regional health authorities.

There is no point in regionalisation and no point in establishing regional health authorities if the Government does not heed their advice. The Sunshine Coast Regional Health Authority identified clearly in its 1992 strategic plan the need for 75 hospital beds in the Noosa electorate by 1996. It employed many consultants, advisers, health planners and all sorts of other people to go through the process of identifying the need for those beds. At the end of the day, the Government, through the central office of Queensland Health, advised the regional health authority that an economic evaluation needed to be undertaken as a last step in that planning process.

In September 1993, the regional director for health wrote to JTCW Forbes, health consultant of Sydney, requesting that he

undertake that economic evaluation. That letter was marked "urgent" and stated that the evaluation had to be completed in five or six weeks. That consultancy was completed. I was approached by the consultant in my electorate office in Noosa. I believe that his fee was \$15,000. He interviewed and met with many other people in my electorate. That was the last step in the planning process for the provision of those 75 beds, the need for which was identified quite clearly in the 1992 strategic plan.

I believe that that strategic plan had the approval of the Minister's office before it was released. One really has to question a Government that releases a strategic plan to people who are about to invest in real estate or settle into a lifestyle in a certain region expecting the delivery of services. What is the point of undertaking planning processes or preparing strategic plans if, after they have been through the Minister's office, the Government does not deliver on them?

Mr Elder: When did it go through the Minister's office?

Mr DAVIDSON: Many people who have moved into my electorate in the last three or four years have been hoodwinked by the Minister's office and by Queensland Health.

Mr Elder: Why don't you table what the consultant told you? You say you've got those statements. Table them.

Mr DAVIDSON: The economic evaluation is in the Minister's office. It has been there for a year.

Mr Elder: Table them.

Mr DAVIDSON: Because it is a Cabinet document—

Mr Elder: You said you had advice from the consultant. Table it. Put your money where your mouth is.

Mr DAVIDSON: This was the Government's consultant. The Minister has been in the job five minutes, and he does not know anything about the issue. I have asked him two questions on this issue in the House, and from his answers it is evident that he does not know anything about it.

Mr Elder: You're talking through your hat again.

Mr DAVIDSON: The document is in the Minister's office. It has been in the Cabinet bag for a year. In March, I asked the Minister a question about the economic evaluation prepared by JTCW Forbes, health consultant. The Minister did not answer that question, because he did not know anything about it.

The economic evaluation is in the Minister's office or it is in the Cabinet bag.

The Labor Party candidate in Noosa was locked out of that meeting the other day. The hospital board would not let him attend that meeting.

Mr Elder: What meeting?

Mr DAVIDSON: The meeting at the Noosa District Hospital on Saturday afternoon. The Minister met with the board and the chief executive officer of Noosa District Hospital on Saturday afternoon at 2 o'clock or 2.30. The board members would not let the Labor Party candidate attend that meeting because he has totally politicised their hospital, and they are really annoyed and upset about that. That candidate's behaviour has been totally disgraceful and unacceptable to the people involved in that hospital and to the people of Cooroy. The candidate for Noosa said in the press at the end of May—

" . . . last Thursday . . . (he) was not prepared to elaborate saying the discussions were private and he did not want to promise anything that he could not deliver."

The discussions that that candidate is said to have had with the board or representatives of Noosa District Hospital were so private that the board or those representatives do not know anything about them!

In another example of disgraceful behaviour and a total lack of protocol from the Minister's office, that candidate rang members of the board asking to attend that meeting. The invitation did not even come from the Minister's office! The members of the board were absolutely insulted to think that an unelected representative would ring them without bothering to first ring the chairman of the board for approval. That candidate rang members of the board asking to meet with them on Saturday afternoon. Although they agreed to meet with the Minister, they refused to meet with that candidate. He is certainly on the nose with the members of the board of that hospital!

I do not know the outcome of that meeting, but the point that must be made is that the Government has failed to deliver a new hospital and extra hospital beds to my electorate. As I said, the need for those facilities was identified in the strategic plan. The strategic plan went through central office and the Minister's office, but the Government was so bloody-minded with politics that it did not put up the funding. The first funding commitment should have been for the

purchase of a suitable site. The Government even had consultants identify six sites. It even had those consultants go to a Noosa Heads real estate agent and start negotiating to purchase a suitable site. That is how far advanced the matter was. I will tell the Minister the facts, because he obviously does not know them.

Mr Elder: This is going to cost you the seat of Noosa by the time I'm finished.

Mr DAVIDSON: No way in the world! I have news for the Minister. The consultants negotiated the purchase of a site for the proposed Noosa hospital, and then the funding was pulled.

The outstanding feature of the actions of the Labor Party candidate for Noosa—and the Minister endorsed this with his involvement last Saturday—is that candidate's lack of consultation with the people of Noosa. Over the past five or six years, many people have been involved in the consultation processes put in place by the regional health authority, including the director of the Sunshine Coast Regional Health Authority and the people who made themselves available for all those public meetings because they had a very strong interest in the delivery of health services in my electorate. This ratbag Labor Party candidate has been running around town making statements but he has not consulted with any of those people and he has not offered any detail. Those people who have genuinely been involved in the process for all those years have been ignored by the Labor Party candidate.

Mr Elder: With that language, you're bleeding.

Mr DAVIDSON: I have news for the Minister. He can come into my electorate any time he likes. He might like to come and talk to the members of the Noosa District Hospital board who are absolutely disgusted at the way in which—

Mr Elder: I give you an ironclad guarantee that I'll be in your electorate during the election campaign.

Mr DAVIDSON: I cannot wait! The Minister can feel free to come to my electorate any time. I will meet him and debate this issue with him at any time and in any forum in my electorate. If the Minister wants to turn it on, he should let me know and I will be there.

Mr Elder: That would be the only time you would be.

Mr DAVIDSON: I think that Saturday was the only time that the Minister has ever been into my electorate. He snuck in

unannounced, trying to do a secret deal, trying to address the issue of health services in my electorate without giving any commitment. The Minister knows that he cannot deliver a commitment on that arrangement at Noosa District Hospital within six months. The matter has been postponed until after the election. The Minister is waiting to see whether the Government loses the election until he walks away from those negotiations and those commitments. That is the Minister's game. He has politicised the issue of health services in my electorate.

Mr Elder: Keep rolling, because this is your last speech. Keep rolling.

Mr DAVIDSON: Don't you worry about that! As I said, the Minister can visit my electorate any time. He just has to let me know and I will be there.

No detail of this proposal has been released. Debate has been raging on the TV, in the newspapers and on the radio, led by the Cooroy clique of the Labor Party, which realises that it is coming from behind in Cooroy. It knows how strong my vote is in Cooroy and how popular I am up there with the locals, who appreciate all the hard work that I have done for them over the past three years. The Cooroy Labor clique is attempting to shore up the Labor vote in Cooroy. If the Government is to be honest, particularly with the answers that the Minister has given to questions he has been asked in this House in the last two or three days, in response to which he has given the shadow Minister a caning over the building of the QE II Hospital which was designed to bolster the re-election chances of two sitting city members—which is exactly what this whole issue up there is about—then there is no way in the world that the Minister could support what is happening in Cooroy.

A month ago, I asked the Minister a question about the Hervey Bay Hospital—and good luck to the member for Hervey Bay; he has achieved the construction of a hospital in his electorate. In reply, the Minister told me that he was building a hospital with a 130-bed capacity at Hervey Bay to cater for a catchment area of 41,000 people. The Minister's regional health authority advised the Minister's office—this is while the Minister was in charge of the Business, Industry and Regional Development portfolio—that the proposed 75-bed Noosa hospital would cater for a catchment of 36,000 people by about 1996. I cannot believe that the Minister is building a 130-bed hospital in Hervey Bay—and this comes from the Minister's own

document in reply to my question—to cater for 41,000 people by 2001. I would like to know what the catchment area of the Hervey Bay region is now. That should be investigated to the fullest extent.

As the Minister would be aware, the site on which the Noosa District Private Hospital is presently situated is just about built-out and car parking is very inadequate. The hospital might own one more block of land there. In its strategic plan, the regional health authority has said that there will be a need for 75 beds in 1996, 100 beds by 2001 and, with future expansion, up to 130 to 150 beds within the next decade. The Government needs to take notice of that if it is to invest money in providing public hospital beds on that site. There is absolutely no spare land on that site. Since the Labor candidate started this debate, I have received calls from residents who are concerned about the security of their homes. They want to know whether the Government will resume any land and if their homes will be demolished. These are elderly people who have lived in the CBD of Cooroy for many years. The Government is scaring them.

I have written to the Minister twice bringing this issue to his attention and requesting a meeting with him: firstly, on 15 March, not long after he was appointed as the Minister for Health; and, secondly, last week, requesting another meeting with him. I have not had a reply to either letter. I have not even received the courtesy of an acknowledgment of those letters.

Mr Elder: The acknowledgment's gone.

Mr DAVIDSON: I have not received an acknowledgment to either letter. If in the coming weeks the Minister is going to use this issue to try to gain support for the Labor candidate in Noosa simply because there is an election looming, he is only playing cheap politics on an issue that is very important to many people in my electorate. The Minister does not understand or appreciate the need for beds in my electorate for those people at Yaroomba, Coolumb, all through Sunshine Beach, Peregian Beach, Noosa Heads, Tewantin, Noosaville and out to Cooroy. He is disadvantaging those people at the southern end of my electorate. It would be easier for them to travel to the Nambour Hospital than it would be for them to travel to the Minister's proposed hospital at Cooroy.

All the consultants and all of the advice given to the Minister's department has suggested that the hospital—or the provision of beds—should be built in the middle of a catchment area, that is, the

Noosaville/Tewantin area. The Minister has a responsibility to take on board all thoughts and opinions—firstly and especially the advice of his department—of other people who have been involved in this issue for many years.

Mr Nunn: How many years have you been involved?

Mr DAVIDSON: I will take that interjection. When I ran my business in Noosa and the Regional Director for Health, Dr John Menzies, was first appointed, as the Chairman of Progress Noosa I arranged a meeting with Dr Menzies. Along with two other members of my electorate, I drove him all over the region, showing him the growth in the area. We took a whole day and we drove him all over the Sunshine Coast. We wanted the new regional director to see first-hand the growth that was occurring on the coastal strip. My involvement at that time—that was during 1990-91—was as a businessman and as a member of Progress Noosa. My involvement was a very genuine attempt—this was before I was in politics—to ensure that Queensland Health was aware of the need for improved health services and facilities in that area.

I am very concerned that, at a public meeting last week, Mr McLeod made the suggestion that if Noosa District Community Hospital did not do a deal with the Government, the Government would provide private and public beds at Noosaville/Tewantin. I am concerned at his attempt to hold a gun to their heads in an effort to gain political support on an issue that is, as I said, very sensitive to many people in my electorate.

Even if the Minister does not want to meet with me after the requests that I have made to him, I suggest that the next time he visits my electorate he talks to some of the other non-political people in my area who would like to meet him and discuss this issue. Those people have no faith in the Labor candidate for Noosa because he raised this issue without firstly consulting with them. As I said, they have been involved in this issue—genuinely involved—for many years. That imbecile just ran off to the press, making all sorts of loose statements. He has shown no respect for the health carers who work in my electorate. There are 30 or 40 people involved in the delivery of health services and health care in my electorate. The Labor candidate did not have the decency to meet with them, consult with them and ask them their opinions and their attitudes. They are the people with whom the Minister should meet; they are the people the Minister should talk to.

Mr Elder: Are they the people who work in the community health centre that we built?

Mr DAVIDSON: They are the people who have been genuinely involved in this issue for many years. Some of them are long-serving residents of the town. This is not a political issue.

In closing, I think that we have railroaded the Minister; he has been railroaded by the shadow Minister for Health, Mike Horan.

Time expired.

Mr ARDILL (Archerfield) (8.20 p.m.): For a non-political issue, this certainly has raised a lot of fire, not the least of which came from the honourable member for Toowoomba South. He spoke a lot of nonsense today. Basically, he is a decent person.

A Government member: Who said?

Mr ARDILL: He is, but he has allowed the blind spot of his politics and his naked ambition to overrule his basic decency in the way he has dealt with this portfolio as the shadow Minister.

Mr Robertson: He can get that blind spot removed down at the QE II.

Mr ARDILL: I am pleased to hear the member for Sunnybank teaching me about the hospital in my own area.

This Bill is about an indemnity for people in the medical area who could be called to account for their actions. According to the advice from the Crown Solicitor, the Bill does not change the situation one iota but is necessary from the point of view of clarification. Therefore, I support the Bill.

We can talk about other indemnities. One that I hope the Health Minister will consider at some time in the future is the necessity for doctors to be given an indemnity when they are issuing certificates, particularly in relation to driver's licences. Many doctors are called upon to give or withhold certificates in relation to driver's licences when people are no longer able to exercise the necessary care and attention to their driving. This causes a lot of problems, particularly in small communities. There is a need to look at that issue at some time in the future.

The Opposition wants an indemnity from 32 years—from 1957 to 1989—of total neglect of the hospital system. Nobody pretends that the hospital system, which is the Labor Party's free hospital system, is perfect nor that it is operating at maximum efficiency. The Labor Party introduced the free hospital system in Queensland—a first for Australia—in the Forgan-Smith era. With the efforts of Ned

Hanlon, who was the Health Minister and eventually the Premier, that hospital system functioned very well up until the time when the National Party and the Liberal Party came to power. They were philosophically and trenchantly opposed to that system. It is not by accident that immediately they came into power they started the downgrading and neglect of that system, which went on for 32 years.

I am here tonight because of the outrage I feel at the criticism that the Labor Party is getting now that it is back on the Treasury benches and is doing something about the neglect of those 32 years. If one listened to the Opposition spokesperson on Health, one would swear those 32 years never happened and that the present situation is something that has occurred since the Labor Party came into power. As a person who went through that system during those 32 years of disgraceful neglect, I can tell honourable members differently.

Twice in the 1960s I went to the PA Hospital for surgery. On one occasion I had a cancer removed from alongside my eye. I was treated in day surgery. When the operation was completed, I was invited to stand up. I buckled at the knees and they asked me if I was able to stand. I replied that I was and they said, "There are no beds available for you, so you will have to move out. Away you go." I called a taxi and went to work. They took one look at me there and called another taxi to take me home. There was blood streaming all over me and I certainly was not in a fit condition to be moving around under my own steam. That happened because of a shortage of beds in the 1960s.

