

## WEDNESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 1997

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. N. J. Turner, Nicklin) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

### PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

#### Sand Crabs

From **Mr Carroll** (1,991 petitioners) requesting the House to immediately restore the prohibition on commercial trawlers taking sand crabs legally in Queensland.

#### Red Hill Police Station

From **Mrs Edmond** (26 petitioners) requesting the House to call on the Government to, at least, retain the Red Hill Police Station property and return this to a fully operational police station.

#### TAFE Facility, Oxford Park

From **Mr Welford** (76 petitioners) requesting the House to (a) retain the Brisbane Institute of TAFE's Horticultural and Rural studies facility at Oxford Park in public ownership; (b) recognise the important value of this facility to the local area as well as the thousands of city-based students who have sought and will continue in the future to seek training in rural skills; (c) acknowledge the opportunities for expanding the role in community based horticulture and associated training courses for the unemployed and other community participants; and (d) reject any proposal to dispose of the facility simply to meet the debts of other TAFE institutes which the Government has failed to ensure operate within adequate budgets.

Petitions received.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Safe and Confident Living Initiative

**Hon. K. R. LINGARD** (Beaudesert—Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care) (9.33 a.m.), by leave: Under this State Government, the Safe and Confident Living Initiative has been expanded to help more older Queenslanders overcome their fear of becoming victims of crime. In 1995, funds were made available to provide six services to work with older women who were living

restricted lifestyles through fear of crime. Initially, funds were provided on a non-recurrent basis for two years. In mid 1997, a review of the six projects was conducted by my department. The review found that some older men have fears and concerns about crime similar to those of women. It also revealed that two years had not been an adequate period to establish the services. It recommended a project time of three years to make them more effective.

Based on the findings, my department has broadened the target group to include all older people, and I have approved more funding for the initiative, which has also been expanded from six to seven areas across the State. The regions to be targeted by the project are Brisbane central inner suburbs, Cairns, the Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan City, Rockhampton and the Sunshine Coast. They have been chosen because of their population of older people and their crime rate.

This State Government is committed to maintaining and improving the Safe and Confident Living Initiative. The increase in the number of services and the amount of funding represents our determination to help older people enjoy the best possible quality of life. It is also part of an overall State Government approach to caring for the needs of all Queenslanders.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Police Recruits

**Hon. T. R. COOPER** (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (9.34 a.m.), by leave: Eight hundred and fifty new police will begin training at the Queensland Police Service Academy's Oxley and Townsville campuses during 1998. Six hundred and twenty-one officers are expected to graduate during the year, with another 229 who start their training towards the end of the year due for induction in early 1999.

The coalition's three-year, \$76m staffing plan is bearing fruit. Police strength in districts right across the State is being boosted. Last financial year we produced 160 extra police—more than Labor did in its final three years in Government. But we have only just started. The coalition plans to boost sworn strength by 2,780 by 2005—double the Labor promise. The coalition will have put 285 new police on the beat in the six months to December. One hundred and forty-two police will hit the streets in December after inductions at Oxley and Townsville. Those graduations

follow the induction of 108 new officers from Oxley in August and the induction of 32 rejoiners last month. Another 168 recruits—the biggest intake since 1991—went into training at Oxley early last month. This is good news for towns and cities right across Queensland. As we accelerate the training of sworn officers, so, too, are we accelerating the civilianisation program, which frees up desk-bound police for operational duties. The coalition's program is in stark contrast to the weary final Labor years, when police numbers actually slumped by 79 between 1993 and 1995 as populations and crime rates rose.

The 168 police now at Oxley will graduate in May. They will be beaten onto the beat by 37 rejoiners due to graduate in February. The 147 recruits who go into Oxley in February will graduate in August, and the same number who start training in May complete their course in December next year. Another 40 rejoiners are due out of the academy in June, a similar number will graduate in October and the first class of 1998 at Townsville will hit the streets in August.

While more police will help in the fight against crime, it is equally important that we focus on crime prevention. To this end, the coalition will develop new strategies to complement our groundbreaking community policing partnerships which are being trialled across the State.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Prison Industries

**Hon. T. R. COOPER** (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (9.37 a.m.), by leave: When I walked into Boggo Road jail in 1987, I was disturbed by the aimless existence of the inmates, particularly the mass of humanity existing in the infamous Black Hole. The inability of some prisoners to be involved in worthwhile industry has stuck in my mind since that day.

I am happy to announce that the Queensland Corrective Services Commission board recently endorsed an initiative to develop a strategic focus on the role of industries in the prison system to significantly improve prisoner employment outcomes. Prison industries have three potential roles: providing a daily work occupation, enhancing revenue generation to reduce cost of imprisonment and providing vocational training.

The goals for the commission's industries have historically been articulated as

underpinning the rehabilitation of prisoners to enable them to return to society with the capacity and desire to contribute to society, to develop pride and self-confidence in each prisoner, to provide prisoners with a full-time vocational occupation and remuneration during their time in jail, and to provide the commission with financial contributions to compensate the State for its rehabilitation role and investment in the corrections system. The correctional centre contract specifications require 90% of prisoners to be engaged in approved programs or gainful employment. Centres are yet to meet this requirement.

It is evident that many prisoners are not engaged in productive employment or programs and that idleness is an increasingly common phenomenon which poses significant management and security difficulties. A number of reasons are likely to have contributed to this situation, in particular increased prisoner numbers and doubling up—caused by the woeful planning of the previous Government—inadequate industrial facilities for the prisoner numbers, absence of overall vision and drive to require prisoners to work a "normal" working day and a focus on profit-making industries at the expense of occupational activities that teach valuable skills.

Monthly reports from correctional centres identify a disturbingly large number of prisoners who are not involved in industries or programs. The percentage of Queensland prisoners employed in revenue-earning industries was below that of other States and down considerably on 1995-96. The previous Government conducted a number of reviews, but there was never any action. There have been a number of previous reviews. In 1989, Touche Ross was commissioned to examine the role and direction of prison industries for the commission. In 1994, an internal review was undertaken to document the current industries, to evaluate performance, to enumerate their strengths and weaknesses and to identify opportunities. This review was upgraded in 1995. A review of secure custody conducted as a result of corporatisation identified the unrealised potential of industries and the existing poor performance.

I support fully significant development and expansion of prison industries, which will only proceed after consultation with relevant industry, unions, the public sector and other stakeholder groups. The QCSC board will establish a subcommittee comprising Sir Bruce Watson, Mr Colin White and Mr Ian Davies to report within three months with the following terms of reference—

establish as a goal a core requirement that prisoners be required to work for hours which, as far as practicable, mirror the Australian community;

provide for the development of viable, competitive industries while maximising prisoner involvement;

develop a capacity within the correctional environment for each prisoner to be encouraged to develop good work habits and skills; and

develop an appropriate focus on outputs.

I am determined that this time the proposal will not fall through the cracks, as have previous reviews. I am not afraid to take on the difficult tasks. I do not shy away from hard work. That is why this Parliament last week approved new powers for police and the establishment of the Queensland Crime Commission. Providing worthwhile activities for prisoners so they can be better prepared for re-entry into the community after serving their sentences has always been a high priority in the corrections system.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

##### Public Health Outcomes Funding Agreement

**Hon. M. J. HORAN** (Toowoomba South—Minister for Health) (9.40 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to inform the House today that the coalition State Government has secured funding for public health programs in Queensland following the signing of the landmark Public Health Outcomes Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth Government. The new Public Health Outcomes Funding Agreement provides Queensland with funding of \$23.176m in 1997-98, an increase of \$3.293m on the previous year. The objective of the Public Health Outcomes Funding Agreement is to improve the delivery of public health services and enable more flexible funding arrangements with a view to achieving shared national public health objectives. The agreement runs over two financial years with funding allocated to a range of public health programs, including HIV/AIDS, women's health, breast screening, cervical screening, immunisation and alcohol and drug services. Funding will ensure Queensland continues to deliver record levels of breast and cervical screening and increased vaccinations.

The Public Health Funding Outcome Agreement will also back up the third national HIV/AIDS strategy, which has received in-principle support from Queensland.

Queensland raised a number of concerns about the third national HIV/AIDS strategy. In particular, the State Government was very concerned that the strategy did not adequately address the potential spread of HIV/AIDS from Papua New Guinea to communities in the Torres Strait and Cape York. The spread of HIV/AIDS through the Torres Strait and Cape York has the potential to devastate Queensland's indigenous communities. I have hosted a senior representative from the Federal Department of Health to the Torres Strait to highlight the movement of Papua New Guinea nationals throughout the outer islanders of the Torres Strait as well as their use of Queensland health services. I have also had discussions with the Federal Health Minister, Dr Michael Wooldridge, and I am confident that the Commonwealth Government now recognises Queensland's unique needs in this area.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

##### In Pursuit of Gold in 2000

**Hon. B. W. DAVIDSON** (Noosa—Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry) (9.42 a.m.), by leave: As Minister responsible for the Queensland Olympic 2000 Task Force, it gives me great pleasure to advise the House of the task force's new pre-Games training guide, *In Pursuit of Gold in 2000*. The purpose of the publication is to promote Queensland as an ideal pre-Games training and premier tourism destination to international teams. A similar publication was produced in 1996 by the task force to promote Queensland during the Atlanta Olympic Games. Although the previous publication served its purpose then, several key items have since been identified and added to this new edition.

*In Pursuit of Gold in 2000* focuses on the attributes and world-class facilities in key areas around the State including Brisbane, Cairns, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Mackay, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Townsville. However, the publication is unique in that it takes a more holistic approach to pre-Games training. Although Queensland has many international-standard sporting facilities, it is our perfect climate and transportation, accommodation and entertainment options that give us the edge over other States. *In Pursuit of Gold in 2000* also highlights our unmatched array of premier tourist experiences as part of Queensland's total training package.

The publication has been distributed to all 197 national Olympic committees, in addition

to international diplomatic posts. The task force has also sent copies to the national sporting federations affiliated with 10 affluent countries specifically targeted by the task force. The task force has received numerous inquiries since the document has been distributed. Only yesterday, the manager of the Queensland Olympic 2000 Task Force secretariat was advised that the Swiss track and field team is to visit Queensland to inspect our facilities next week. The task force has already been successful in signing for Queensland the British Olympic and Paralympic teams, the Italian Olympic team, the United States swim team, the Russian boxing squad, the Danish rowing and swim teams, the men's hockey team from Singapore, the Belgian track and field and judo teams, the Norwegian Olympic team, the Netherlands swim team, the Vanuatu soccer team, and the Australian diving, sailing, rowing and track and field teams.

In fact, outside of New South Wales, Queensland to date has been the most successful State in attracting teams for this purpose. The economic impact and promotional value of hosting teams is not to be underestimated. The 800-strong team of athletes, officials and media contingent from Great Britain alone is expected to bring approximately \$10m worth of economic benefits to the Gold Coast region. The steering committee and other key stakeholder agencies charged with providing input into the content and design of the publication are to be congratulated for their work.

I would also like to thank the Premier for his support for this outstanding initiative. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the task force, and in particular its chairman, Mr Denis Buchanan, for not only producing this document but for its continuing commitment to gaining Olympic opportunities for Queensland. This comprehensive resource will ensure Queensland maintains its share of the pre-Games training market. It will help Queensland capitalise on the unparalleled tourism opportunities to be gained in the lead-up to the Sydney 2000 Games. I now table this document for the benefit of all members of this House.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Greenhouse Challenge Program

**Hon. B. G. LITTLEPROUD** (Western Downs—Minister for Environment) (9.45 a.m.), by leave: Early next month the important third conference of the parties to the 1992 United

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be held in Kyoto, Japan. I will have the privilege of representing the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council at that meeting. In view of that, I would like to bring to the attention of the House recent significant Commonwealth Government announcements on Australia's response to climate change such as expansion of the Greenhouse Challenge program and new domestic greenhouse measures.

The Greenhouse Challenge program has the support of the Queensland Government, which was the first State to join the program. One hundred businesses, including many from Queensland, have now signed agreements under the program. They account for 45% of Australia's industrial emissions and have committed themselves to reduce their forecast growth by about 22 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by the year 2000. Extra funding of \$27m has been provided to extend the program to smaller companies and increase the number of large and medium companies participating to 500 by the year 2000, and to more than 1,000 by the year 2005. In total the Commonwealth Government is providing an extra \$180m over five years towards the National Greenhouse Strategy for other areas as well as the Greenhouse Challenge program including—

- Renewable forms of energy currently contribute about 6% of our energy needs, which compares well with the OECD average of 6.4%. Initiatives to increase the Australian level will include an innovation investment fund, a loans and grants program, several showcase projects and targets for electrical retailers;

- Adoption of best practice new technology for fossil fuel electricity generation;

- Measures to reduce emissions from motor vehicles such as fuel efficiency labelling, a 15% fuel efficiency improvement target by 2010, and bringing forward the phase-out of leaded petrol.

- Working with the States and Territories to develop energy efficiency codes for housing and commercial buildings, appliances and equipment; and

- Building on the \$328m revegetation program being undertaken through the Natural Heritage Trust.

Australia contributes only 1.4% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, but the new measures are expected to reduce net

emission growth from an anticipated 28% to 18% from 1990 to 2010, noting that we have a projected population increase of 30% from 1990 to 2020, higher than the rates for Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Japan, Switzerland, Norway and the European Union's 1.7%. It is also significant that about 20% of our greenhouse gas emissions are embodied in our exports, notably aluminium and agricultural products, which is double the OECD average and the highest in the industrialised world.

I look forward as a representative of ANZECC to supporting the Commonwealth delegation led by my Commonwealth counterpart, Senator Robert Hill, at Kyoto. This country is prepared to do its share in combating a universal challenge through a fair and equitable approach, rather than through mandatory targets which would advantage many developed countries while disadvantaging countries such as Australia.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority

**Hon. M. D. VEIVERS** (Southport—Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Sport) (9.48 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday, Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority crews from Wynnum and Laidley attended local incidents. Mr Speaker, if you allow me, I will give you the details. At 4.47 p.m., the Wynnum Fire Station received a call from the Ambulance Service through the Brisbane Region Fire Com Centre requesting the station to respond to a man suffering chest pains at Wynnum Bowls Club. At the time all ambulance crews had been called out. The fire truck from Wynnum left the station at 4.48 p.m. for Bridge Street, Wynnum, and arrived at 4.51 p.m. The crew found an elderly man in the passenger seat of a car suffering chest pains. They took him out of the car and made him comfortable and gave him oxygen from an oxy-viva until the first ambulance arrived at 5.02 p.m. A second ambulance arrived at 5.08 p.m. The patient was then taken to Greenslopes Hospital for testing and observation.

At Laidley, there was a car on fire in a car park near the golf club. At 5.05 p.m., Fire Com Centre received a call to respond. At 5.07 p.m., auxiliary firefighters were paged and a crew of two officers and four fighters responded, and at 5.17 p.m. the crew arrived at the scene and found a vehicle well alight. At 5.17 p.m. the ambulance and police arrived. At 5.20 p.m., a patient was transported from

the scene to Laidley Hospital suffering serious burns. Firefighter Barrett drove the ambulance to the Laidley Hospital because the ambulance responded with one crew member. It is not unusual for the Fire Service to assist with a driver where an ambulance officer is required to provide assistance to the patient.

There is nothing—absolutely nothing—new in either of these two incidents. Yet we have the incredible situation where a radio broadcast this morning is cobbled together with snippets of information about these incidents with a grab from the member for Murrumba, and later another program with the Leader of the Opposition and unionists to paint a totally false impression of the ambulance services around Brisbane being in crisis.