On another occasion I went to the PA Hospital during the National/Liberal Party control of the system. I was suspected of having appendicitis and was put in a ward with about 20 other men with similar symptoms. Our conditions were not considered to be urgent because apparently there was a virus going around at the time, so we were not treated but were put in a ward to see what would happen. One of the men in my ward happened to have appendicitis. His appendix ruptured because there were no doctors available to treat him. He ended up with peritonitis and was in a terrible state.

This was not the general situation, just as the problems that Mr Horan gets up here and talks about day after day are not the norm today. Those sort of situations occurred because of downright neglect and the failure

to provide funding, staff, decent facilities and equipment, which was of a Third World standard, yet the Opposition did nothing about that in all the years it was in Government.

In the last five years under the Labor Government, spending on hospitals, and on the health system generally, has increased by 50 per cent. Last year \$2.4 billion was spent, so that is a 50 per cent increase on an already significant amount—not a minor amount as we saw in the meagre funds provided by the Nationals for some areas such as the environment. The Health budget was a major item, despite the fact that the Opposition never provided enough. The Opposition will claim that that 50 per cent increase in the budget is taken up on bureaucrats, which is absolute nonsense. Today, there are 200 fewer bureaucrats in the whole system, including at head office and in the regions, than there were when we took over. That is a clear statement of fact which is accepted by everybody, except the National Party and the Liberal Party.

We have diversified the provision of administration into the areas where services are needed, and we have also sent experts, who were previously at head office, throughout the State. The Opposition criticises this Government for setting up a structure in the regions, which amazes almost everybody in Queensland who knows anything about this subject. There are now 3,000 more people being treated in the hospital system every week than there were five years ago when the Opposition was in power. Members of the Opposition ignore that, and so does the majority of the media. Some television channels are only too pleased to feature certain people, the rubbish they talk and the hypocrisy in which they indulge.

Where was the Opposition for 32 years? I know it was not in the hospital system. My three sons were born in the Royal Women's Hospital in Brisbane. It was an excellent hospital, but even then it had poor equipment and poor staffing. However, the people who worked in that system made it work and it was the only place to go. The Opposition now denies all the problems that existed. Obviously they never saw the public hospital system as we, the ordinary people who had to suffer it, did. I went up to the PA Hospital on numerous occasions before Medicare when I could not afford to go to a private doctor and on numerous occasions I waited there from 8 o'clock in the morning until 5 o'clock in the afternoon and then went home. That was the norm.

For Dr Senewiratne to take photos of what is occurring at PA Hospital right now showing crowded conditions in that casualty area is absolutely ridiculous, because what has changed? There are actually more people going through the system and therefore a lot of them are at the PA Hospital. But in point of fact, the scenes that he showed on that video are no different at all from what I saw there on the numerous occasions when I went up there myself or with members of my family—no different at all. It was exactly the same, with people on trolleys parked in the passageways. That was exactly the situation under the Opposition's leadership.

Mr FitzGerald: What did you do about it?

Mr ARDILL: Under your leadership.

Mr FitzGerald: What are you doing now?

Mr ARDILL: What is being done about it? The whole place is being renewed and millions of dollars will be put into it. From this Budget you will see a change in that hospital. But do we get any credit for that? Not at all! Honourable members opposite look at what is there today and say that it should have changed in five years. A major hospital is not rebuilt in five years, but honourable members opposite had plenty of time to fix it in the 32 years of neglect—of wilful neglect—during their time in office. It was a disgrace. It is an absolute disgrace that they presided over that wilful neglect of 32 years and that they now come in here and criticise us for not waving the magic wand, for not changing National Party sepia to glorious technicolour in a couple of years. They want to see something from the Wizard of Oz but they are not getting it and cannot get it. What they will see is gradual change. There is a lot of change already.

Honourable members opposite should have a look at the Royal Brisbane Hospital and see what has happened in the five years that we have been in charge. Change is occurring. Look at the new hospitals that have been built where they are needed, out in the suburbs that are developing such as Caboolture, Logan City and in the regional areas which again they neglected. Ask the member for Hervey Bay. He has achieved. What did any of the honourable members opposite do?

What did honourable members opposite do in Toowoomba in all the time that they were in power? Absolutely nothing! Let us talk about the QE II Hospital. It is in my area. I have had personal experience of it as an

outpatient and I have also had to go there in an ambulance. The service was fairly good but I could not say it was the top type of service that we are hearing about today. It certainly was never like that. In all my time in this House and previously I received numerous complaints about the service at QE II. So let us not hear the nonsense as we heard from that good doctor today that everything was rosy at QE II under the Opposition's tutelage. It was not.

Ms Spence: It was half closed then.

Mr ARDILL: That is right. Half of the floors were closed. They never used the second floor. It was always vacant. I opposed as much as anybody the transfer of the maternity section from that hospital. Sooner rather than later I hope to see maternity back there again. There is no way that all of the facilities provided in a large general hospital can be provided at that hospital. I was listening to a specialist from the college of surgeons when I was down south recently talking about hospitals of excellence. He said that in big cities such as Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne it is foolish to try to provide all of the services at every hospital. He said that what we are doing in Brisbane is on the right track, to provide hospitals of excellence in one location, in one particular type of activity and to move people to that hospital of excellence. He said that that is where the doctors want to be, where they get the experience of handling all those cases, and that makes sense.

But honourable members opposite do not give any credit for that. They talk about providing all of this excellence in every hospital, no matter how small, right around the metropolitan area. They are flying in the face of the advice from specialists, and senior specialists at that. The good doctor said that the QE II Hospital is not being used. That is nonsense. It is certainly not the busy place it was when it had a medical ward which was the back-up for the front line people at casualty. But one of the reasons why so few people are arriving at casualty at that hospital is that Mr Horan, people like Mr O'Keefe and certainly every Liberal Party candidate who has been anywhere near QE II Hospital have promulgated the idea that the hospital is either closing or has closed. They have destroyed confidence in the hospital. It is providing the same casualty facilities that it has always provided, particularly at weekends. It just does not treat people who are going through casualty and will later need in-patient care. Those patients are taken to the nearest hospital.

I heard somebody say something about a patient from Logan City who was taken to PA Hospital. I would like to know why that particular patient was directed to PA when he should have gone to Logan? I think honourable members opposite really should address that particular problem. They have tried to downgrade Logan. They have succeeded in downgrading QE II by destroying people's confidence in it. That is still continuing. I want to tell people that that hospital is up and running, and it will be operating to an even greater degree when the ophthalmic unit is put on the fifth floor in the near future. It is certainly treating people in the 30 neuro-rehabilitation beds. They were stolen from a beautiful ward at the PA! It has changed a lot since I was there. The geriatric ward was not beautiful! The floor which was the medical floor now has operating theatres up and running. They are not closed down at all. QE II has four operating theatres providing elective surgery. I want to say that I am totally with the Minister and the department in changing at least a section of QE II over to elective surgery. It is a great idea. Instead of being sent home, as many of us have experienced, day after day they can go to that hospital and know they are going to be treated, and that is a great innovation which was never there under the Nationals.

As I said, more than 3,000 people per week over and above the number the Nationals were treating five years ago are going through the public hospital system. It is only natural that crowding is occurring and that a lot still remains to be done. I have every confidence in this Government to deliver, to make sure that in the near future we will see a great change in the system and that elective surgery lists will be reduced.

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Minister for Health) (8.40 p.m.), in reply: Before I deal with the piece of legislation before the House, I thank all those who contributed to the debate, particularly the members from this side of the House, because it gave us as a Government an opportunity to put right the untruths that have been peddled by the Opposition—in particular, the member for Toowoomba South—over the last few months. I suppose it illustrates where honourable members opposite actually stand on Health. Even though this is a small amendment, it is an important one.

The debate on this legislation gave honourable members opposite an opportunity to discuss a range of health issues. I think it is important to note that although the Opposition says that it considers health to be the most

important issue in the lead-up to the election, only three speakers from the Opposition side have spoken on this piece of legislation. I repeat that only three members of the Opposition spoke during the debate on this legislation, and for the majority of the debate no more than three Opposition members were in the Chamber. On a number of occasions during the hours that this debate has ensued—and it began at approximately a quarter to four—Mr Horan has been sitting on the Opposition side by himself. That shows honourable members where the members of the Opposition really stand on what they see as the most important issue in the coming election. Only three of the members opposite were interested enough in the subject to make a contribution or to spend time in the House during the debate. I will return to some of the points that were raised by those opposite and by members of the Government after I have spoken about the legislation itself.

The purpose of the Bill is to repeal a provision of the Health Services Act 1991, which provides for indemnity for employees, members and agents of regional health authorities. The Bill also provides for routine machinery amendments to improve the quality of the statute. The repeal of section 3.35 follows concerns by health practitioners that that particular section may prohibit the State from providing indemnity where an employee has been negligent. I do not see that that is the case, but that is the perception. The SPSFQ, the Full-time Medical Specialists Association of Queensland, the AMA, the Medical Superintendents Association of Queensland and the medical defence organisations have all been consulted. They know my view on that section. I have consulted widely in relation to this amendment. That is why I was prepared to introduce it and have it passed by the House.

The statutory protection of section 3.35 has operated in conjunction with the Government's indemnity policy and the Government's indemnity guidelines. The policy acknowledges that many Crown employees have difficult and delicate responsibilities and that they may be exposed to claims of damages. It is the policy rather than section 3.35 that is utilised where neglect is alleged. However, the repeal of the section will remove the perception that public sector medical practitioners are not indemnified in this State. It is a perception. That is of particular importance for recruitment, especially in provincial and rural communities.

As has been articulated by members of the Government, the four-point plan that I

outlined prior to the Budget called The Immediate Need announced a \$30m package of incentives to recruit and retain full-time specialists and medical superintendents in metropolitan, provincial and rural areas. We did a lot of work on that package, and I am still listening to and talking with the medical profession to ensure that we can make better gains and that it actually achieves its objectives.

What I saw the other day from a member of the National Party really amazed me. In the package, we propose a range of non-award incentives such as motor vehicles, communications equipment, administrative support and other components that we are currently developing such as extra payments in lieu of private practice. We examined the issue of indemnity. I have been talking to specialists about a whole range of other incentives—in particular, specialist training positions—to improve opportunities for them. The package is designed, particularly in the case of specialists, to overcome the disincentives of working in the public sector system. So I was surprised to see a member of the Opposition, particularly the member for Charters Towers, criticising the purchase of vehicles for doctors and the purchase of telecommunications equipment for doctors and saying that it was propping up bureaucrats and that it was not going to help those in rural communities—rural communities that many on this side of the Chamber represent. That is just nonsense. It is an initiative designed to retain and attract specialists and medical superintendents—people who the members opposite have been saying we have problems attracting to rural areas.

The Government put forward a package of non-award incentives to attract suitable people, and we considered the indemnity issue. As sure as night follows day and day follows night, out come the members of the Opposition with criticism. In this case, the criticism is targeted at their own doctors. They criticise the system continually and, as they do so, they criticise the integrity of doctors and nurses within the system. This is just another good example of pig-headedness, because that member is cutting off his nose to spite his face. He is prepared to do that to his own community of Charters Towers. This package provides an opportunity to attract medical staff to rural areas, and all that the honourable member can do is criticise the move to provide support for doctors in the form of vehicles and telecommunication packages.

I would like to know where the Opposition stands on this issue. I would like to see some consistency. I have seen the message bubbling up in weekly columns. Someone in the press must say to those members, "Quick, criticise the Government about cars, but don't tell them it is for doctors." The line is run and, of course, we read it. I will be writing to every medical superintendent, and I will make sure that our candidates write to every medical superintendent, outlining that criticism.

It will be interesting to see whether Mr Horan actually takes a stance on this issue within the next two days. In fact, I challenge him to do so. I challenge him to actually support or criticise a member of the Opposition for his criticisms of the package that has been designed to retain medical specialists or medical superintendents. I do not think I will hear a whimper because the member knows that on this issue I am right, and he knows that on this issue I have the support of the specialists, medical superintendents and rural doctors.

Mr McGrady: You are right on most issues.

Mr ELDER: I have been right on every issue to date and he has been wrong on every issue to date, but that has been par for the course since I have been Minister.

The shadow Minister raised the question of what is meant by contractors or consultants. I am happy to clarify that point. The confusion probably arose because the term "consultant" is often used in a health context when referring to a specialist medical practitioner. However, the Queensland Health indemnity policy clearly states that, in this context, "consultants" does not refer to specialist medical practitioners. In the context of the policy, "consultants" does not refer to specialist medical staff; it refers to consultants that we may have employed to prepare draft plans or to conduct some other activity. Consultants are those organisations and those individuals who perform tasks from time to time. That seemed to be the only issue that the honourable member raised that related to the legislation. The Bill is fairly simple. It is straightforward. It repeals a provision in the Act and ensures that indemnity is provided.

The rest of the honourable member's contribution was the typical tiresome scaremongering. I will go through some of the issues that he raised. My colleagues have quite clearly articulated where the honourable member has been misleading people and where he has been wrong. Regionalisation is the best example, and the members for

Chermside, Fitzroy and a number of others on this side of the House spoke about regionalisation and what it has achieved in terms of ensuring autonomy in the regions and ensuring that the decision-making process is based in the regions. The shadow Minister has said that he will scrap regional authorities, the community representatives and the structure that underpins regionalisation because he does not believe that it results in community consultation.

Fortunately, as has been outlined by a number of Government members, some National Party candidates believe that the Government is right and are prepared to put their name and their money where their mouth is, that is, they are prepared to serve on regional health authorities. I commend them for that, because it takes a pretty strong person to take on one's party when one believes that one is right. They believe that regionalisation is the best delivery mechanism and they want to play a role in achieving what is best for their region because they know that the regions are autonomous, that decisions are made in the regions, and that the system is working well. I commend the National Party candidates for Mulgrave and Cook, because it is a good, sound vote of confidence in our system.

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr ELDER: I will take that interjection. That is the only thing that they have been right about today. Although it might be a small concession on their part, when the Opposition makes such a concession, we should support it.

A Government member: They're learning.