There is nothing new in fire crews attending emergency incidents. It happens every day of the week, every week of the year in Queensland. Despite the political mileage that the demarcation brothers opposite are trying to make of this, I say that it happens all the time. Indeed, arrangements for this cooperation between the services was given formal legs under Labor in 1992. Local agreements were reached through Fire Service regional commanders and Ambulance Service regional commissioners, led by Ambulance Service Assistant Commissioner for Brisbane, Malcolm McDonald, and Fire Service Regional Commissioner for Brisbane, Keith Drummond. Labor Ministers responsible for Emergency Services in that year included Terry Mackenroth, Nev Warburton and Paul Braddy. So many changes, I guess it is a bit hard for those comrades over there to remember what they did and who did it.

The point is that this cooperation between emergency services has been going on long before any of us were here in this Chamber. Under the arrangement, if the Ambulance Service becomes aware of possible delays it will contact the Fire Service and ask for assistance. Fire officers will assist in managing the site of the emergency for patient care. This means making sure injured people can breathe and severe bleeding is stopped and that patients are made as comfortable as possible until the ambulance arrives.

The members opposite know this to be the case—perhaps not in the member for Murrumba's case: he has shown a naivety of emergency service operations that really is pathetic. But they know this happens, and to try to make political mileage from an everyday occurrence shows just how totally bereft of any real policies this Opposition is. Even a casual

observer could tell members that at many emergency incidents we not only have both the Fire and Ambulance Services, we also have the police and the SES. All of these people are trained in emergency first aid. These services operate in a cooperative manner, and that is how they will continue to operate.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

### Reports

**Mr WOOLMER** (Springwood) (9.53 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the following reports of the Public Accounts Committee: report No. 42, Aboriginal Councils and Torres Strait Island Councils: Review of Financial Reporting Requirements, together with the transcripts of proceedings relating to public hearings held during the inquiry; and report No. 43, State Government Grant Funding Supplied to 99 FM Community Radio Association Inc., and move that the reports be printed.

Order to be printed.

**Mr WOOLMER:** Since 1985, the Queensland Auditor-General has repeatedly expressed concerns at the number of qualifications and disclaimers attached to the audited financial statements of various Aboriginal councils and Torres Strait Islander councils. These councils receive funding from both the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments and are accordingly required to apply for and acquit expenditure to agencies in two separate jurisdictions.

In September 1996, the Queensland Public Accounts Committee approached the Commonwealth Joint Committee of Public Accounts with a view to resolving these matters through a joint inquiry. The committee believed that an examination of problems from a cross-jurisdictional perspective may be the only way to make a substantive difference. During the inquiry, the committees visited most of the Aboriginal and Islander councils concerned and saw the impact on council administration of problems caused by remoteness and isolation.

Twenty recommendations are made within this report, the major ones being that a grants forum at ministerial level be constituted, which is intended to have the introduction of standardised financial acquittal and reporting requirements as its key initial responsibility; that the major grant providers to the councils immediately commence negotiation to achieve standardisation of their grant application and acquittal processes; and that council clerks

supply copies of their monthly reports to councils to all of their grant providers to facilitate both improved accountability and closer, more timely monitoring of council financial affairs by the grant providers.

The committees also made recommendations relating to training and software packages used by councils, the role of community services officers, and other issues. The committees strongly urge all agencies to take the opportunity for change and work cooperatively by expediting the implementation of the recommendations arising from this report.

I now turn to the second report which I am tabling today, State Government Grant Funding Supplied to 99 FM Community Radio Association Inc. This report is the product of an investigation into allegations about a lack of financial accountability of State Government grant funding supplied to 99 FM Community Radio Association Inc., Redcliffe.

This inquiry uncovered no evidence of fraud or misuse of State Government funding within this association. However, insufficient details combined with poor accountability systems meant that it could not be proved that it did not occur. The association received two State Government grants identified during this inquiry—the Youth Services Development Grant in 1995 and a grant under the Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund. Acquittal for the Youth Services Development Grant in 1995 has yet to be made properly, 13 months after its due date, and acquittal for funding provided under the Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund was 15 months late when received.

Therefore, the committee has made a series of recommendations aimed at improving departmental processes regarding monitoring and follow-up of grant acquittals, improvements to guidelines, and suggestions to address apparent breaches of the associations incorporation legislation.

Finally, this report outlines a possible contempt of Parliament perpetrated by the association's treasurer, Mr Len Matthews. The committee intends to refer this matter to the Speaker of the Parliament for his consideration and action.

In conclusion, the committee is grateful for the time and effort expended by all participants during both of these lengthy inquiries. I would also like to thank committee members for their dedication and commitment and acknowledge the work of the committee's secretariat in the compilation of these reports.

I commend the committee's reports to the House and I give notice that I will move on Thursday next that the House take note of the reports.

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

### **Report**

**Ms WARWICK** (Barron River) (9.57 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 11 of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, A Report on a Matter of Privilege: Matter Referred to the Committee on 2 September 1997.

### **NOTICE OF MOTION**

#### **Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry**

**Hon. R. J. GIBBS** (Bundamba) (9.58 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move—

"That this House views with alarm the incompetent handling of the Tourism, Small Business and Industry portfolio by the Minister, in particular—

- (1) his failure to carry out adequate probity checks on the Sunbelt sponsorship disaster;
- (2) his failure to secure jobs as promised for 295 trainees after the South Pacific Cruise ship debacle;
- (3) his back-stabbing of QTTC Chair, Frank Burnett, to give his job to Sally Anne Atkinson;
- (4) his failure after 11 months to appoint a CEO and his inability to provide certainty and stability to senior members of his executive service; and
- (5) his international embarrassment over the rhino safari tour of South Africa."

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

#### **Wik Legislation; Chevron Gas Pipeline**

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (9.59 a.m.): If the Premier introduces his so-called Wik legislation today before legislation is passed through the Federal Parliament, a move that would be totally inappropriate, I foreshadow that I will move that the debate on it be adjourned until such time as the Federal Parliament passes its Wik legislation. The Borbidge Wik legislation will contribute to uncertainty. It is unworkable and, if successful, will cost billions of dollars in compensation. The losers will be Queensland

taxpayers, the pastoralists, the miners and Aboriginal people.

Today I wish to congratulate everyone concerned with the signing yesterday of the landmark agreement between the Chevron petroleum company and Queensland Aboriginal people. The Chevron agreement proves that that can be done without confrontation and without political interference. That sends a clear message to business that it need not be stood over and intimidated by the Premier and that negotiation can be a winner for business.

This \$2 billion project will create thousands of jobs for Queenslanders. The agreement guarantees access for the company along the route of the 2,000 kilometre natural gas pipeline. Chevron will have a 20 kilometre corridor from the tip of Cape York to Gladstone. Aboriginal people will be offered jobs and job training during construction. Chevron will provide funding for various Aboriginal projects.

It is Chevron that says that the agreement was made possible because of mutual trust and respect between the company and the Aboriginal people. It is the company which says that this is an example of reconciliation. Aboriginal facilitator Norman Johnston says that the deal proves that deals can be done to everyone's benefit.

We need to put Queensland first in this debate. The attack by the Premier this morning on the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner is just typical of a politically inspired debate, simply to get the Government re-elected—it is not about putting Queensland first—and this legislation will contribute to more uncertainty.

Time expired.

#### **Victoria Point State High School Speech Night**

**Mr HEGARTY** (Redlands) (10.01 a.m.): Last night I had the pleasure of attending the inaugural awards evening at the Victoria Point State High School in my electorate. The school's 250 Year 8 students have acquitted themselves well in their first year of high school, gaining achievements in a wide variety of academic, sporting and cultural areas.

Students have competed in academic competitions such as the Australian Maths Competition. One student, Chelsea Middenway, achieved a special achievement award. Debating competitions were also entered with good results for the

inexperienced teams. The Year 8 Rugby League team made the preliminary finals in the greater metropolitan secondary Rugby League competition, achieving a good result considering the few students to select from.

A number of awards for academic, sporting and cultural achievements were made, including to the schools male and female duxes, Christopher Diplock and Bethany Schofield respectively. Bethany also won the Ampol All-round Award for the school's highest achiever.

The school is ambitious to build on its early successes, as it has applied to become a Leading School in round 2, commencing in 1998. Full consultation was entered into with the teaching staff and parents prior to submitting the school's application. Nearly 100% of teachers and nearly 80% of parents who showed interest in the proposal approve the Leading Schools concept. The school sees its objective of demonstrated learning outcomes as being best achieved through this initiative.

A highlight of the night was the presentation of several musical numbers by the school's concert and stage bands and choir members, which were excellently delivered. The night concluded with a well-prepared supper provided by the school's home economics students.

School principal Dr Kevin McKinnarney and his staff can be justifiably proud of the school's achievements to date. I look forward to seeing further achievements from the school in the years ahead.

#### **Indigenous Sporting and Cultural Festival**

**Ms SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt) (10.03 a.m.): Last weekend I had the pleasure of attending the largest indigenous sporting and cultural festival in Australia. Held at Whites Hill in Brisbane, the first Contact Sports and Cultural Festival had 61 participating teams from as far away as Yarrabah, Woorabinda, Cherbourg, Townsville, Mackay and New South Wales. This is an annual event. The men's open touch was won by a team from Moree and the women's open was won by a non-indigenous team from Griffith University.

The festival is not just a sporting festival; it is also a cultural festival with non-stop entertainment from a number of different ethnic groups. Over 25,000 people attended the event. The festival was a great success and First Contact, the indigenous youth organisation which organised the event, deserves congratulations.

Notable by their absence were the Minister responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, Mr Lingard, and the Minister for Sport, Mr Veivers. In fact, not one Government member could find the time to put in an appearance. Given the significance of this event to sport and to the Aboriginal community in particular, it is a pity that these Ministers could not even find a colleague to represent them. The Minister for Sport does not even have one indigenous person on his Sports Advisory Committee.

It is well known that the Minister with responsibility for ATSI affairs has little interest in this part of his portfolio responsibility and his absence from major indigenous events is obvious. At the recent national NAIDOC awards which were held in Brisbane, ATSI Chairman, Gadjal Djekerra, and Gough Whitlam could find the time to attend, but Minister Lingard was notably absent. No doubt he finds it very embarrassing to take a higher profile in indigenous affairs when his Premier does all that he can to inflame racial discrimination and harm the process of reconciliation.

The Minister would be wise not to attack the ATSI policy statements recently launched by the Opposition, because this policy has been enthusiastically received by the indigenous community in this State and because all of Queensland knows that this Government—

Time expired.

#### **Yorkeys Knob Junior Sailing club**

**Ms WARWICK** (Barron River) (10.05 a.m.): Today I would like to tell the House a very positive story about a small group of parents and children in my electorate of Barron River. Five years ago, a handful of parents started a junior sailing program at the Yorkeys Knob Boating Club. Starting from scratch with just one sailing boat, a Flying Ant skiff, and a tinnie that was used as a rescue boat, they have built their fleet up to 15 skiffs and two modern rescue boats.

From the outset, the young sailors have done all their own fundraising, enabling them to pay for top coaches from interstate and to send boats and crews to Australian championships in three States. Their hard work will be rewarded at the end of next year when the club is expecting to host the Australian Flying Ant titles. This will be the first time in over 30 years that they have been held in Queensland and they are coming to Cairns. This landmark event will bring around 500

parents and children to Cairns and, of course, there will be a tremendous economic spin-off from that event.

The club is proud of its efforts of having started with nothing and, after a few short years, being able to run a national event. As the parents will say, the focus is always on the kids—teaching them skills and teamwork, and giving them something positive to do with their spare time. For this small club it takes an enormous effort both on an off the water to keep it all together, but obviously the rewards are great. The club is an inspiration to others, showing that even during our crowded and stressful lives, people are still willing to put in that extra effort for the children.

Last Saturday night I attended an awards night at the club. I was very impressed with the very positive attitude of both the children and their parents. I congratulate them and wish them all the best when they go to Fremantle at Christmas for the Flying Ant championships. They bring great credit not only to Barron River but to Queensland.

#### **Qantas Airways Ground Staff**

**Mr PEARCE** (Fitzroy) (10.07 a.m.): Qantas Airways ground staff face an uncertain Christmas as their employer prepares to make 2,000 jobs redundant as part of the company's productivity and cost-reduction drive. All Australians know that Qantas staff are a credit to their company. We have an airline to be proud of. The quality of service provided by them is second to none in the world.

Despite the unions making in-house tenders for jobs with savings of 23%, the company, in the boardroom where the fat cats sit, say that it is not enough. Qantas Airways is looking at foreign-owned companies to contract out work now done by ground staff at airports in Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. Like other major employers, Qantas Airways has caught the job-eradication disease. The company has become anti-worker and anti-family. It fits into the same mould as the Federal and State conservative Governments. The fat-cat executive officers of Qantas Airways have recently increased their numbers from 96 to 104. The cost of salaries now comes to \$26m, or an average of \$250,000 per officer, plus perks and perquisites. On top of that, directors of the company have benefited from an \$800,000 remuneration increase, which is up from \$4.3m to \$5.1m.

The fat cats now expect the people who do the work at the coalface to sacrifice wages

and conditions—to work for less according to the rules of the master. It is a national disgrace. The impact on families is heart breaking, but who cares? No-one in this Government and no-one in the Federal Government! They do not care because they are not losing their incomes and their ability to pay their mortgages, buy cars, and feed and educate their families.

I hope that all Australians who have lost jobs under the Governments of Prime Minister Howard and Premier Borbidge remember to get square at the ballot box. It is time that the Prime Minister and the Premier got off their backsides, pulled the big employers into line and brought back stability to the labour market.

#### **Bed and Breakfast and Farm-stay Holidays**

**Mr HEALY** (Toowoomba North) (10.09 a.m.): I am pleased to inform the House that Queensland's wealth of bed and breakfast and farm-stay tourist products are highlighted in two new publications that have been produced by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. Under the strong leadership of Tourism, Small Business and Industry Minister, Bruce Davidson, QTTC has decided to tap into the bed and breakfast and farm-stay holiday categories to help broaden Queensland's image as a sun, surf and sand destination for tourists.

There is great interest among domestic and international tourists in Australian heritage and character, and more and more visitors are indulging in this interest by visiting more homely accommodation. For some Australians a visit to a host farm may be their only first-hand contact with the rural sector. Rural tourism experiences such as this help to bring town and country together and foster greater understanding of life in regional areas.

The QTTC's Farm and Station Holidays brochure has been produced in conjunction with the Queensland Host Farm Association and outlines host farm product all over Queensland from the Brisbane Valley to the outback. The QTTC's Queensland B & B Guide 1997-98, produced jointly with the Queensland Bed and Breakfast Association, lists a broad range of private accommodation options across Queensland. These facilities complement Queensland's world-class hotels and resorts and are part of a rapidly developing special interest tourist market.

I believe the QTTC and the Minister should be congratulated on taking a pro-active role in bringing the bed and breakfast and

farm-stay tourist products to the attention of potential tourists. The B & B market and its attractiveness has ballooned over recent years as a real alternative to the traditional style of holiday destination. In a lot of cases, and with minimal effort, people have been able to convert historic homesteads and other venues into comfortable and affordable overnight accommodation. The Queensland B & B Guide brings together all of the information that is needed for tourists, both domestic and international, to select a home away from home destination. This initiative is further evidence of this Government's hands-on approach to tourism promotion.

#### **CSR Softwoods, Caboolture Electorate**

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN** (Caboolture) (10.10 a.m.): Black soot spewing from the smokestacks at CSR Softwoods' Caboolture mill is causing concern and distress to a number of my constituents. Likened to black rain by one person, the particle fallout is forcing my constituents indoors, preventing them from enjoying their gardens—one of the advantages most Queenslanders enjoy over their southern neighbours thanks to this State's superior climate.