Mr ELDER: They are learning. Regionalisation replaced a system of management that was straight out of the 1930s. The concept of hospital boards and the way they were run by the National Party Government was straight out of the 1930s. When we were elected, the management systems for Health and the lack of service provision and the lack of equity in service provision made the system a laughing-stock. Now, the Opposition says that it will go back to that same system. It says, "We will go back to the way we used to do business."

I think it is salutary to note that, at the recent annual general meeting of the AMA, the outgoing AMA president, Dr Robert Hodge, when referring to the National Party administration of Health stated—

"The then Queensland Health Department's centralised bureaucracy vested all legal responsibility for the conduct of hospitals in the boards but with machiavellian expertise deprived them of any real power by holding the purse strings."

In other words, a centralised bureaucracy. In other words, an acknowledgment by Dr Robert Hodge of the folly of going back to a centralised health system and of the folly of the Opposition's policy, which is about the only policy that it has put forward on this occasion.

As to QE II Hospital, I thank the member for Archerfield and the member for Sunnybank for correcting the wrongs of the absolutely outrageous statements about the QE II from the Opposition and from Opposition candidates in that area. The member for Toowoomba South spoke about cutbacks at the QE II. If anything, this hospital is a monument to poor planning by the previous National Party Government. We went through the reasons why it was there. The National Party Government built it, as it built a whole range of small 40-bed community hospitals. Members would know the ones to which I refer—"Forty beds, do it in a National Party electorate, but leave it at that." Members should ask Joan Sheldon why the Caloundra Hospital was left the way it was. The National Party Government had no intention of doing anything with the Caloundra Hospital. The Nambour Hospital was always going to be a tertiary hospital. The previous Government said, "Give them the hospital at Caloundra." It was a good little 40 bedder. The same occurred at Hervey Bay—"Give them the 40 bedder. That will calm them down. That will win the seat at the election." In fact, I note that the National Party candidate for the seat of Hervey Bay does not want a new hospital in Hervey Bay.

Mr Nunn: Mr Horan said we didn't need it. We have a perfectly good one up the road at Maryborough.

Mr ELDER: So Mr Horan endorsed it, and Mr Nioa supported it.

Mr Nunn: He changed his mind.

Mr ELDER: One of them has changed his mind, but then they change their minds on a regular basis.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Briskey): Order! The Minister will be heard.

Mr ELDER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The truth hurts and the Opposition has been known to squeal long and loud

when we start to land the punches that count. There will be a few more in the next 16 minutes. When the QE II opened, it had an occupancy rate of 28 per cent, and floors were left vacant. At least under this Government the role of QE II as a specialist hospital will be enhanced. We will be enhancing its role as a teaching hospital and we will be creating an opportunity for it to become a centre of excellence in elective surgery. We will at least put appropriate planning in place for the south side of Brisbane.

Mr Beattie spent some time referring to the Royal Brisbane Hospital. When I became the Health Minister, it was one of the first hospitals I visited. It is the largest in Australia and, under this Government, it will be rebuilt. In fact, I can say that the master planning is well under way. It will be one of the first major hospitals rebuilt once this Government is re-elected. We will get on and rebuild the metropolitan campuses. They are big projects—a \$650m program across metropolitan hospitals. I can say that \$40m has been brought forward in my package—I will not mention the Budget—to do just that.

I have been criticised—and this hurts the Opposition—for putting together a corporate sector board to help me in that task. Sir Llew Edwards has been appointed to that board. The Opposition has criticised him long and loud, but he has taken a position on the board. He knows what is required. He knows that the Government is heading in the right direction. He wants to participate. However, as soon as he put his name to that board, the criticism from the Opposition was long and loud. Trevor Reddacliff and Judith Maestracci—people who I believe have good private sector skills—will also have a significant input into helping me deliver that program. I am prepared to work with them and rebuild the RBH and the PA.

Mr Beattie spoke about the \$3m equipment upgrade. He also spoke about what we will be doing in terms of opening the theatres and tackling the waiting lists. Those theatres will do just that; they will be targeted to undertake 2,700 elective surgery operations in the next 12 months. Those procedures are targeted directly at those people who have been waiting for elective surgery.

Mr Horan: You were doing it last year before you closed the theatres.

Mr ELDER: The member does not like it, because the Government is meeting the immediate need. The member can squeal long and loud. I appreciate it. It is music to my ears, because I know that he is losing touch

out there. His conduits are drying up, and when he comes in here and complains, that is music to my ears.

Mr Fenlon, the member for Greenslopes, referred to the Princess Alexandra Hospital. This Government will get on and rebuild it. Another lie from the Opposition was that theatres at the PA have been closed. Those PA theatres have been running full bore. Last week, I was out at the hospital talking to people about the pressure on PA theatres. But that does not stop the Opposition. Why should the truth get in the way of a good story? The Opposition has been allowing that to occur over the last few months. The Government will get on and supply radiology equipment, it will rebuild the accident and emergency section and it will provide support for the ICU.

We know that the Opposition has one policy, and that is to take away the autonomy of people in regional areas and to centralise health. The Opposition spokesman advocates going back to a voluntary community council. Who is going to run the \$130m budget in the peninsula and far north health authorities? A voluntary community council? We know that that equals a National Party ticket. That is what used to happen. At least the National Party candidates in the north know that. But wait for it, recently, another little sneak of a policy announcement came from Mr Horan when he addressed a nursing meeting the other day.

Mr FitzGerald: Ha, ha!

Mr ELDER: Well might the member for Lockyer laugh, because I think that this is rather humorous. Mr Horan started to say what the Opposition would be doing in terms of policy initiatives for nurses. I paid special attention to that. Let me state where the Government stands on some issues which have been announced already. I have already given a personal undertaking to the Queensland Nurses Union, the Director of Nursing and nurses throughout the State that I will appoint a senior nurse clinical policy adviser at an SES level at the Department of Health. I have announced that already out there in the constituency. Previously, under the old tripartite system of management there existed the position of chief nursing officer. It was a token position without any real power. It existed so that the previous National Party Government could say, "There is a chief nurse. We are looking after your interests."

Of course, regionalisation has meant that most of those top-level jobs have been opened up to nurses so they will be able to

play a more pro-active role in the management of the system. They are not being seen as a token element of the health system as they were under the National Party Government. I have already said that we will have that position in place. Surprise, surprise, the Opposition's commitment—

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Briskey): Order! The Minister is not taking interjections. The member will cease interjecting.

Mr ELDER: The member does not like it when I have him on toast. Today the member announced, "As one of the initiatives of the Opposition, our policy will be to reinstate the position of chief nurse." That has been done already. I thank the member for the endorsement. On page 11 of the Health Action Plan that I released it is stated that this Government will include a staff relief program to cover the replacement of remote area nurses undertaking annual leave and professional leave. The policy announced by Mr Horan today was that the Opposition will introduce a nurse locum service for rural nurses to provide relief in remote areas and opportunities for training and attending training courses. That has been done. Again, I thank the honourable member for the endorsement of the policy. I appreciate that.

I refer to page 10 of the Health Action Plan and the three-year, \$6m nursing work force management program that will be introduced to improve the range and level of nursing skills available in our hospitals. That program will increase the supply of specialist nurses available in our large hospitals throughout the State, encourage the re-entry of nurses into the nursing profession and assist the transition to work of new graduate nurses. That is the Government's policy. The Opposition's policy was announced today. It states—

"Higher procedural training so nurses can acquire skills necessary for certain clinical practices in remote areas.

A boost to nurse specialist training in hospitals, such as in intensive care, renal care and theatre procedures."

That has been done.

Mr Nunn: You've impressed him.

Mr ELDER: There is another endorsement of a Government policy.

I refer to the Health Action Plan and the \$6.1m incentive package to be introduced to attract and retain nurses in remote areas. I

spoke about that policy package today. The Opposition's policy states—

"A special package for rural and remote nurses to ensure security, improved standards of accommodation and remote area service incentive and relief."

We have already done that. I thank the Opposition Health spokesman for his entire endorsement of our nursing policy. At least on this issue we are as one. I am sure that the honourable member will go into the election endorsing me and the plans that have already been put into practice.

I am always one to give a sucker an even break and one who takes a bipartisan approach to politics. I am prepared to start releasing policies—and we have been doing that—even quicker and on a daily basis so that the Opposition Health spokesman has something to announce the next day. After I talk to the Premier tomorrow and say that it is probably in our interests to do that, the honourable member can rest assured that I will send the press statement directly to his office so that he can endorse it for release the next day.

I turn to the contribution from the member for Noosa, who made a few remarks about the Noosa hospital.

A Government member: He has to be smarting.

Mr ELDER: He is smarting; he has to be hurting. The member for Noosa mentioned the name Ross McLeod, the candidate for Noosa, at least 10 times in his 20-minute speech. That candidate must really be making an impact; all the honourable member spoke about was Ross McLeod, the candidate for Noosa. The honourable member has to be hurting.

The draft services plan for that region is still with central Health. We are going through a second period of consultation in relation to that plan. Any of the work that has been done on strategies in relation to the provision of a hospital in Noosa will be part of that draft services plan. Because of the demographics in Noosa, the likelihood of a major hospital being built there is some years away. The member has stuck out his neck; he is hurting and bleeding all over the place. I am surprised that he does not support a position which would see the private and public sector playing a joint role in the delivery of health-care systems.

Ross McLeod and I are at one on this issue. Since I came into the Health Ministry, from day one I said that I would support

private and public sector collocation and cooperation in terms of delivering health-care services. Mr McLeod was pretty forward thinking when he decided to take on the issue locally. He certainly hurt the honourable member for Noosa. I will not drag out the pain for the honourable member, but I will add that I wrote to those board members; I did not ring them, I wrote to them. Let me outline the facts. They accepted my invitation. When I went to the meeting, I did not expect anyone else to be there other than the board members, the CEO and me.

If the honourable member for Noosa thinks that Ross McLeod and I are wrong and that the honourable member is right—to disabuse him of that perception I will quote from an editorial in the *Sunshine Coast Daily*, because it provides an interesting insight into the views of people on the north coast. It states—

"Noosa mayor Noel Playford might not be reflecting general local opinion when he describes as 'lunacy' a proposal for another hospital in Noosa—but he is absolutely right."

The mayor had made a comment about joint facilities and using and maximising resources. The editorial continued—

"The push for a new hospital in Noosa has been around for years—invariably gathering pace at election time when political candidates of all persuasions call for its approval.

But it's just not on. A new hospital in Noosa is neither needed, nor affordable.

Mr Playford this week suggested the Noosa District Hospital at Cooroy could adequately sustain extra public beds, particularly given the declining number of people seeking private health cover.

That line of thinking reflects the views of Health Minister Jim Elder, who has been speaking with growing enthusiasm of combining private and public hospitals within a single facility.

That is the answer to Noosa's hospital needs—at least in the short to medium term. The region does not have the population to support two hospitals in such close proximity. And it would be sheer extravagance to construct a new building when funds are so urgently needed in other areas of medical and health.

Taking advantage of the facilities already available at Cooroy—and to a

lesser extent at Nambour—and developing and extending them is a much more sensible and practical alternative than building a brand new hospital."

They are the opinion makers. I rest my case. The honourable member for Noosa has a problem in his electorate. That was his last speech in this House, and it was not a classic.

I refer to the case of a young spina bifida patient who was mentioned by the honourable member for Keppel, Mr Lester. I have thought about that case and have compassion for that young person. However, I must correct a few of the statements that the member made. No previous air travel has been provided under the Patient Transfer Scheme—PTS; so the member was wrong about that. I am not saying that such travel was not needed; I am simply saying that the member's statement was incorrect.

A treating medical officer, that is, a non-hospital practitioner, and the Director of Medical Services at the Rockhampton Base Hospital both independently assessed the case at the request of the regional office and the media. They knew that Mr Lester would attempt to promote the case. That young person received a proper and close assessment from clinical practitioners, both of whom were satisfied that that mum and her son would not be adversely affected by the trip in a bus or some other form of transport. What the local newspaper neglected to state was that the case had been assessed by two doctors. I had offered to reassess the case for future referrals for specialist treatment in Brisbane. I intervened to ask for information from those specialists.

Mr Lester went on to talk about this Government's lack of commitment to the Patient Transfer Scheme. That is absolute nonsense. In 1988, the former Government spent \$6m on the PTS. Last year—and we have got greater call for it this year—we spent \$14m on the PTS. So that exposes the folly of the member's claim that this Government is neglecting those people. In addition, we have been providing support in the regions. I refer to the flying specialists who go to rural and remote Queensland and other places in the west of the State. I refer to our providing services in north Queensland such as oncology and cardiac services. In other words, we are providing services so that we do not have to transport people from those areas. In addition, we are providing far more funds to cater for the needs of those patients than was the case under the former National Party administration in this State.

I could go on and on dealing with the litany of lies that members have heard from the Opposition in respect of health care over the past few months. I know it is late, and I will have an opportunity to address this issue again tomorrow during question time when the honourable member asks me a question. No matter what the question is about, I look forward to it and a few others that might be asked from the other side of the House. I am looking forward to the day when the honourable member spends the whole of question time asking questions of the Health Minister, and I hope tomorrow is it.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. J. P. Elder (Capalaba—Minister for Health) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14—

Mr HORAN (9.11 p.m.): This clause relates to the section to be omitted, and it will place the onus back on departmental policy to be used in the case of litigation. I ask the Minister: what is the state of that policy? I understand that it is being redeveloped. Is the policy on litigation finished? Is the Minister able to give us some information about it?

During his reply, the Minister referred to consultants in response to my asking whether the indemnity provision covers everybody. I want to be sure that it covers people such as agency nurses, private dentists working within the public health system who have been contracted under the Commonwealth general dental program, and the consultants who work at the regional health offices. Another innovation is the use of obstetric contractors such as those being used at Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Caboolture. Are those variants to the standard full-time staff, part-time staff, VMOs and so forth—such as agency nurses, obstetrics contractors, private dentists and consultants who work in the regional authorities—covered by the indemnity provision?

Mr ELDER: I said earlier—and I think that the member understood this—that the consultants were those who would actually undertake that other independent work. In terms of the classes of people that the member just mentioned—for their public work, they will be covered. The range of indemnity that is covered is normally negotiated when they negotiate a contract with us to provide

the service. In terms of the policy—it is with Justice now. The interim Queensland health policy has been resolved with the health professionals and others in terms of the wording, because we took the intent of the original wording in 1991 and incorporated that into the new policy.

Clause 14, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 15 to 19, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Elder, by leave, read a third time.