However, they are not even safe locked up inside their homes, as the soot defies every attempt to keep it locked out, invading through seemingly invisible gaps in window and door frames and through roofs. Apart from the loss of lifestyle and the mess that needs to be cleaned up, people are fearful about the long-term effects of continually breathing the soot. They are told not to worry, that they are in no danger. That is what the asbestos miners at Wittenoom were told.

Over the past four years or so the incidence of the soot fallout has increased dramatically. Four years ago, fallout occurred for a couple of days every four months or so. Eighteen months ago, it was a couple of days a week. Now the fallout is constant. The Minister for Environment has advised me that the company has spent over \$1m on control measures for noise and dust, will spend a further \$200,000 on noise pollution this year and is on track to complete its boiler upgrade by June next year, which it is claimed will alleviate fallout. The Department of Environment's response in this matter has been pathetic. Goodness knows we need the jobs in Caboolture, but surely any escalation of commercial activity should be undertaken with proper regard to detrimental consequences for neighbouring residents.

#### **Buderim War Memorial Community Association**

**Mr LAMING** (Mooloolah) (10.12 a.m.): Last Saturday I had the pleasure of attending the Buderim War Memorial Community Association annual general meeting. This was no ordinary AGM, because this is no ordinary association. The association was formed in 1945 as a living memorial to our service people who did not return from two world wars. Its objective is to promote and build on the traditional sense of community spirit on Buderim. It does this by being an umbrella organisation for 39 community organisations and has hundreds of members in its own right. The association's assets include Buderim's major hall complex, and it currently runs major events on both Anzac Day and Australia Day, both of which are very enjoyable for the community.

Other current campaigns include a project to restore the old Buderim Post Office as a community facility and to launch a community concert band. I wish it well with both projects. So successful has this association's concept been that it is currently being studied by Dr Chris McConville of the Sunshine Coast University College. When completed, this study will provide a model for other communities in Queensland to emulate.

I commend the committee for its efforts and obvious success. The president is Simon Whittle, and his committee is made up of about a dozen hardworking people, each with their own particular portfolio. I hesitate to mention anyone in particular but must mention the 17 years of service provided by outgoing treasurer, Mr Jim Secomb. The members of this organisation are representative of the fine spirit of Buderim, and I wish them well in their current and future endeavours. All honourable members have hardworking community associations in their electorates, but I am particularly honoured to represent an area which has such a great community spirit.

#### **Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Ms K. Walters**

**Hon. M. J. FOLEY** (Yeronga) (10.14 a.m.): I salute the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Karen Walters, for her courage in speaking out against the human rights abuses involved in the Borbidge Government's premature Wik legislation. This morning on ABC radio Premier Borbidge made a disgraceful political attack on his own Government's appointee as Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Ms Karen Walters. Ms Walters

spoke out against this Government's plan to bring into this Parliament Wik legislation before similar legislation has even passed through the Federal Parliament. She was speaking out for human rights and she was doing her statutory duty under the Anti-Discrimination Act passed by this Parliament. What did she get for it? She got accused by this Premier of political bias for doing her statutory duty. If we had an independent Attorney-General, he would be telling the Queensland people what the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner told them, namely—

**Mr T. B. Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr FOLEY:** Indeed, he has been found guilty of political bias. He would be telling them what the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner told them: the Commonwealth Parliament has power to make laws only for the benefit and not to the detriment of Aboriginal people. He would be warning of the dangers of the Racial Discrimination Act being breached. He would be speaking out about the compensation issues involved in compulsory acquisition on just terms.

But what we see is all of a piece. It is exactly the same tactic that the Premier uses in attacking anyone who carries out their statutory duty. Mr Speaker, you would remember that he accused the Director of Public Prosecutions in this State of being ill informed or politically motivated. He attacked the High Court as loopy and irresponsible. Premier Borbidge shows a disrespect for the rule of law. He attacks statutory office holders for doing their duty according to law. This is what happens when an Attorney-General lacks the confidence of the Parliament.

### **R. Goedhart, Mackay**

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani) (10.16 a.m.): I take great pleasure in announcing that, as a result of the Queensland coalition Government's proactive support of regional Queensland, a new job-creating industry is being established in Mackay. Townsville-based company R. Goedhart has decided to expand into Mackay, where it will establish an estimated \$1.5m galvanising manufacturing plant. In turn, this plant will create 15 new jobs for the people of Mackay.

I congratulate the company on recognising the economic development and growth potential of the Mackay region, which is already a centre of agriculture, mining and mining services. On coming to office, the coalition Government recognised the wealth-

creating significance of the Mackay region by establishing an office of the Department of Economic Development and Trade. I congratulate the office on attracting Goedharts to Mackay and facilitating the project.

At this stage, I congratulate also the manager of the Mackay office of Economic Development and Trade, Matthew Magin, on a job well done. Fifteen new jobs is great news for Mackay and it is an example of the hands-on, practical approach and support by the coalition Government for regional Queensland.

### **Law and Order**

**Mr DOLLIN** (Maryborough) (10.17 a.m.): This Government and this Attorney-General, who does not enjoy the confidence of this House, claim to be tough on crime and criminals. What a joke! I refer to a report in the Courier-Mail on Saturday, 22 November, which stated, "One man dead, three others in hospital after a sledge hammer attack in an outer Brisbane hotel early last Friday."

A 31-year-old security guard was taken to the Princess Alexandra Hospital with serious injuries after being assaulted at the Browns Plains Hotel. The alleged attacker, a 29-year-old, was taken to the Logan Hospital with minor injuries. Shortly after, the police chased two men they believed could help with their inquiries. The vehicle hit a tree at an intersection, killing the male 26-year-old passenger, and the 25-year-old driver was taken to hospital with broken legs.

To their credit, the police did a good job, but I cannot say the same for the Minister for Justice. I have been informed by the victim's mother that, while her son lies at death's door, the person who tried to bash his brains out is walking free while her son is being guarded by security in hospital. She believes it is ridiculous that, considering the alleged attacker was charged with grievous bodily harm and premeditated murder, he should be given bail until he appears again before the court on 16 January 1998. The mother is fearful of a further attack on her son by this person. On her behalf, I ask that the Ministers for Police and Justice take the necessary precautions to ensure that that does not happen. Tough on crime? What a joke!

### **Electronic Villages**

**Mr CONNOR** (Nerang) (10.19 a.m.): I rise to speak about the Nerang electronic village. The aim of this Nerang Chamber of

Commerce project is to set up an electronic village such as has been set up in Blaksburg, a small rural community in the United States. What is an electronic village? It is an Internet-based network service including training, user support and resource integration throughout the community including Government information, citizen access, social services, education and business information to homes, schools, public libraries and places of work. It can be used for increasing small group discussion and participation.

An electronic village is committed to community-wide ubiquitous and inexpensive access for all citizens. Through strong cooperative efforts with the public schools and the public library, all interested schoolteachers, children, parents and citizens will have free direct access to the Internet including private email accounts. An electronic village promotes the economic development of a community and businesses through a comprehensive program of network technology education and technology transfer.

An electronic village is a non-profit cooperative wired community. It is not unlike a telecottage or a telecentre such as Walcha in New South Wales. It is Internet intensive and partially funded by offering Internet related technologies and training. It is a locality specific electronic networked organisation. An electronic village is designed to deliver a critical mass of participants from a locality that has a community of interest.

The public face of an electronic village is a substantial Internet presence with major stakeholders within the locality, including the private sector, Government, community and education groups, having a major role. The primary focus of an electronic village is for continuous education. Not only does an electronic village enhance communication within the locality, it allows cyber communities of interest to be developed. Specialist knowledge being funnelled back into the electronic village in turn can be easily and quickly disseminated, stored and processed where appropriate around the electronic village. An electronic village is all about ensuring not only that information is cheaply and readily available, but that the speed of access to new information is increased and disseminated more effectively and efficiently around the community. See Nev at [www.nev.ort.au](http://www.nev.ort.au).