NATIVE TITLE (QUEENSLAND) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 24 May (see p. 11877).

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (9.15 p.m.): It is my pleasure to speak to the Native Title (Queensland) Amendment Bill. This Bill continues this Government's extraordinary record on this extraordinary legislation. First, we had the Goss Government passing legislation ahead of the Commonwealth Native Title Act, which made the need for amendments automatic. We passed mirroring legislation before we had the mirror. That was obviously back to front and reflected the eagerness of the Government to jump on board the Prime Minister's bandwagon.

We then had the extraordinary decision of the Government not to enact its legislation pending fulfilment by the Commonwealth of a series of requirements set down by the Premier in his second-reading speech to the Native Title (Queensland) Bill in December 1993. When the Government did move towards enactment with a series of amendments last year, none of the key concerns of the Premier had been satisfied, but we went ahead with those amendments and their enactment, anyway.

So now we have more amendments. We are told that they are procedural and are required to bring provisions of the Native Title (Queensland) Act regarding the Queensland Native Title Tribunal in line with requirements of the Commonwealth Act in order that our tribunal can be recognised under the Act. It should be noted that one of the reasons the Premier would not agree to enact his native title legislation was that he was dissatisfied with the Commonwealth's proposal in relation

to the financial support of the State body. We did not get the financial support that the Premier wanted, but he went ahead, anyway.

Pending a satisfactory response from the Minister on some key points, the Opposition will not oppose the Bill. If we are to have native title legislation, then clearly it is in the best interests of Queenslanders for us to retain control of this process to the greatest degree possible. Nobody should kid themselves, however, about the degree of autonomy that this legislation presents the Queensland Native Title Tribunal. These amendments are about bringing the Queensland process into line with the Commonwealth process so that the Queensland Native Title Tribunal, for all practical purposes, will be one and the same as the National Native Title Tribunal.

The qualification of not so much our support but lack of opposition to this legislation relates to the potential double standards that it represents. We have no trouble with one of the three key elements of this Bill, that is, the amendment to ensure that the notification period given by the Queensland Native Title Tribunal to persons potentially affected by an accepted application for native title will run for the same time as the notification period for the public. There is no problem with that. But we do see a possible conflict in relation to the potential interplay between the remaining two features of the Bill.

One seeks to ensure that a non-claimant application in the Queensland Native Title Tribunal is not taken to be unopposed where a claimant application is subsequently made in relation to the same area in the National Native Title Tribunal. I seek from the Minister an indication that we are dealing here with the one process; in other words, that the subsequent claim to which the legislation refers is in the context of a genuine claimant application. Obviously, we could not support a situation in which a decided non-claimant application which determines native title does not exist is then superseded by a claim which purports that native title does exist, whether it is lodged with the National Native Title Tribunal or not. I seek the Minister's guidance on that.

The other major element of this amending legislation is to ensure that not only those details of native title claims which have been accepted by the Queensland Native Title Tribunal or the National Native Title Tribunal are entered onto the Queensland Native Title Register. The potential conflict—the potential double standard—is this: clearly, any non-claimant application—ultimately accepted

or otherwise by the tribunal—will, by definition, alert those who may wish to make a claim for title. Claimants obviously are well catered for. However, the boot appears to be on the other foot for non-claimant applicants or other interested parties in relation to knowledge of claimant applications.

The legislation indicates that claims will not appear on the Native Title Register until they have been accepted. In other words, interested parties may not be made aware of claims until they are accepted, whereas potential title claimants would appear to be in a position of knowing of a non-claimant application as soon as it is lodged. If this is the case, then there is no level playing field for those Queenslanders whose properties and livelihoods could be affected by a claimant application. I seek the Minister's views on that matter. Can he guarantee that applications will be advertised on a fair basis and that a fair go will be given to all parties? If that issue is satisfactorily resolved, the Opposition will not oppose these amendments. If we do not receive satisfactory explanations and an assurance of a level playing field, the amendments will be opposed.

I also want to talk about the Goss Government's record on Aboriginal native title legislation and Aboriginal affairs generally in Queensland. That record is not good. The Government has raised expectations that went well beyond its charter. It has not been able to deliver. It promised the Aboriginal people land, a better land title, royalties, a better lifestyle, better self-government and independence. It has not delivered. The Goss Government has spoken with a forked tongue. Aboriginal people do not have the promised land, they do not have a better land title, they do not have the royalties, they do not have a better lifestyle, they do not have better self-government and they do not have the independence that the Government promised. For the first time, we saw with our very own eyes Aboriginals tearing down the front doors of Parliament House. That did not happen under a National Party Government; it happened under a Labor Government. The Opposition can almost rest its case. The Government has raised expectations within a community—it does not matter what community—and it has not been able to deliver those expectations.

Let us look at where we are today. Thanks to Keating and Goss, this great nation is divided. There is animosity, particularly between black and white, but—and worst of all—there is terrific animosity between black and black. Government members who sit back

in their chairs and their nice comfortable homes in Brisbane do not understand the real issues. A few members of the Government may understand the real issues, but it has not got through to the rest of them. There is serious animosity amongst the blacks and the Government has not been able to come to grips with that problem. Until the Government understands the Aboriginal culture properly, not just on an emotional basis, it will not be able to solve the problems of the Aboriginal people.

The Government has thrown money at the problem, as it has thrown money at health and education, and what has happened? It made a mess of it. The Government threw money at the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, and what has happened? It has got worse. Are there better health standards now than there were before? Is there a better lifestyle out there for Aboriginal people? Are there better educational opportunities?

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Yes.

Mr HOBBS: There are not, and the honourable member knows that there are not. If Government members think that there are, they are absolutely wrong. The Government has been on a spending spree. ATSIC is a good example of what the Government does not do. It is an open chequebook, at the taxpayers' expense, that has been given to a few people. This was done with good intentions, but the end result has been a mess. There is no accountability. What other Government funding is there that does not require accountability? What other funding is there where taxpayers' money is spent in the millions—virtually billions—every year and there is no accountability? The Government is going about solving this problem the wrong way.

The Government is fast building an apartheid system in Queensland and Australia. It is doing it here; we can see it. Let us look at the health system, for instance. The Government is building an apartheid health system in Queensland. I can cite a couple of examples in my own electorate and in a bordering electorate. In Charleville and in Dalby, Aboriginal health centres were set up virtually in competition to the very capable and good services that are provided to the people through the general hospitals. Why on earth would the Government want to set up another expensive system that people generally do not use? An amount of \$600,000 alone for each town is a lot of money. Of course, there are all sorts of rumours going around about the funding of those health centres.

Mr Johnson: I don't think they're rumours; I think they're fact.

Mr HOBBS: As the member for Gregory says, they could be fact. Federal Police are visiting Charleville today, and they will be investigating all sorts of things, such as missing funds. I understand that books have been confiscated from some areas and that irregularities in voting have been uncovered. The Government is creating an expectation within Aboriginal people that they are virtually beyond the law of the land.

Let us look at the situation today. Recently, a couple of Aussies, Tom and Wendy Chapman, were granted approval to build a bridge to Hindmarsh Island. There was a land claim lodged in that vicinity, for whatever reason. There could have been a logical reason; I have no problem with that. People can lodge a land claim if they believe that there is a need for that. It seemed that the bridge was going to get the okay because the claim and the reasons for that claim were not sufficient to halt the building of that bridge. However, inspired by the Keatings and Gosses of Australia, someone conspired to invent a story of secret women's business. The Federal Minister, Robert Tickner, announced a 25-year ban on any bridge in that area. Of course, that has virtually sent those two people who were going to build a commercial structure within Australia to the financial wall. Any construction in that area has been banned completely for 25 years.

Can honourable members guess what happened next? Since then, people have come out and said that they in fact did conspire to lodge this claim and that the whole claim was a fabrication. Today, two separate inquiries were announced: one by the Federal Government to look at the Hindmarsh affair and a royal commission to investigate the matter from the South Australian perspective. One must ask: how did the matter get this far in the first place and how could people conspire to defraud a Government, with its enormous resources and legal expertise, on some sort of totally fabricated dream? That that can happen in this day and age is nothing short of scandalous.

The Opposition has serious reservations about the whole context of this legislation. We are not saying that there should not be better assistance for the Aboriginal people of Queensland or Australia. Those people are part of Australia, as are all Australians. We all want to be Australians, but we do not want to be a divided nation. What is going to happen here in Queensland and in Australia—and it

has been perpetrated by the Labor Party—is that we will end up being totally divided. We will not be able to face the year 2001 or any of the years ahead with any confidence.

The Opposition views the legislation before the House with concern and we will certainly be very interested to see how it is administered. We have raised our concerns, and we ask the Minister to allay those fears. The Opposition looks forward to hearing the Minister's reply.

Mr NUNN (Hervey Bay) (9.30 p.m.): I was mesmerised by the previous speaker. Everybody knows that he is loquacious, if not eloquent.

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. The member is being facetious, and I feel offended by that. I would like those words withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Briskey): There is no point of order.

Mr NUNN: What a pity! Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker.

As the Minister indicated when he introduced this Bill, the Native Title (Queensland) Act was enacted in 1993. Although a number of provisions of the Act were proclaimed in November and December 1994, for various reasons there are some provisions yet to be proclaimed. One such provision relates to the establishment of the Queensland Native Title Tribunal, which will, amongst other things, determine native title claims and claims for compensation made by native title holders or potential native title holders. It will also be responsible for considering non-claimant applications for the determination of native title.

As I understand it, under the provisions of the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993, the Commonwealth Minister may make a determination about an established tribunal or body. Proclamation of that provision in the Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993, which establishes the Queensland Native Title Tribunal, will enable this to be done. Queensland has been negotiating with the Commonwealth in an endeavour to gain recognition of the Queensland tribunal as this would ensure that the State retains an ability to exercise authority over the use of the State's resources. However, the Commonwealth has indicated that before recognition can occur, certain minor technical matters in the Native Title (Queensland) Act should be rectified.

The Minister has outlined the three provisions in the Bill which will clarify the

position and thus enable the Commonwealth Special Minister for State to recognise the Queensland Native Title Tribunal. The Minister has also pointed out the Commonwealth-State funding arrangements that will apply following Commonwealth recognition of the Queensland tribunal. Importantly, recognition by the Commonwealth ensures that the State retains responsibility for land management issues, and decisions of the Queensland Native Title Tribunal will be legally enforceable. I support the Bill.

Hon. G. N. SMITH (Townsville—Minister for Lands) (9.34 p.m.), in reply: The contribution from the member opposite was unfortunate, and I think that would be a fairly euphemistic way of putting it. This piece of legislation has never sat comfortably with the Opposition. The Opposition's performance in 1993 gave a true indication of its view of reconciliation in this country; it was a very negative view. Of course, the Opposition is caught in the situation now whereby every State Government in Australia has come on line to put in place a system which will provide an orderly regime. Even the Premier of Western Australia, Mr Court, has now lined up. Of course, from the beginning, everyone predicted that ultimately Mr Court would have to do that. He extracted some political mileage out of it, and the Opposition spokesman is trying to do the same thing. I find that a bit unfortunate.

A number of countries, such as the United States, Canada and New Zealand, have had to come to terms with native title or its equivalent. That has been done in a civilised way in those countries, and it has been done in a civilised way here, although I find some of the rhetoric that went on tonight a little unfortunate. Clearly, no State would want to find itself in a position which is legally contrary to the position taken by the Federal Government. Therefore, I say with some sincerity that the Queensland Government has demonstrated a commitment to native title legislation dating back to 1993; indeed, we were the first cab off the rank. The recognition of the Queensland Native Title Tribunal by the Commonwealth Government would ensure that the legislation is put in place, because the Commonwealth has said from the beginning that all States must come on line to put in place the 50 per cent funding support regime. The member for Hervey Bay summed up the situation fairly well when he reiterated that there was a threefold reason for the Bill. In view of that, I cannot understand why people are trying to make more out of it.

I believe that the Opposition spokesman is well aware of the answer to the second point he made in relation to the acceptance of a claimant application in response to a non-claimant application. We are talking about a situation in which a non-claimant application is, for instance, lodged with the Queensland Native Title Tribunal. Without rectification of the legislation, there was the possibility that a claimant application lodged in the national Native Title Tribunal could have an effect on the Queensland application if it was lodged within the appropriate time of two months. The legislation that we are putting in place makes it quite clear that unless a claim is accepted as a claim—whether or not it is successful—it will have no bearing on a non-claimant application in the Queensland Tribunal. I thought that the honourable member understood that quite well, and essentially it addresses the point that he made. I do not believe that it is appropriate for me to respond to the general point made by the Opposition spokesman. I believe that his comments were unfortunate, and I shall leave it at that.

This is a very simple Bill and one that must be put in place. The proposed commencement date of the legislation is 1 July. Therefore, it is necessary to put through these very minor amendments to ensure that the Bill is compliant with the national Native Title Tribunal. Unless the Bill conforms exactly with national requirements, it will not be possible for the Queensland tribunal to be recognised. That, in total, is the reason for the Bill.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 3 and Schedule 1, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Smith, by leave, read a third time.

MOTOR VEHICLES SECURITIES REGULATION 1995 (SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION 1995, No. 91)

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (9.41 p.m.)
I move—

"That the Motor Vehicles Securities Regulation 1995 (Subordinate Legislation 1995, No. 91) tabled in the Parliament on 23 May 1995 be disallowed."

The main reason for moving this disallowance of the Motor Vehicles Securities Regulation was the variations between a number of Acts regarding the definition of "motor vehicle". It was an opportunity to have this problem recognised and thus avoid confusion that might have occurred in the future. With the stringent requirements that will evolve as a result of REVS, it has become even more important that greater clarity be provided with regard to the definition of "motor vehicle". There has been a great deal of support for the principles of REVS. Concerns have arisen following its introduction because of ongoing problems and inconsistencies. There are 10 Acts in which the definition of "motor vehicle" occur.

Firstly, I would like to quote the definition of "motor vehicle" from the Motor Vehicles Securities Regulation 1995, which is—

"(1) 'Motor vehicle' means—

- (a) a land vehicle propelled by anything other than humans, animals, gravity or the wind; or
- (b) a vehicle (other than farm machinery), for example a trailer, designed to be attached to a vehicle described in paragraph (a).

(2) However, a 'motor vehicle' does not include—

- (a) a train or hovercraft; or
- (b) a vehicle used, or intended to be used, primarily in mining."

I would like to go through some of the other 10 pieces of legislation in which there is a definition of "motor vehicle", because I am quite concerned that some confusion could arise as a result of the necessity to comply with the strict requirements of the REVS definition given the definition in the Motor Vehicles Securities Regulation that we are looking at.

Mr Beattie: Is this why you have moved this motion of disallowance?

Mr ROWELL: This is the principal reason that I am moving the motion of disallowance. I would just like to list those Acts that contain a definition of "motor vehicle". They are the Motor Vehicle Securities Act, the Motor Vehicles Safety Act, the State Transport Act, the Traffic Act, the Motor Vehicle Control Act, the Auctioneers and Agents Act, the Tow Truck Act, the Motor Vehicle Driving Instruction School Act, the Motor Accident Insurance Act, and the Transport Infrastructure Act.

I would like to record some of the differences that I have found during the course of my investigation of these different Acts and point out my concern about how things could be misconstrued in the future because of the need to comply with the stringent requirements of REVS. In the Acts I listed, some vehicles are included in the definition of "motor vehicle" in the Motor Vehicles Securities Regulation but are excluded from the definition in the following Acts: the Auctioneers and Agents Act, in which a fire engine or a fire reel is excluded; the Motor Vehicles Control Act, in which a fire engine, fire reel or any machinery designed specially for road-making or road-maintenance is excluded; the State Transport Act, in which a fire engine, fire reel or any machinery especially designed for roadmaking; the Motor Vehicles Safety Act, in which a straddle truck, mobile crane, mobile dump truck or any machinery designed for cutting grass or foliage is excluded; and the Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Regulation, from which a fire engine is excluded. I am not certain about the definition of "motor vehicle" in the Motor Vehicles Securities Regulation, but a number of vehicles are excluded from the other Acts. In the Auctioneers and Agents Act the definition of "motor vehicle" does not include a vehicle designed for use on a railway or tramway. The definition in that Act is very close to and has some relation to the REVS register, and I think it is important that that be noted.

The Motor Vehicles Control Act uses the words "any machinery designed for cutting grass or foliage . . . and used for no other purpose . . ." The State Transport Act mentions "tramway locomotive"—certainly we talked about omitting locomotives and so on from the definition in the Motor Vehicles Securities Regulation, but I do not know really where "a tram motor, tram car or traction engine" stands in relation to the definition in the State Transport Act. The Motor Vehicles Safety Act refers to "a recreational vehicle as defined in the Motor Vehicles Control Act . . . stream traction engine, diesel traction engine . . ."

Then we turn to the Motor Vehicle Driving Instruction School Act 1969, from which a traction engine is excluded, as is a vehicle used on a tramway. Then the Liquid Fuel Supply Act excludes a tram. The Traffic Act excludes a traction engine.

There are definitions omitted from the definition of "motor vehicle" in the Motor Vehicles Securities Act but are included as a definition of "motor vehicle" in the following Acts. They include the Motor Vehicle Driving

Instruction School Act 1969, which excludes a tractor, as does the Traffic Act. They really are the areas of disparity that occur in the definition of "motor vehicle" about which I am concerned.

The implementation of the REVS register on 17 April 1995 created confusion among dealers and the public. I was told of delays occurring of more than one day's duration. I want to make the point very clear that the delays that occurred disadvantaged not only dealers who had sales held up but also consumers who were wanting to complete a car sale transaction. They were not able to conclude the purchase as the dealer had to produce the certificate to ascertain whether an encumbrance was listed or evidence that there was an attempt made to produce a certificate. In some instances, computer software was not user friendly and difficulty was experienced in running that system in. In some instances, dealers could not get hooked up to on-line facilities. Computer software such as Desklinc had some problems. Phones and fax lines were jammed for 4 to 48 hours because the system was overloaded in the initial stages. I understand there has been a substantial improvement lately. Additional costs would have been incurred by people in country areas who have tried to get information by phone since the Government's removal of the 008 number in August last year.

Dealers have said that they were not fully informed of the implementation of the legislation until 3 April. I have been told that they requested a deferral to become better organised but that the request was turned down. The Consumer Credit Act, for which Queensland holds template legislation, was supposed to be implemented in September this year, but due to other States not being able to pass the legislation, commencement of the Act has been deferred until March. If it was acceptable for a delay to take place with that legislation, why were the Government and the Minister so heavy handed about insisting that, at relatively short notice, the REVS register had to adhere to the prescribed date?

It became evident that the New South Wales system which is being used was not able to cope with the increased demand. I believe that those involved in sales that had been held up by difficulties were told that if they could demonstrate that they had made every attempt to access the register, consideration would be given to their endeavour to comply. It is difficult to prove that an attempt was made if the telephone or fax lines were jammed. A high level of frustration prevailed. I have had many phone calls from

irate people who were dubious about the conclusion of a particular transaction. I have also received numerous letters from motor vehicle dealers stating that the system was in chaos. They were incensed by remarks attributed to the Minister, namely—

"The legislation was a major breakthrough for Queensland consumers as encumbrance rip-offs cost \$10m every year."

That remark was reported in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on 30 April 1995 and the *Maryborough Chronicle* on 27 April 1995. The dealers have said that they are unaware of the source of those statistics. However, their knowledge of the industry and claims against the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund do not support that extent of losses as a result of dealers' failure to ensure that clear title is passed at the time of sale.

I now refer to hearings of Budget Estimates Committee B, at which I asked the Minister questions regarding the REVS register and the claims that have been made about the auctioneers and agents fund, which actually supports that register as far as claims from dealers are concerned. Mr Burns said that total claims paid to motor vehicle dealers between 1 January 1990 and 1 March 1995 were \$1.952m. In relation to 1991-92, there were 202 claims involving \$8,200.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! Firstly, I remind the honourable member that it is against the Standing Orders to read from the *Hansard* of the current session. Secondly, the honourable member is referring to the Estimates, which are part of the Budget which is before the House. The honourable member will desist from continuing in that vein.

Mr ROWELL: I certainly will do that. Of the \$10m that was mentioned by the Minister in a number of press articles, only \$1.9m has been spent. I believe that is really quite significant. It states "every year", whereas only \$1.9m has been spent over a five-year period.

I will continue with those dealers' comments. They stated that if such losses were incurred, they would assume that it was a result of backyard or private sales—an issue which must be addressed by the Office of Consumer Affairs and which is totally ignored in the current legislation. I believe that that is a very valid point.

In an article in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on 30 April, the Minister stated that motor vehicle dealers should have linked into the system by 17 April. He said that their protest and refusal

to link into a new consumer rights protection system will not be tolerated. In an open letter to the Deputy Premier, the dealers stated—

"This is not about motor dealers linking into a 'consumer rights protection system', nor is it about dealers refusing to become involved in the REVS system. Firstly, this is not a 'consumer rights protection system', it is simply a register of financial interests where financiers record their encumbrances to warn prospective buyers of vehicles that there is money owing. Secondly, there is no need for motor dealers to link into the REVS computer system, because the system is claimed to be accessible by telephone and facsimile which will be the option taken by a majority of dealers. What cannot be tolerated is the failure of the system to deliver within a reasonable time, and the haphazard delivery time of between 4 and 48 hours is not reasonable. Dealers are required to provide a certificate to the purchaser at the time of both parties signing the contract. This cannot be achieved unless Mr Burns' system can perform on time, every time. Computer system failures in the first two weeks by the Office of Consumer Affairs do not engender confidence in the Departments ability to deliver."

Time expired.

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (9.57 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr Beattie: Here's a used car salesman. He'll know all about it.

Mr CONNOR: I rise to formally second the disallowance motion. I also acknowledge the fact that I was a licensed motor dealer for many years.

Mr Beattie: We knew that.

Mr CONNOR: I did not sell motor cars; I sold motor homes. That is where the honourable member was wrong.

I wish to deal with the aspects of the new REVS requirement, the Register of Encumbered Vehicles. I make it clear that just as the motor dealers of Queensland support the concept of REVS, so too does the Opposition. What the motor traders and the Opposition do have a problem with, however, is the high-handed and arrogant way that it is being administered by the Minister, Tom Burns. Quite simply, it is being put in place by someone who is totally ignorant of the way in which the industry operates. Quite simply, under the guise of consumer protection, the

Minister is putting in place a tangled web of red tape that is totally unnecessary and, in many cases, counterproductive for consumers. In many cases, it is anti-consumer.

Mr J. H. Sullivan: How? Tell us how.

Mr CONNOR: I will answer the honourable member. That is what this debate is about. There is no doubt that a national computerised database of motor vehicles dealing with encumbrances, where sales are checked against that database, is of immense importance to the consuming public. Mr Burns, however, has forgotten one very important aspect, that is, that the majority of motor vehicles sold in Queensland are not sold by motor dealers. He refuses to expand the REVS requirement to private sales.

Mr Burns: Where did you get those facts from?

Mr CONNOR: Where did I obtain that information? I received that from the MTAQ, the industry organisation. The biggest problem for motor vehicle consumers is shonky backyard dealers, and the Minister knows that that is where the problem lies; it is the shonky backyard dealers, not the licensed dealers.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr CONNOR: Can the Minister show me a long list of licensed dealers who have sold encumbered vehicles and caught consumers? I challenge the Deputy Premier to table a list of all the people who have been taken down, who have received encumbered vehicles from licensed dealers and have not been bailed out. The only ones who have not been bailed out are those whom his Government has not backed with a guarantee. That guarantee exists for motor dealers under the Auctioneers and Agents Act and the provisions of the fidelity fund, which members opposite raided.

The Minister knows that the biggest problem is the shonky backyard dealers. By placing the requirement only on licensed motor dealers he is increasing the cost differential between the licensed motor dealers and the shonky backyard dealers. By increasing the cost of the licensed dealers he is making it easier for the shonky backyard dealers to take advantage of the consumer. He is making their operations cheaper. So he is making it worse for the consumer because he is forcing many of them onto those shonky backyard dealers. He knows that, the motor traders know that and the motor industry knows that—everyone knows that. But he will not do it. Why will he not do it? Why will the Minister not place the requirements of REVS

on private sellers? Because the Minister knows that, because of this new system and because we are bringing in all the other States, there is a whole mass of encumbered vehicles in Queensland from all the other States. The Minister knows that if he starts requiring those REVS certificates to be provided by private sellers they will be caught. The people selling cars privately to people will start getting caught, and the Minister does not want to be in amongst it when all that happens. That is what is behind it, and that is why REVS is not being incorporated in private sales.

The Minister will argue that he does not want to have that additional cost placed on private sales. It costs \$8. It really comes down to the fact that parties already have to pay \$200 or \$300 in stamp duty for the transfer. However, he is saying that people will not be prepared to pay the extra \$8 to ensure that the vehicles that they are buying are unencumbered. That is total rubbish. What it really comes down to is this: the Minister wants additional costs for small businesses and he wants additional red tape for small businesses. It is all about additional revenue for the Government.

As I was saying, these sales by shonky backyard dealers are the ones that are causing the trouble. They are the ones that regularly catch consumers. For example, an article carrying the headline "Stolen cars seized from new owners" appeared in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* of Friday, 2 June—just on a week ago. Guess what? On reading the article, it states that the buyer bought the car privately for his lawn-mowing franchise. Over and over again, people are being caught through private sales.

Members might recall a big hoo-ha a few months back when a red Laser, purchased by a woman on the Gold Coast, attracted Statewide news attention. Members might also recall that that car was purchased privately. It was repossessed because it was encumbered. Again, this was a private sale. Guess what? A company on the Gold Coast by the name of Sunshine Ford bailed out that girl. That company ended up paying for that car. The company had nothing to do with the sale or the purchase of that car, but it bailed that lady out. I will read a letter that was sent to Mr Burns by that dealer. I might add that Sunshine Ford is, if not the largest motor dealer on the Gold Coast, one of the largest dealers and possibly one of the largest dealers in Queensland. The letter states—

"I feel insulted by the inferences . . . not consulting with the

Australian Automobile Dealers Association when creating legislative changes"——
and I might add that this letter was dated 29 May and signed by Steve Kelly, the Dealer Principal of Sunshine Ford. The letter states further——

"I have supported the introduction of the National Register for encumbered and stolen vehicles, since it was first discussed in 1977. Unfortunately, the new REVS system recently introduced by your Department is totally unacceptable and should be urgently redressed as it provides no security to Dealers and creates a substantial financial burden to our company and others within the industry."

It states further——

". . . costs caused by delays of up to two weeks by certain finance companies lethargy in removing encumbrances.

Minister, what have you done to ensure finance companies act within an appropriate time frame to reduce the intolerable inconvenience to our customers?"

Mr Kelly then refers to the real guts of the issue, and that is the requirements of the Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971-1985. In his letter, Mr Kelly quotes from the Act, which states——

"If a used Motor Vehicle is sold by or on behalf of a Motor Dealer, whether by auction or any other mode of sale, the Motor Dealer——(a) shall be deemed, at the time of sale, to guarantee clear title to the motor vehicle to the purchaser."

That is the bottom line. That is the Act. Under that Act, they have been guaranteeing the ownership of those vehicles ad infinitum. So this REVS business with which the Minister has been pounding the beat around the State is a total farce and a phoney.

I would just like to sum up by referring to what another dealer on the coast, Websters Car Sales, had to say about this matter in a letter to the Minister. It states——

"Under the new legislation, each transaction requires a new certificate daily, which is great revenue funding for the Government."

Again, the bottom line is revenue. Further, what has AADA, the motor dealers themselves, had to say about this matter? In a letter to the Minister, the dealers state——

"It is obvious that the Office of Consumer Affairs and the QMVS

Division are not at this time able to supply to Industry the required certificates to meet the legislation introduction deadline."

The letter states further——and this really sums it up——

". . . will see confusion and difficulties between sellers and buyers and will be counterproductive to the legislation's intent of consumer protection."

That is what it is all about. It is counterproductive. It is not in any way protecting the consumer.

Time expired.

Mrs WOODGATE (Kurwongbah) (10.07 p.m.): Once again, the member for Nerang has disappointed me. Every time he rises to speak in this place I think that he is going to top his maiden speech. He has never topped it yet for the most stupid speech made in this House. However, I say that he went pretty close. I will give the member for Nerang a little bit of advice: he should keep his day job. He should not put in for that job lecturing in logic next door at QUT, because he would never get it. QUT would not even give the member a second interview.