Time expired.

### **Calamvale Newsagency, On-line Gold Lotto Machines**

**Mr ROBERTSON** (Sunnybank) (10.21 a.m.): I seek leave to table a non-conforming petition from 1,039 petitioners.

Leave granted.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The petition expresses anger at the Golden Casket Office's refusal to supply a Gold Lotto on-line terminal for the Calamvale Newsagency on Beaudesert Road, Calamvale. The newsagency owners, Rob and Sandy Faulkner, came to see me recently in desperation at the delays by the Golden Casket Office in approving their application for an on-line machine. The Faulknors were originally told that the terminal would only be provided if they could demonstrate sufficient demand. Evidence of this demand would be indicated by the level of sales of over-the-counter instant scratch-its.

As scratch-it sales approached the levels set by the Golden Casket Office, the Faulknors again applied for a Lotto terminal. The Golden Casket Office then said that it had severe shortages of on-line terminals and was involved in the lengthy process of buying new terminals to replace existing machines throughout Queensland and, therefore, a terminal would not be supplied in the near future. The Faulknors were then told that they would not receive a new terminal because Calamvale is already adequately serviced by terminals at Browns Plains, Sunnybank and Algeester. This is of course a nonsense as the 1,039 signatures on this petition attest.

There is clearly a demand for an on-line terminal at Calamvale. It is the only newsagency in a suburb which continues to grow rapidly. The newsagencies in adjacent suburbs are not convenient for local residents. The Calamvale Newsagency is in a very busy and popular shopping centre and attracts many non-Calamvale residents due to its location. This is borne out by many of the comments written by customers on the back of the petition. "Convenient for home trip to pick up Lotto", wrote one petitioner. "The criteria that determines eligibility for a terminal are pathetic", wrote another, but perhaps the most insightful comment came from one resident who wrote, "Get real—let the man earn a living." I could not agree more.

If this Government is in any way serious about looking after small business, the Treasurer, Mrs Sheldon, will act immediately and give this small business operator and Calamvale residents a fair go.

### Government's Crime Initiatives

**Mrs WILSON** (Mulgrave) (10.23 a.m.): In the electorate of Mulgrave, and indeed in the entire State, real solutions to crime take real commitment and real initiative—commitment and initiative that this Government has demonstrated in spades. That is why there has been a slow-down in the rate of crime. That is more than Labor could boast in its six years at the helm. The response and answer to crime are very complex indeed, a point that is totally lost on the buffoons opposite. We are tackling crime across a broad front, and that means jobs, training, housing, health, education, community services and policing.

A landmark initiative is the creation of a new social policy coordinator to mesh together policy and programs developed across the Government to better target the underlying social problems at the root of crime. To address the links between drug use and crime, the State Government has put together a ministerial task force on illicit drugs to develop pro-active new health, policing and community programs. The finishing touches are being put to that package and will be announced in the near future.

The new Crime Commission will also get at drug crime from a crime fighting perspective, particularly those who are responsible for the production and distribution of drugs. New police powers—something that this Government has achieved after flowery rhetoric but inaction from the members opposite—will also help in the crime fighting area. Yes, we have had nothing but accolades for this legislation. A policing response is critical. The running down of police numbers and rising crime rates during Labor's term in office demonstrated how disastrous a strategy it is to ignore policing. The Government's response to crime comes right down to special specific program initiatives: the revolutionary CPPs, school-based policing, volunteers in policing and successful initiatives such as Operation Heat, which has substantially reduced the rate of car theft.

I have heard the Opposition Leader clutch at urban renewal as if a lick and a promise of paint here and there on its own were some kind of crime prevention panacea; it is not. That is just a shallow and simplistic approach. This Government is committed to urban renewal projects.

Time expired.

### Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority Selection Process

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba) (10.25 a.m.): Recently I advised Parliament of the irregularities and blunders that have occurred in the selection process for senior officers of the fire service. The alarming fact that 11 of the appointments to the senior ranks of the fire service had been overturned on the grounds of cronyism by the independent reviewer, Francis Consulting, did not move the Minister in the slightest. He said that this just showed that the process was working.

However, this so-called independent reviewer who overturned the findings was, in fact, involved in setting up the process in the first place. Some independence! Some review! Two senior officers successfully appealed on the grounds that irregularities had occurred in respect of the 11 positions for which they had applied. The independent reviewer upheld this. However, the same irregularities occurred in respect of all the 34 positions to which the appointments were made. The so-called independent reviewer refused to set aside the other 23 appointments on the mere technicality that they had not been the subject of a successful appeal, even though exactly the same defects had occurred in the process for those 23 positions. When senior officers said that they could easily organise appeals in respect of those other processes, the so-called independent reviewer said, "It is too late. The appeal period is closed."

Not only are this Minister's agents taking refuge in technicalities, they are also running a cover-up for which this Minister is ultimately responsible. I understand that members of the Senior Officers Association tried to get transcripts or copies of tape recordings of the interviews. This was refused. Why are they not being provided with copies of the tape recordings? After all, they were hearings on which 34 jobs depend. The answer is: because the evidence would be incriminating.

When the senior fire officers protested that they wanted natural justice and that they did not want to have the matter determined by someone who himself had an interest in the result, they were told that selection panels for the fire service were exempted from having to observe natural justice. That is what is on the tape; that is why the Minister and his agents are covering it up. I call on the Minister to intervene and cause a transcript of the hearing to be made and I call on him to table it in the Parliament.

### Forest Policy

**Mr STEPHAN** (Gympie) (10.27 a.m.): I take this opportunity to point out forest policy in the State to those who have a lock-up mentality in relation to forests. They do not realise what damage that mentality does to the forests. The expertise in this area of the principal of the Gympie Timber Company, Perry Corbet, is certainly very well documented. He said that it is time to explode the myths that have surrounded the decisions that have been made in the timber industry for a very long time. He slammed the uneducated who had lobbied for forests to be locked up by saying the result will be a stagnant forest. He said—

"Popular opinion from these people suggests that a forest becomes healthy by locking it up and not allowing any further logging ..."

In fact, the reverse is the case. If we do not go through this process nature will take its course by fires or other disasters that will do the job for us. Mr Corbet went on—

"At that point and without the opportunity to selectively log mature timber, oxygen production ceases to exist.

Older trees tend to produce as much carbon as they absorb when they start to decay which means they are static in Greenhouse terms."

Mr Corbet also said that forests along the coast have been there for over a hundred years.

### Wet Tropics Management Authority Board

**Mr WELFORD** (Everton) (10.29 a.m.): The very National Party that railed against the Wet Tropics Management Authority when it was first established is now doing its best to unpick it, unpin it, pull it to bits and destroy it. Over the last two years the Minister for Environment has ensured that the Wet Tropics Management Authority could never perform its functions. First he frustrated the Federal Government's attempts to appoint a chairman. Now that agreement has finally been reached on a good chairman, the Minister is refusing to comply with the Federal Government's request to try to fill the board to ensure that the board can function. The board is unable to function because this Minister has failed to ensure that the board has all its vacancies filled. It cannot do its job properly, and that is why this Minister is undermining the Wet Tropics Management

Authority. He is pulling it apart and destroying the Wet Tropics of north Queensland.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I rise to a point of order. Those statements are completely wrong. I find them offensive. They attack my chairmanship. I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr WELFORD:** I withdraw. The Minister has deliberately and repeatedly failed to do the right thing by the Wet Tropics in Queensland.

Time expired.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Firefighters

**Mr BEATTIE** (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Minister for Emergency Services to overnight emergencies at Sandgate and Wynnum where firefighters were dispatched to give suspected heart attack victims urgent medical attention because ambulances were not available. I refer also to public complaints by firefighters this morning that it is stressful and inappropriate for them to do so because they do not have the proper medical training. I ask: how many more tragedies must Queenslanders suffer before the Minister gets his priorities right and gives the Ambulance Service the \$32m it desperately needs to do its job?