The member started off telling us that the legislation is totally anti-consumer. We all interrupted him and said, "Prove it." The member did not say anything about that. He just gave us a lesson on how he was a used car dealer. We used to call him "Honky tonk". From now on, he is going to be known as the "Shonky tonk" of Nerang.

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order. First of all, I find that offensive because it is untrue. I never sold used cars.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! I warn the member for Nerang under Standing Order 123A.

Mr CONNOR: I am not a used-car salesman.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. I am on my feet. I have warned the honourable member under Standing Order 123A. When I am on my feet, the honourable member resumes his seat. If he wants to continue in that vein, I will ask him to leave the Chamber. If the honourable member is rising on a point of order, he should make his point of order as briefly as he can and not give an explanation. Then I will make a ruling. Take your point of order.

Mr CONNOR: As I was saying, I find that offensive. I ask it to be withdrawn. It is untrue. I never sold used cars.

Mrs WOODGATE: What is so offensive about selling used cars? Mr Deputy Speaker, I withdraw the fact that I said that the member sold used cars, but what an insult to used car salesmen—the member saying that he finds that offensive.

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order. I ask that it be withdrawn unequivocally. I do not want to comment.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has withdrawn.

Mrs WOODGATE: I withdraw. As I was saying, from now on the member shall be known as "Shonky tonk", not "Honky tonk". The member tells us that the legislation is totally anti-consumer. Then he says that this legislation will create more backyard dealers and encourage more private sales. How in the name of heaven is this legislation going to make more people buy cars privately? It is going to encourage more people to buy cars from the dealers because they will receive protection.

Mr FitzGerald: The dealers have protection now.

Mrs WOODGATE: They have better protection now. I am not standing here tonight denying that there are not dealers who are unhappy with aspects of this legislation. However, the Opposition has to realise that in the car game there are a lot of good dealers and there are a lot of very bad dealers. This legislation protects people from the very bad dealers and it follows that this will, in turn, be to the benefit of the very good dealer. Before the member for Nerang has had enough and leaves the Chamber, one of these days I would like to ask him to let me know in passing how much he ever put into the fidelity fund. He is a great defender of all of this, but how much did he put in? The Minister interjected and asked him——

Ms Power interjected.

Mrs WOODGATE: Not a brass farthing, I am sure. As I said, this legislation will bring more people buying cars back to dealers. It protects them. The question was asked, "Why do only motor dealers have to pay this? Why not the private market?" The requirement that dealers do ensure that clear title is passed and that they provide the certificate is a means of ensuring that the public will receive protection by dealing with a motor dealer. If clear title is not passed, the consumer is entitled to make a claim against the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund. Obviously, this type of protection does not exist in private-to-private sales. We have heard a lot from the

auctioneers. They have just concerns and the Minister realises that. He discussed that issue with members of the committee, of which I am a member. The Minister is taking their concerns on board. The auctioneers are telling us why they cannot comply with the requirement to supply the buyer with a certificate from the registry in relation to sales at auctions.

In a nutshell, the auctioneers' argument is that they cannot know who the buyer is prior to the sale. After the fall of the hammer, the sale is completed, and it is too late to provide the buyer with the REVS certificate. Some of them are saying, "We may sell 300 cars per day at auction. That means that we would have to buy 300 certificates. At \$4 each, that will cost \$1,200, and we may sell only 200. We would waste \$400." The simple solution to the problem is for the certificate to be displayed to bidders prior to the sale of each vehicle. The Act does say that the buyer should be given the REVS certificate prior to the sale. Using this method, although the buyer would not have a personal copy of the certificate, he or she would still be given the certificate—in that one was made available—so that the prospective buyer could see clearly whether the vehicle was encumbered. The certificates can be supplied to bidders in remote areas by computer and fax, so there is no practical reason why bidders cannot see a certificate. There is really no practical reason why the auctioneers cannot comply with that.

I have a bit of sympathy for the argument that the provision of certificates in that way is expensive, because more than one certificate may need to be obtained in relation to one vehicle if that vehicle is not sold at auction on the first occasion. I understand that. Auctioneers want to be able to supply a certificate to the buyer straight after the fall of the hammer. I have discussed this problem with the Minister, and the solution is not an easy one; it is something that the Minister is looking at. An amendment to that effect may be moved in this House some time down the track, but there is no easy solution.

The Sale of Goods Act 1896 provides that where goods are sold by auction, the sale is concluded at the fall of the hammer. The whole point of an auction sale is to ensure that the sale is concluded on the spot and there is a binding contract between the parties. If we are going to accommodate the wishes of the auctioneers in this matter so that the REVS certificate is supplied only to the successful bidder, auctions of used motor vehicles will need to be conducted differently from the way in which they are conducted at present. A sale

will not be able to be concluded at the fall of the hammer. Rather, we may have to think about making the sale conditional upon the production of a REVS certificate shortly after the sale. That is something to be looked at. As I said, the Minister has discussed this with members and officers of his department, and there is no easy solution. Maybe an amendment will come before the House in the future. The Minister is quite amenable to that suggestion.

The aim of the present provision is to provide the consumer with a certificate prior to the sale so that the consumer will have the opportunity either to back out of a contract if the certificate shows an encumbrance—and that is a very good safety net for a buyer at an auction sale—or to continue with the contract in the full knowledge that there is a registered encumbrance. I am sure that quite a few honourable members on both sides of the House would know of instances in which relatives and friends have bought encumbered cars at auction. That happens in the best of families.

The question we must ask is: if the auction sale is made conditional upon the production of a REVS certificate, how will the consumer be able to get out of the contract if the certificate shows an encumbrance? We have to address that question. If the contract is made conditional upon the production of a certificate, the contract would be binding irrespective of whether the vehicle was showing an encumbrance. That means that the consumer is not protected in any way. Therefore, the amendment would have to be framed in such a way that the consumer would get the benefit of being handed a REVS certificate and having the opportunity to back out of the contract if an encumbrance is shown. I think that is the way to go.

As I said, I have talked about this with the Minister. An amendment could be introduced down the track. This may be the way in which the Government is heading. That would mean that the auctioneer would need to provide a certificate showing clear title for the contract to be binding immediately or else the contract would be made voidable if the certificate were to show an encumbrance. I think that would satisfy members on both sides of this House. As I said, if auctioneers want to be able to supply a certificate after the sale, there would need to be quite drastic changes to the way things operate now. We will have to leave that for another day.

I do not accept some of the statements made by the member for Nerang. I do not

think that I have ever accepted any of the statements made by the member for Nerang, who from this day on should not be known as the "Nerang-outang", as he has been so unkindly referred to, but as the shonky—

Mr FitzGerald: You are like Paul Keating in miniature; you're no better than he is.

Mrs WOODGATE: I thank the member for Lockyer; to be called a miniature Paul Keating would be the highest acclamation that I could receive in this House. I rest my case.

Mr HEALY (Toowoomba North) (10.16 p.m.): I support the disallowance motion moved by the member for Hinchinbrook. In doing so, I welcome the opportunity to echo the thoughts of many people involved in the motor vehicle industry. In particular, I wish to make some comments about the conversion of the Queensland Motor Vehicles Security Register to the New South Wales REVS register.

At the outset, let me say that the conversion itself has the support of the industry, and the Minister knows that to be true. However, the REVS system is not the be-all and end-all as far as consumer protection in the motor vehicle industry is concerned. What is needed is new legislation giving both the consumer and motor vehicle dealers real protection. I wish to quote from an open letter to the Queensland consumer, which appeared in many newspapers in May. The letter was written by Paul King, the Used Car Chairman of AADA, the Australian Automobile Dealers Association. I think it is important to quote from that letter because it gives a real indication of the concerns of the motor vehicle industry in Queensland. That open letter states—

"... the licensed motor dealers of Queensland have a vested interest in ensuring that your rights"—

that is, the people of Queensland—

"are protected and that only individuals with the integrity, capacity and professionalism are allowed to operate in this State. As part of this process, we joined in a review of the legislation regulating motor dealers in 1991 and put forward some major recommendations to the Minister for Consumer Affairs to protect consumers purchasing motor vehicles whether they bought from licensed dealers, private sales or beside the road."

Further, the letter states—

"This review was heralded by all who took the time to understand it as a major initiative to protect consumers and the proposed changes had the support of the motor industry and consumer representatives. Since its release in 1992, the government has seen fit to ignore our repeated requests for its implementation and has deferred and delayed some of its major features thereby leaving the consumers this government is elected to represent, and talks about at length, at risk."

It goes on further to say—

"Some of the major initiatives supported by this industry were: mandatory warranties on used car sales, increased penalties for illegal trading, penalties against all individuals who windback odometers and protection for consumers at auction sales, plus a standardised format for contracting to buy a motor vehicle, stricter regulation of unethical practices and the implementation of a legislated code of conduct for motor dealers, and the list goes on."

The letter then states—

"We are proud of our industry and the people who work in it, bearing in mind it is a major employer within Queensland, but have found the negativity of the Office of Consumer Affairs and their reticence to make decisions or effectively police the current legislation to be frustrating and to hinder true consumer protection in this State."

It concludes—

"The only true way for any Government or industry to effectively operate in today's society is for all parties to work toward consensus through appreciation of each others point of view. This industry appreciates the consumer, for without them and their continued support we would not survive in the highly competitive marketplace. Hopefully the Government will equally learn to appreciate our position and implement the long, long overdue and 'real' consumer protection legislation as a totality rather than attempting to pass-off the REVS system as 'consumer protection legislation' which it is not."

I believe that is an important point of view from the industry—both the Australian Automobile Dealers Association and the MTAQ.

The suggestion to the Minister is that, whereas the REVS system will go part of the way towards protecting the consumer, it will not go all of the way. These thoughts of the AADA are a very real plea to the Minister not to walk away from the problems by using the REVS register as a crutch. REVS goes only part of the way towards consumer protection. Even the conversion itself has had some problems, which the Minister acknowledges in numerous letters that I have seen written to various people. The problems seem to be slowly ironing themselves out. Those problems experienced since the conversion date did cause great concern to the industry and individual dealers. Until the system is fully operational, no doubt some dealers may still have problems.

The real problems facing the industry are outlined clearly in a letter to the Minister—again from Paul King of AADA—which said—

"The industry does support the principle behind the implementation of any scheme which would reduce the incidence of encumbered or stolen vehicles being sold to consumers, however we believe you have only addressed half the equation, leaving a majority of purchasers buying privately or at the side of the road at serious risk."

A joint letter to the Minister from Bill Clarke, the Executive Director of the Motor Trades Association of Queensland, and John Cant, the Queensland President of the AADA, stated—

"The Motor Dealers of Queensland are extremely concerned that the legislation does not require private sellers of motor vehicles to produce a QMVS Certificate at point of sale of a used motor vehicle.

If as we believe this legislation is aimed at consumer protection our members believe that as transfer of registration statistics prove 50% of all secondhand vehicles sold are private to private sales, the legislation has missed protecting more than 50% of consumer buyers."

The industry generally is extremely concerned that REVS does not require people selling a used vehicle privately to provide a certificate. I believe that that is probably the main concern of the industry. The industry itself is quite happy with the REVS system. But its members seem to believe—and I agree with them—that they are being discriminated against unless there is a level playing field for private-to-private sales in relation to REVS

certificates. Registration figures show that 50 per cent of all second-hand vehicle sales were private. If REVS, or the legislation governing it, were aimed at consumer protection, then it is missing out on protecting 50 per cent of used-vehicle buyers.

I know that the Minister says that private sellers of motor vehicles who use the register appreciate the protection that the register offers. The Minister has also been quoted as saying that something like 99.7 per cent of that 50 per cent of used-vehicle buyers to whom I have just referred actually use the register. There is no legislation to make it mandatory for a private seller to obtain a certificate. The Minister has foreshadowed that legislation is to be introduced which will remove the rights of the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund to have the discretion to assist buyers who purchase an encumbered vehicle from a backyard dealer or the side of the road. I have said before that even though many licensed dealers in the past were not bothering to purchase a certificate—and I agree with the Minister—they are doing so now and are quite happy to continue to do that. But they are continually being frustrated by the fact that at least 50 per cent of motor vehicle transactions in this State—those constituted by the private sales market—do not require the purchase of a certificate.

The motor vehicle industry, particularly in areas such as Toowoomba, where the drought has had a huge impact on some dealers, is doing it pretty tough. Not only must it compete with the backyard and the unlicensed dealers but also with Government auctions, where many of the regulations of a normal sale are not required to be complied with. I know that a Government auction at which 62 motor vehicles will be up for grabs will be held in Toowoomba in the not-too-distant future. Recently, I attended a meeting of the Australian Automobile Association held in my electorate. Those dealers virtually said that they might as well close their doors on that particular day, because there will certainly be no business for them. They are cranky that some of the regulations that are required of them are not required of those auctions.

Protection for the consumer is of paramount importance in the case of motor vehicle sales to the public. The Australian Automobile Dealers Association insists that its members, who are licensed motor vehicle dealers, are already required under their licence provision to guarantee clear title to consumers purchasing used motor vehicles. There is therefore a very real need for

amending legislation to include the sale of all second-hand motor vehicles, including those sold private to private. The industry has suggested that there should be a wrecks register to prevent stolen compliance plates from wrecked vehicles being placed on a stolen vehicle. That has been suggested to the Minister before. Until such time as amending legislation is enacted, the industry will continue to be of the belief that REVS is discriminatory and that the charges associated with it are nothing more than an additional tax on vehicle sales.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN (Chermside) (10.26 p.m.): I rise to oppose the disallowance motion, and there are two aspects on which I will speak. The first is a concern that has been raised by some dealers who have queried why the requirement for the compulsory issue of certificates is contained in the Auctioneers and Agents Act rather than the Motor Vehicles Securities Act. The reason for this is that the requirement to produce a REVS certificate is aimed at dealers in used motor vehicles. Other provisions concerning motor dealers are contained in the Auctioneers and Agents Act, so this is the logical place to put this provision.