**Mr VEIVERS:** If the honourable Leader of the Opposition had listened to my ministerial statement this morning, he would have heard the complete answer to that question.

### Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation

**Mr BEATTIE:** I refer the Minister for Tourism to page 31 of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation annual report, which shows that full-time equivalent staff numbers at the QTTC increased only slightly during the 1996-97 financial year. I ask: as the same report on page 34 reveals that QTTC salaries and wages increased by \$2.8m, or 17%, over the same period, what does it say about the Minister's incompetence and wrong priorities that he has allowed massive pay hikes at the QTTC at a time when its operating losses blew out from \$262,000 to nearly \$1.4m in 1996-97?

**Mr DAVIDSON:** The salaries paid at the QTTC are not an issue for me to deal with. Obviously they are recommendations to the CEO and approved by the chairman of the board. The Leader of the Opposition needs to appreciate that we have totally restructured the QTTC and given it a whole new direction

for promoting and marketing Queensland. When I was first appointed, the QTTC had lost its way. It had no new marketing campaigns, no new marketing strategies in place for the promotion and marketing of Queensland tourism.

As an initiative of mine, we moved the Office of Tourism out of the Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry back into the QTTC. There are about 28 staff involved in that section of the QTTC. It is a very high-powered office. Last night a speech was made in this House about the appointment of Mr Tony Charters. Mr John Osborne has been appointed to that division. Mark Peters is the executive director. Some very key people involved in that office have developed enormous partnerships with industry right across this State. I believe that the professionalism we have now with key people in senior appointments at the QTTC has given it a whole new direction. Its acceptance within the industry has been endorsed. As I move across the State and as all honourable members on this side of the House move around the State, we find that its whole new direction has been endorsed by the industry right across Queensland.

#### **Native Title Amendment Bill**

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I refer the Honourable the Premier to the amendments to the Commonwealth's Native Title Amendment Bill proposed by the Labor Party yesterday, and I ask: will these amendments have a negative impact on Queensland if they become law?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In reply to the honourable member, can I in the first instance table the Opposition amendments to the Native Title Amendment Bill and suggest to the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues that they consider closely the disastrous ramifications for and the disastrous impact on Queensland that these amendments would have. The amendments to the Bill released by the Labor Party in Canberra yesterday, which are to be moved in the Senate, are further proof, if further proof were needed, that the divisive problem the nation currently confronts over native title is not to do with the Commonwealth's amendments in relation to the High Court's Wik decision. They are down to the absolute failure of the Labor Party in 1993, in Canberra and elsewhere, to deal with the issue honestly, and they are down to the sort of extraordinary division that will flow from the amendments that we saw emerge yesterday.

I will concentrate on one area in response to the honourable member's question which would have the Labor Party offering, for coexisting native title claim in Queensland, not 50% of the area of the State, as the Commonwealth's amendments provide, but well over 75% of the land mass of Queensland under those amendments that I have tabled this morning, which are the stated policy of honourable members opposite. Mr Speaker, when you combine that with some other amendments that also impact on pastoral leaseholders, who have almost exclusively been set apart to carry the burden of native title rights on behalf of the entire community, I can assure you that Labor has done this State and this country a massive disservice and will reap a harvest of rejection.

What Labor has said is that there can be no confirmation of extinguishment by grants of exclusive possession. That is what is in the amendments. That is an extraordinary decision with many impacts, and it flows from what is obviously a growing conviction in the Labor Party that there is no extinguishment of native title on any pastoral lease anywhere. Labor appears to be firmly of the view that native title rights are simply suppressed for the period of the grant and then they revive in full, which is at odds, as the Federal Opposition Leader has told the House of Representatives, with the very widely held view of what the High Court has held repeatedly to be the common law of this country, which is that where there is an inconsistency with rights under a pastoral grant, native title is extinguished to the extent of that inconsistency. Extinguishment means extinguishment—non-revival. So what we have is a proposition from the Labor Party in Canberra that totally denies the validity of any effort by the Commonwealth to delineate which pastoral leases in Queensland are grants of exclusive possession and which are not, because they simply reject any extinguishment at all. That is what those amendments say.

In the negotiations with the Commonwealth that my Government carried out, we fought for recognition that many pastoral leases in Queensland were grants of exclusive possession which had extinguished native title. We were only partially successful. The Commonwealth held that pastoral development holdings, pastoral holdings, preferential pastoral holdings and stud holdings, which cover some 50% of the area of Queensland, were not grants of exclusive possession and would therefore be open to coexisting native title claims under its—that is, the Commonwealth's—amendments. But a

number of leases were deemed, on strict standards of interpretation of the common law, to be grants of exclusive possession, and these included grazing homestead perpetual leases, grazing homestead freeholding leases, special lease purchase freehold, perpetual lease selections, purchase leases, agricultural farms, special leases and term leases. While these are considerably more numerous, they cover some 25% of the area of this State. So Labor, which cannot countenance extinguishment, is prepared to throw the great bulk of this State open to coexisting title, because its amendments in the Senate open up all those other forms of leases to the full impact of the High Court decision.

There are many other aspects of the Labor amendments which also impact on this area. They include, on the basis of Labor's views, that rights on pastoral leases are not extinguished, merely suppressed, to the proposition that native title rights will revive at the end of the grant. So what Labor is proposing is that, where native title is not extinguished, it can be revived. When we go for a lease renewal, we can have a revival of native title. That is what the Labor Party is proposing in its amendments. So every time a lease would have to be renewed in Queensland, Labor's policy says that native title can, therefore, be revived. What we have seen from the Labor Party is a total betrayal of the State of Queensland and a total betrayal of property holders in this State.

There are other horror stories in Labor's proposed amendments. They include a complete gutting of the ability of pastoralists to expand activities on their leases. They include demands for the right to negotiate to apply to certain activities on pastoral leases. These are Labor's words, its amendments, its document—tabled in the Parliament this morning and which was presented in Canberra yesterday.

If the Labor Party thinks that this is a recipe for justice and for reconciliation, it should wait for the reaction—not just the reaction of the bush but, according to recent polling, to the reaction from the 80% of Australians who think that the Labor Party wants to turn this nation's pastoralists into sacrificial cows in terms of the land rights issue. The people of Queensland are entitled to know where the member for Brisbane Central stands.

I also want to comment on certain comments made by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Yeronga that somehow it is improper for us to be introducing

the State amendments into this place today. What did Labor do when it was in Government? It not only introduced its own native title legislation, but it debated it ahead of the debate in the Federal Parliament. So that is another example of the double standards of the Labor Party. The people of Queensland are entitled to know where the member for Brisbane Central stands because, as things stand today, he is an accomplice to these amendments that his colleagues have moved in Canberra, which will have absolutely horrific implications for the people of Queensland.

### **Rhinoceros Project**

**Mr ELDER:** I refer the Tourism Minister to the beating jungle drums which say that Davo's great South African rhino hunt is on again, and I ask: after the embarrassment that he has already caused his Government, why is he still being allowed to pursue this fantasy to import South African rhinos as tourist attractions? Is this the reason he gave the Burke Shire a sizeable grant and why property owners in the shire are being flooded with application forms to nominate their properties as prospective rhino parks?

**Mr DAVIDSON:** The member for Capalaba is wrong. I did not give the Burke Shire a grant of any type that I can recall.

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. My understanding is that he did. It was \$20,000. Do I have to table it?

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

**Mr DAVIDSON:** That was not associated with this proposal. I thought that members opposite would have got the message loud and clear in Mount Isa.

**Mr Elder:** You just said you didn't give them a grant. Do you want me to table it?

**Mr DAVIDSON:** I thought that members opposite would have got the message in Mount Isa when they were there a couple of weeks ago. I thought that the Mayor of Mount Isa would have delivered the message to them about the feasibility study that he has done on behalf of the Mount Isa City Council into the location of a rhino park in that area.