The benefits flowing to motor dealers as a result of the requirement to produce REVS certificates to consumers are significant. The amendment which the Minister introduced to the Auctioneers and Agents Act contained three important elements: firstly, the dealer is required to supply a REVS certificate to the buyer before the sale; secondly, the old provision requiring the dealer to guarantee clear title was replaced with a requirement that the dealer had to actively ensure that title was passed to the buyer; and, thirdly, if the dealer did fail to pass title, the buyer would have a clear right to claim compensation from the fund. The main benefit is that the consumer will know that, by dealing with a motor dealer, there will be the safety net of being able to claim against the fund if clear title is not passed. Reputable dealers should feel comforted by this, because that will help generate more trade for them away from the private market.

This significant benefit to dealers comes at very little cost to them. At the moment, the only direct contribution that dealers are required to make to the fund is part of the initial fee paid on the licence application. A contribution is also made to the fund through the interest accrued on client funds held in dealer trust accounts. In numerical terms, the proportion of motor dealer trust accounts to the total is only 0.4244 per cent—less than one half of 1 per cent. The remaining trust

accounts are held by real estate agents and auctioneers. In anyone's language, this is a very cheap insurance policy and a very cheap way to attract business.

The second matter that I wish to address is the current performance of the REVS service. The Office of Consumer Affairs has employed and trained 24 additional staff in the REVS section, taking the total number of operators to 40. This has ensured that the REVS service is now working very well, with the average call holding time or queue time being below 30 seconds, and the fax delivery service generated by the phone queue is less than 10 minutes. Many dealers have actually shifted back from the fax to the phone service because of the faster response times. I believe that the number has dropped from 900 per day to 400 per day. In fact, many dealers have reported that the first certificate is arriving on their fax machine while they are still on the phone to the REVS operator giving them a second request. However, for STD callers—and our country members of Parliament should note this point because it will affect people in their electorates more specifically—it is still more cost effective to use the fax service.

The only problem with the phone/fax service at the moment is with dealers who have phone/fax switches. The REVS system will attempt to contact a fax number three times then redirect the request to an error report, which will not be generated until much later in the day. The certificate will then be manually faxed to the dealer. So if at all possible, a dealer should have a separate fax line to gain the fastest and most efficient service.

About 2,500 REVS certificates are now generated per day, with 1,500 generated on-line directly by the dealers. There are occasional times when congestion occurs on-line, so the office has ordered an expansion to the on-line REVS service so that any congestion problems will be gone in about four weeks' time. Many people have no doubt seen the TV and press campaign on REVS which is aimed at the private-to-private market. The Office of Consumer Affairs is presently processing about 100 private certificates per day as a result of the campaign. The Minister is considering the compulsory provision of REVS certificates for private-to-private sales, but that is something to be looked at in the future. I oppose the disallowance motion before the House.

Mr GRICE (Broadwater) (10.31 p.m.): I also wish to speak on the legislation

concerning the operation of the Register of Encumbered Vehicles—REVS. I wish to make it very clear to the House and to those members opposite that the legislation is riddled with inequity and injustice to those who actually do the right thing in the motor trades industry. Those who do the right thing in the sales of used cars are in fact the licensed motor dealers throughout the State who have been strictly controlled under the Auctioneers and Agents Act and through comprehensive industry self-regulation for many years.

Since 1971, under section 57 of the Auctioneers and Agents Act, all licensed motor dealers have been required to guarantee clear title of the motor vehicle to the purchaser in writing. The Consumer Affairs Minister has made mention of the need to clean up the motor trades industry. In reality, the Consumer Affairs Minister is offering the purchaser no more protection than has been available since 1971. Now the purchaser has the privilege of paying for the same protection. We now have here a proposal to supposedly safeguard the consumer through protection from being ripped off by an untrustworthy or unscrupulous dealer. I am able to rightly say that such a dealer would not last long under the existing controls in Queensland and through the strong industry self-regulation which exists in the motor trades industry.

The Consumer Affairs Minister now presents the motor dealers in Queensland with a new tax. This REVS system has in fact produced a new tax, and the cost will ultimately be added to the price of used cars. Motor dealers are required to obtain a REVS certificate through the Department of Consumer Affairs before a contract of sale can be entered into on a vehicle. Such a certificate attracts a fee. To obtain a certificate, the dealer must pay a fee of \$6, a facsimile fee of \$2 and any phone charges, dependent on where that dealer may be operating his or her business, since the Consumer Affairs Minister was responsible for removing the 008 number for the securities register in 1994.

With the certificates now being a Government requirement, the actual cost of the certificates is being passed on to the purchaser. Clearly, the REVS system provides the same protection as has always been offered to the purchaser but now discriminates against the licensed motor dealer. I wish to present some figures on actual motor vehicle sales which have been produced recently by the Motor Trades Association. Tonight, I noticed the Minister gesticulating that he doubted those figures, but they are figures that have come from the Motor Trades

Association and they do indicate that 50 per cent of car sales are as a result of private sales and sales by backyard operators.

This system essentially offers no more than what was previously offered for no charge under the provisions of the Auctioneers and Agents Act through the licensed motor dealer, yet REVS now openly discriminates against the motor dealer. Fifty per cent of motor vehicle sales are conducted other than through licensed motor dealers, so where is the protection for the purchaser in these instances? There is no requirement for the purchaser to access the REVS database under these circumstances. The backyard operator who deals in cars will still have a free hand at sales, but all licensed motor dealers are required to access the REVS database and obtain a certificate at a cost to the dealer for all sales.

The REVS system has not gone far enough. The Consumer Affairs Minister has made use of the statement that he would introduce complete consumer protection. This is simply not the case. The REVS system just does not offer complete consumer protection. Certainly it is a step in the right direction, because it enables better access to national motor vehicle records than did the Queensland motor vehicle securities register. However, the REVS system does not in any way provide information to the purchaser regarding whether the vehicle is stolen. A person may go ahead and buy an unencumbered vehicle that is stolen in the confidence that he has a REVS certificate. Where is the consumer protection for those who choose to access this system for private sales? There is little or no protection in that regard. The REVS system reports only on vehicles which may have money owing on them and such information is provided by various financial institutions.

The majority of motor dealers have experienced major problems with the REVS system. The motor dealers themselves were not consulted by the Government on the introduction of the REVS system and were only advised of the finalised system one week prior to its commencement. Some dealers have opted for a direct link with the REVS system, while others have relied upon the telephone and the facsimile link. All have experienced major problems with equipment supplied by Consumer Affairs for a link-up to the REVS database. The equipment supplied has not been up to scratch and turnaround times for phone and fax inquiries have taken far too long to ensure maximum client satisfaction in the purchasing of a vehicle.

Once the certificate has been issued, it is only valued for 24 hours.

The REVS system is definitely on the right track. However, it discriminates against licensed motor dealers, and that is not acceptable. The real rip-offs are found, and will continue to be found, in and around backyard dealers and shonky private sales which escape the attention of the entire REVS system. As the Consumer Affairs Minister has stated his reliance upon the REVS system to provide consumer protection, he should spread that protection across-the-board to overcome in their entirety the problems that REVS is meant to avoid.

I would say to the Minister that this disallowance motion is not as a result of a difference in philosophy between the Opposition and the Government; it has been moved because we have received representations from a very large number of motor dealers. Only three weeks ago, I went to a breakfast on the Gold Coast that was attended by 120 dealers. Certainly there is the shonk car dealer, as there is the shonk doctor, lawyer or carpenter, and the Cooke inquiry certainly told us that there are a lot of shonk unionists. However, the vast majority of dealers are decent businessmen, and they have a legitimate beef. That is why we are occupying the time of the House at this hour of the night. It is a genuine attempt to improve the system. It is a shame that the Minister is not interested in that comment.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (10.38 p.m.) I was so amazed by the contribution of the previous speaker that I was almost left speechless, and honourable members can imagine how difficult that would have been! I have listened to the contributions by the various Opposition members and I think that they do not understand the legislation. The honourable member for Hinchinbrook talked about the definition of "motor vehicle". I could not quite grasp what he was going on about.

Mr Robertson: Horseless carriages.

Mr BEATTIE: It was not horseless carriages. There is a definition of "motor vehicle" in the Motor Vehicles Securities Act and a definition of "motor vehicle" and "used motor vehicle" in the Auctioneers and Agents Act.

Mr Rowell interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I will come back to that. I will deal with that, because this is where what I have to say differs from what the honourable member is saying.

Mr Rowell interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I am happy to take the member's interjection, if he would just let me finish. The definition of "motor vehicle" in the Motor Vehicles Securities Act is wide but it provides for certain exclusions. They are: trains, mining vehicles, hovercraft and farm machinery which attaches to a motor vehicle. The definition of "motor vehicle" in the Auctioneers and Agents Act also excludes trains and trailers other than caravan trailers. It can be seen that the range of exclusions under the Motor Vehicles Securities Act is narrow. There should therefore be few instances in which a vehicle comes within the definition in the Auctioneers and Agents Act but not the definition in the Motor Vehicles Securities Act. I do not understand the point that the honourable member is making.

Mr Rowell interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: It is such a minor difference that it is not going to lead to the difficulties to which the member referred. I have dealt with the point that the member raised.

I will move on to the contribution by the honourable member for Nerang, who tried to suggest that there was a significant increase in the number of private dealers. The statistics are very clear: that is just not true. The Department of Transport has given formal transfer figures for the number of second-hand car sales. For the purposes of these figures, "dealer" includes private to dealer, dealer to dealer and dealer to private. The number of dealer transactions in that category in 1993-94 is 438,145.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The member should let me finish.

Mr Connor: That's not a sale, that's a transaction.

Mr BEATTIE: Of course it is a transaction. The member was talking about private sales.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: If the member wants to have a serious debate, I am happy to do that; if he wants to be an airhead, I will not bother.

I will make this very simple: in 1993-94, there were 438,145 dealer sales, which represented 70 per cent of transactions. In the 1994 financial year to April 1995, the dealer transactions—and that is again private to dealer, dealer to dealer and dealer to private—were 538,619, which again represented 70 per cent of transactions. That

means that in 1993-94 total private transactions were 30 per cent at 183,442. In 1994-95 they were still 30 per cent at 228,612. Therefore, what the member is talking about is absolute bunkum. He does not know what he is talking about. Compared with 1994-95, the number of private transactions in 1993-94 was still 30 per cent. It is not true that there was a big increase as he has tried to suggest. The member's suggestion that there has been an increase in private transactions in some dishonest way—

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, you did, and it is just not true.

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The member will resume his seat. When the member rises to take a point of order, he will not accept interjections.

Mr CONNOR: I find that offensive and it is untrue. I did not say what the member said and I ask him to withdraw. I did not say it was increasing.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat. The Chair has ruled with the honourable member previously that points of order should be short and sharp without explanations. All the honourable member has to do is say, "I find the remarks made by the honourable member offensive and ask that they be withdrawn." The Chair will then rule. In this case, the Chair finds no point of order.

Mr BEATTIE: As I was saying, the honourable member for Nerang tried to suggest that there was a significant increase in private to private transactions. The official statistics from the Department of Transport show that that is simply not true. Recent market research indicates that, of private sales, over 55 per cent are made between parties who already know one another, that is, family to family or friend to friend.

The honourable member for Nerang is trying to suggest that we should not have private sales. The National and Liberal Parties are trying to say that a father should not sell to his son, a mother should not sell to her daughter, an uncle should not sell to his nephew, and a brother should not sell to his sister. The Department of Transport did an analysis of who was selling cars in a private capacity and found that most of the people were related. What the honourable member said was the greatest heap of bunkum since Adam and Eve were in shorts. I table those

official Department of Transport statistics for the information of the House.

The Opposition had better hope that this disallowance motion is unsuccessful tonight because, if not, the whole motor vehicle industry would be down on it like a tonne of bricks. One of the key matters contained in this new regulation is the fact that New South Wales, Victoria, the ACT and the Northern Territory are recognised States for the purposes of the Motor Vehicle Securities Act. Disallowance of this motion will mean that persons in Queensland will not be able to be protected under the Act if they are provided with data coming from those jurisdictions.

The Opposition is attacking the consumers and the people who want security when they purchase a car by saying they cannot have interstate information. That is wonderful politics! In addition to that, some of the fees contained in the new regulations reduce the fees provided under the repealed regulations. The cost of a certificate to a dealer under the old regulation was \$8, and it is going to be \$4 for on-line dealers. In other words, the Opposition wants dealers to pay twice what they would under these regulations. The Opposition should tell that to the dealers!

The new regulations provide for the new services which have been introduced with the adoption of the REVS system. For example, the regulations allow for the purchase of computer software packages to access on-line information. They will also allow for applications to the registry to be made on-line and for searches to be made on-line. The Opposition does not want to allow that. If it was successful, it would be very unpopular tomorrow.

Let us take a hypothetical case. If a consumer bought a car from a licensed dealer and the vehicle becomes known to be encumbered despite assurances from the dealer to the contrary, under the old system the car would be repossessed. If the consumer had made any improvements on that vehicle, he or she would lose those when it was repossessed. The consumer would be paid out of the fidelity fund, but if he put mag wheels on the car or made any improvements on it, he would lose them. If a person buys the same car under the new system, he will not lose it. The consumer is given the REVS certificate at the point of sale, the car's encumbrance is paid out and the consumer gets to keep the car and the options that would have been put on that car, such as mag wheels. Therefore, the best thing for the consumer is that he or she gets to keep the

car. The Opposition wants to go back to the old system where the buyer loses the car and any improvements made to it.

The real question here is: how much does it cost the fidelity fund to pay out claims made where consumers have taken the word of a used car dealer that the vehicle is unencumbered, and how much do dealers pay into the fidelity fund to protect their customers? My advice is that there is a huge disparity, and perhaps the Minister could advise us on that when he makes his contribution. It would be interesting to see how much real estate agents are required to pay to protect motor vehicle dealers and their clients.

Time expired.

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Emergency Services and Consumer Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier on Rural Affairs) (10.47 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions. I am surprised at the motion to disallow this regulation. Section 14 of the regulation lists the recognised States as the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, the Northern Territory and Victoria. The old scheme allowed a person to find information on an encumbered vehicle only in Queensland; it made no provision for obtaining any information elsewhere.

The Opposition has said that it does want us to be able to check, and the member for Broadwater talked about incomplete consumer protection. How incomplete would it be if, as a result of a resolution carried by the Opposition, we could not access information about encumbered vehicles in New South Wales, Victoria, the Northern Territory, and the ACT? Whilst the Opposition wanted to debate this tonight, it did not think about its motion, which is about defeating the regulation and thereby removing protection from the consumer.

The cost of a certificate to a dealer, as the honourable member for Brisbane Central has said, was \$8 under the old regulation. It will now be \$4 for an on-line dealer. Because of the way in which the fee structure is now arranged, the bulk of the transactions by dealers and financiers are, in practical terms, much cheaper than they were before. For example, the register of an instrument under the old regulation cost \$11, plus \$2 for each vehicle and the subject of security on the instrument. Under the new regulation the cost to register an interest by on-line batch is \$5, against \$11 plus \$2 for each. The new regulations provide for the new services which have been introduced with the adoption of REVS. For example, there are about 600

dealers who bought on-line equipment and are dealing directly with us, but with this motion the Opposition wants to wipe that out.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr BURNS: Yes, that is what the Opposition wants. The Opposition is moving to disallow the regulation. Go and read the regulation! For example, the regulations allow for the purchase of computer software packages to access on-line information. By removing the regulation, that service is removed. It also allows for application to the registry to be made on-line and for searches to be made on-line, which was impossible under the old scheme.

As a consequence, if the motion is successful, dealers will revert to a more expensive system and consumers will have less protection than under REVS. For instance, there have been 78,000 transactions under REVS since its introduction. If we assume that 70,000 have been dealer transactions and that they have saved between \$8 and \$4, that is \$280,000 less that dealers have paid than they would have under the old scheme. That is, honourable members opposite want them to pay 280 grand more. In addition to that, if it had gone down to only \$6 as would be the case if they used the fax, then it would be \$2 a head for 70,000, which is \$140,000.

Honourable members opposite never thought it through. It is the most stupid motion that has ever been before this place. They talk about consumer protection and they are saying, "We want to increase the price, we want to remove the areas that they cover in the other States." They want to take the on-line equipment away; they never thought it through. They just wanted to get up and have a bit of a bag because they have been hearing about non-consultation. All honourable members opposite have quoted the *Motor Traders Journal* tonight. Here is the *Motor Traders Journal* of 1994 with my photo on the front. The story says—

"Queensland REVS gives access—

Mr Connor: That's before they knew.

Mr BURNS: Hang on, here is the article.

Mr Connor: How about the latest edition?

Mr BURNS: Does the honourable member want to listen? Of course he does not want to listen. You fell for it, digger. The honourable member fell for Mr King and some of his stories. Let us read it here out of their magazine. Page 9 states—

"From April 1995 Queensland car dealers will be compelled to provide a clear certificate to title number for every used car sold. It is the first in making this State part of the national vehicle register."

They were not told! It is in their own magazine. The member for Broadwater said that they were not told until a week before. Here we are in their own magazine—and the date is on it. There it is for everybody to see in November last year. The honourable member fell for the plot. He fell for the three-card trick. He bought a used car off a bloke who did not know what he was talking about. The article continued—

" 'For a long time we've known that it is far too easy for crooks to trade interstate registered vehicles which have financial encumbrance,' said Mr. Burns."

They warned all their members to be in the deal. They wrote to our office in December 1993. The letter stated—

"As you are aware, AADA have actively counselled its members to carry out security registered checks on all vehicles that they trade and to also obtain a certificate to protect their legal title to the vehicle. We are well aware of the dangers of dealers not carrying out these checks and the costs that some dealers have had to face."

AADA wrote to us saying they knew that. AADA put it in their paper four months before it occurred—and honourable members opposite say they were taken by surprise.

Mr Rowell went on all about everything that had nothing to do with REVS but, unfortunately, he is pretty good at doing that. The only thing he talked about in the end was the QMVS. The notes that were supplied to me in response to his speech show that it really did not apply to the material that is before the House. The material before the House is all about REVS.

Mr Rowell: I was dealing with the definition of a motor vehicle.

Mr BURNS: It was dealing with the definition of a motor vehicle. Read the regulations. While we are talking about no consumer protection, let us look at a few of the people who were mentioned in the magazine and who were fined. One dealer after the other was fined in this particular case. A Runaway Bay motor dealer whose business address had been at Ashmore was fined \$4,000. Brian Thomas Gurney was fined \$6,000 in the Beenleigh Magistrates Court. Thomas John Lonergan of Board Street Car Sales was fined \$4,399. These are the honest

dealers that Opposition members are protecting.

There are good dealers out there who come to me and say, "Keep going. Don't take any notice of the fellows who don't want to pay the 4 bucks. Keep going."

Mr Connor: They love to pay it. They are happy to pay it.

Mr BURNS: The honourable member doesn't even know what he's talking about. They told me to take no notice of him, too. They said straight out, "If Connor comes to you, don't buy a used car off that mug." That is what they said to me. Good dealers are coming to me one after the other telling me to keep going with this, because there are dealers—if the honourable member has been in the business, he knows it—who sell the cars they no longer want any more to backyard dealers. This system gives some protection from the backyard dealer.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BURNS: The honourable member is just a loud noise. He never thinks. I will address my remarks to someone else because he will not listen. Under the auctioneers and agents scheme—the current scheme—if a person's car is repossessed, when the car is taken away we then come to pay you out.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr BURNS: The honourable member for Brisbane Central asked me would I talk about the money that has been paid out. In 1992-93 where we had 323—

Mr Lingard: Why don't you talk to the Speaker?

Mr BURNS: I am talking to the Speaker. I will talk this way to the Speaker. I don't have to face Mr Speaker to talk to members through him. Do I have to look at Mr Speaker? Is that the way it has to be?

In 1992-93, when we paid out \$323,300 for a few dealers we collected back only \$11,500. Where did the other money go? When we talk about the money, we are not recovering it out of the dealers. The people who are paying are real estate agents through the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund. In 1993-94, of \$199,444 we got \$52,000 back. In 1994-95 till March, we had \$64,991 back out of \$164,580. We are not recovering the money at all.

We are not suggesting for one moment that this is complete consumer protection. But the first argument honourable members opposite put up is that we ought to have a

certificate between private and private sales. I think the honourable member for Brisbane Central stole my thunder there, because 55 per cent of the sales of private to private are between relatives—relative to relative. The first thing is to think out how you would work it out. We register motor vehicle dealers. We provide an insurance scheme for people who deal off them. Those who deal off a registered motor vehicle dealer can be looked after. If a person buys on the side of the road there will be no protection from the Auctioneers and Agents Act, not one bit of protection whatsoever. Buying off a backyard dealer gives no protection at all.

We have an advertising campaign that has been running for a while saying "buy off a dealer and check the encumbrance register". We make provision for private people to do it if they want to. To make it compulsory you would have to find a way of doing it. How do you do that when the deals are between aunty and uncle or brother and sister? We would have to send inspectors down to the Transport Department every day and say, "Who registered a car today? Did they have it encumbered?" They would have to send someone out to the house to check it out. It would be crazy.

I am prepared to look at any system that is practical, but that is so impractical that it is impossible. It would cost all the funds to do it. The other way to do it is to talk about a compulsory certificate—everyone must have it. I cannot believe that Opposition members are proposing that. Everyone dealing between relative and relative would be forced to hand a certificate over, "Here Dad, I am buying your car. Give me a certificate to see you are not ripping me off." For God's sake, what sort of a mob are Opposition members?

Honourable members opposite take the word of Mr King that this is a good proposal. They take the figures he gives out—they are not right—and then they take those silly ideas and come in here and recommended that we do away with the system that checks encumbrances in every State on the eastern coast of Australia. They say they want to get rid of the system that does that. They say they want to introduce a system that will put the fees back up again, not down, and then they are going to go out there and trumpet that they have done so very, very well. I see the honourable member for Nerang—and empty vessels do make the most sound. He proves it very regularly here in this place. When he rattles that head of his, we get all those funny noises coming out of it. A couple of members from my own side who have been on my

committee know that there are a few things that we have to look at in this scheme.

Mr FitzGerald: Dealers shifting stuff is a problem.

Mr BURNS: Let's talk about dealer to dealer. An encumbrance certificate bought today for \$4 covers the whole day. If it is transferred to three dealers that day another certificate does not have to be purchased. That costs \$4. Second-hand cars can be worth \$50,000 or they can be worth \$5,000. Four dollars is not a lot to pay.

Mr FitzGerald: What about the book work on shifting it from one stand to the next?

Mr BURNS: It is not book work; only one certificate is needed. That is not right. A certificate purchased in the morning covers the whole day. It goes with the car all day. It is there for the day. If a bloke says, "I've had it in five yards today, and I've had to buy five certificates", that is bull-dust. He needs to buy one certificate only, and that costs \$4.

Mr FitzGerald: We are talking about a dealer who wants to shift a car from Indooroopilly to Ipswich Road. He's got to get a certificate.

Mr BURNS: No, because he is not selling it. If it is going between one yard and another, we do not ask him for a certificate. However, if he is selling it, he has to have a certificate, because we want to follow the trail and check whether odometers have been turned back. If I sell a car to the honourable member with 200,000 on the clock and he sells it to Kev Lingard, who sells it to Mr Rowell, who sells it to somebody else, and by that stage the car has 50,000 on the clock, if we insist on certificates then we can follow those transactions and trace them back. We might not pick it up the first time, but we will eventually know if those couple of dealers in the middle are tampering with the odometer. We need to follow that trail. Dealers say to us, "For the first time, we've found the suitcase dealer, the carpetbagger who doesn't have a business, who doesn't have a shed on the main road."

Mr FitzGerald: I have one up in my area named Lloyd Faint, and I have written to you a number of times, and you won't do anything. He hasn't got a licence, and you aren't prepared to deal with him.

Mr BURNS: I turn to another subject with which I am pretty happy—the fishing industry. A fellow in Proserpine has lost his licence three times. He does not care; he just goes and buys another net.

Mr FitzGerald: This fellow hasn't got a licence.

Mr BURNS: That is right. What do we do? Do we take him to court? Do we charge him for operating without a licence?

Mr FitzGerald: You can't stop shonky second-hand dealers; that's what you are telling me.

Mr BURNS: Are you ready now, Blue? If the honourable member settles back for a minute, I will talk about what we could do. The honourable member's view is that I have to grab that dealer by the scruff of the neck, take him down and throw him in the slammer. Unfortunately, we have legislation and laws in this country, and that person has to be charged and taken before a magistrate. We need people who are prepared to give evidence. A certificate would help, and we would be able to use the encumbered vehicle register as evidence.

Mr FitzGerald: He's already been in gaol.

Mr BURNS: Listen, a lot of people have already been in gaol, and I do not know whether the REVS register, which the honourable member wants to remove, will keep people out of gaol or put people into gaol. The member should be a bit sensible about this issue. He knows damn well that his suggestion is not very practical. He knows damn well that our inspectors have been after that person all the time and will continue to be after him. If he reads *Hansard*, Mr Faint ought to know that we have him on the list. He is one of those whom we need to get. There are a whole lot of them out there. The whole industry is asking us to do something about those shonks.

Mr King and others who quote figures of 50 per cent cannot even get the exact figures into their own local newspapers. They say that no-one has consulted with them, and they had photographs on the front pages of newspapers five months before they said that the consultation started. When they cannot get their facts straight in their own local newspapers, it is very hard to believe members opposite when they recommend that the fee should go back up and that we no longer connect with New South Wales, Victoria, the ACT and the Northern Territory. That is what this motion is all about.

We should consider a couple of sectors: auctions and private sales. We need to see what we can do to tighten up the private sale sector. Auctioneers are in a very difficult position. Under the Auctioneers and Agents Act, when the hammer drops and a person

has bought a motor vehicle, that car is theirs. If it happens to be encumbered, it is still theirs. That sector contains many dangers. If an auctioneer buys certificates for 400 cars and sells only 200, he has wasted his money on 200 certificates. One possible method of dealing with that problem is to change the Auctioneers and Agents Act so that, at the beginning of an auction, an auctioneer can say, "Ladies and Gentlemen, at the fall of the hammer a certificate will be obtained from the encumbered vehicles register. If it is not encumbered you can have it; if it is encumbered you have the right to get out of the sale." That is the best way that we can see to solve the problem, but we have to work through that with the auctioneers.

I have been talking with individual dealers for some time. I have not spoken to Mr King and others because they have been writing articles for their local newspapers which include statements that I do not believe are true. Officers of my department tell me that those stories are not true, and I see no reason to have contact with any person who negotiates on such a shaky basis. However, I am prepared to sit down with any responsible dealer—as I have on the Gold Coast, in Townsville, Cairns and Brisbane—and discuss his or her concerns.

There is nothing wrong with REVS. It is a good system. It is not complete; it never will be. As the honourable member opposite said in relation to Mr Faint, there will never be a system that will stamp out every shonky used car dealer. There will never be a system that will stamp out shonks in every industry. If honourable members believe in such a system, they believe in fairies at the bottom of the garden. Such a system does not exist. All we can do is implement the best system possible.

The REVS system is handling thousands of calls a day. In the first 16 days of the scheme, 6,000 vehicles were found to be encumbered. Those 6,000 vehicles—from interstate and elsewhere—could have been sold to people who would later have had those

cars repossessed, and we would have had to chase the money. Because of REVS, people did not pay over the money, and the cars did not go out. Some people are complaining about that, but I think that is because they did not sell their cars. We have to protect the customer. The customers and their hard cash are what we are worried about. The people in the industry to whom I have spoken and with whom I have met have said to me, "Don't back away on it. Keep going. Sit down and talk about the couple of problems—the auction system and the private-to-private system. Talk about the other little problems, but don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. It is a good scheme."

The scheme is working well for the dealers, and if we can get the advertising campaign about private sales under way, it will be a far better scheme because we will pick up more and more private sales. I ask the House to reject the Opposition's motion. I cannot believe that members opposite are suggesting that the fees for dealers should go up and that we should remove the protection of checking encumbered vehicle registers in New South Wales, Victoria, the ACT and the Northern Territory.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 29—Beanland, Connor, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Perrett, Quinn, Rowell, Santoro, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Turner, Watson *Tellers*: Springborg, Laming.

NOES, 45—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bennett, Bird, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Burns, Clark, Comben, D'Arcy, Dollin, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Hamill, Hollis, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Power, Purcell, Pyke, Robertson, Robson, Rose, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Sullivan T. B., Szczurbanik, Vaughan, Warner, Welford, Wells, Woodgate *Tellers*: Livingstone, Budd.

Resolved in the **negative**.

The House adjourned at 11.13 p.m.