Our involvement in this proposal was limited in the beginning, which meant my trip to South Africa on behalf of the proponents. Since then it has moved on. KPMG has become the project manager for this proposal. Extensive work has been done over the past three or four months with a scientific team in

north Queensland—right across the top end. There has been a lot of consultation with many different shires right across the top end. I believe that the scientific research has identified one or two areas that would be suitable as the location of a rhino park. I understand that the proponents intend to visit South Africa again in the next couple of weeks.

**Mr Elder:** Who?

**Mr DAVIDSON:** I understand that the project manager from KPMG will be on that trip with other proponents of this proposal. It continues to develop, and I hope that the feasibility study which I commissioned into this proposal will be delivered to my office in the next few days.

### Native Title Legislation

**Mr CARROLL:** I also refer the Premier to the Native Title Amendment Bill before the Commonwealth Parliament and major amendments proposed by the Australian Labor Party, and I ask: can he inform the House of the impact on Queensland if the Federal legislation lifted constraints on native title claims?

**Mr Welford:** That's the same question as before.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Does the member not want me to tell the people of Queensland about his party's policies? I would like to tell the House a bit more about Labor's horror story in respect of the impact on the social fabric and the economic development of Queensland should its amendments in the Senate be successful.

The intent of the Labor amendments really is quite staggering. They go to many other issues which are going to impact adversely on our State. For example, under Labor's proposals there would be no extinguishment on any land set aside for a public purpose. That is what its amendments say: no extinguishment on any land set aside for a public purpose. There would be extinguishment only when the school, the hospital, the fire station or the ambulance station was built. And before the land could be acquired for that purpose, there would have to be a right to negotiate with potential native title holders. So we will not even be able to build a police station, an ambulance station, a fire station or a school without the right to negotiate. That is Labor's policy. That is what it is proposing. The right to negotiate would continue to apply in full on mining on pastoral land under Labor with no constraints on the

time limits currently set down in the Native Title Act—no constraints at all. That is Labor's policy.

**Mr Bredhauer:** You're a fraud.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I now warn the honourable member for Cook under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I wonder what the people of Cook will think of the member's support for these policies. I wonder what the people of Cooktown will think when we want to build a new facility up there. I wonder what sort of support we will get from the member for Cook.

The right to negotiate would apply, in relation to mining tenures, on extensions or renewals of pastoral leases. There would be no exemption from the right to negotiate for the small tin and gold mining operations. That end of the mining industry would be dead under Labor, dead under Mr Beazley's amendments and dead under Mr Beattie's proposals. Access rights to pastoral leases would not, under Labor, be restricted to those people who had access as at the Wik decision, as proposed, quite fairly, by the Commonwealth. They would be open to all. One would not even have to be a claimant. Labor would not want one's access rights to be restricted to what they were before one's native title claim; Labor would like to see them expanded. So there would be statutory rights of access as an automatic right under Labor's proposals—under the proposals supported by the member for Yeronga and supported by the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner.

There would be no sunset clause to time limit claims under the Act under Labor. There can be a continuation under Labor's proposals of multiple claims—either together or separated by a period of years; any number of years—with separate determinations and separate compensation payouts. That is the impact of Labor's policy. That is the end result for Queenslanders under Labor's policy. There would be no automatic strike-out of claims that are currently on the books—as proposed by the Commonwealth—so the 40-plus per cent of Queensland currently under claim would remain under claim. Effectively, there would be no physical connection test for claims at all. Traditional affiliation would exist however long ago that connection was. That is Labor's policy.

One of most extraordinary proposed amendments is on page 35 of the ALP's explanatory memorandum. I will quote it because it is amazing. Labor argues that the Commonwealth should—

"... replace the absolute prohibition on claims over previous exclusive possession tenures, and exclusive rights on non-exclusive tenures, with an obligation adhering to common law principles, that claims should not be made in areas where native title is extinguished."

Labor's latest contribution to the debate raises a question. That amendment implies that, according to Labor, none of the forms of tenure currently regarded as exclusive tenures that extinguish native title can really be regarded as extinguishing. That is their policy in that document. That is the policy of the honourable member for Yeronga and the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Foley:** We're trying to solve problems, not inflame them.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The honourable member who interjects is saying that claims over anything, anywhere, any time are on. That is the policy of Labor. Under Labor's formula, that is exactly what we would get. It is Labor's amendments that are extreme, not the position of the Commonwealth or of this State on this issue. If the amendments as proposed by the Commonwealth are passed, there is some chance of holding together the social fabric of this country and eventually advancing the good cause of reconciliation. If Labor has its way with its amendments, the divide between black and white in this society in this State will become a Grand Canyon. Members opposite know it. They may not admit it, but they know it. That would be a major disaster for all Queenslanders, black and white.

If there needed to be any indication that the amendments proposed by the Commonwealth are commonsensical and the way forward, it is in these amendments from the Labor Party. The amendments from the Commonwealth show a process that is in touch. Labor's effort shows a political party flying over the cuckoo's nest. Their amendments are a degradation of and a basic assault on the principle of private ownership of property over 75% of the land mass of Queensland. That is what Labor is proposing. As the import of what it proposes reaches the general community, I believe that support for the Commonwealth's package will sweep up the majority of reasonable Australians who want to see a fair deal for Aborigines and a fair deal for everyone else in this great country.

### Sunbelt Developments

**Mr GIBBS:** I refer the Minister for Tourism to his assurances to Parliament on 27 March

that concerns raised about the financial state of Gold Coast Indy sponsor Sunbelt Developments were "totally unfounded". I also refer to a 10 November 1997 letter from liquidator P. G. Downie to Mr Jeffrey Stauber, which states—

"In your capacity as director of the company debts were incurred at a time when the company was insolvent and which debts remain unpaid. I have clearly established that the company was insolvent at 31 December, 1996. Under the provisions of the Law the company is deemed to have been insolvent at all times after that date. Debts incurred during that period and which remain unpaid total \$3,222,524 and a schedule detailing those debts is enclosed."

Remembering that the Minister signed Sunbelt as sponsors, made the announcement in February 1997 and blamed Labor for damaging that company, I ask: why did he deliberately mislead the House about the truly parlous state of Sunbelt's finances? Why should he not take the blame for that disaster when the liquidator's report shows that Sunbelt still owes \$691,985 to the Gold Coast Motor Events Company?

**Mr DAVIDSON:** As the shadow Minister well knows, I did not sign the sponsorship arrangement with Sunbelt. I had not met Sunbelt before it was signed as sponsor of the 1997 Indy on the Gold Coast. The member for Bundamba knows that under his Government, the previous Minister, Mr Burns, struck the partnership deal with IMG. In that situation, the Government had no control over the board of Indy. Labor struck the partnership deal and signed the arrangement, not us. The Government has absolutely no control over any decisions that the board of the Gold Coast Indy makes. It is entirely up to the board of Indy as to whom they sign as sponsors.

**Mr GIBBS:** I rise to a point of order. If what the Minister is saying, that there is no control—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will state his point of order. We are not having a debate.

**Mr GIBBS:** What control does the Minister have over the taxpayers' money that went into the Indy event this year?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

**Mr DAVIDSON:** I see that the member for Bundamba is very soft on this issue, because he knows that it was his Government that struck a partnership deal.

**Mr Borbidge:** We can't even appoint the board members without their agreement.

**Mr DAVIDSON:** That is right. We cannot even appoint the Government representatives on the board without approval from IMG. That is the deal Labor struck. We have absolutely no control over sponsorship negotiations that the board has with any particular sponsor in this State or in the world. The member for Bundamba continues to harp on the Indy Sunbelt sponsorship deal. It resulted from the arrangement that was struck with IMG under the previous Government.

### Water Reform Agenda

**Mrs GAMIN:** I ask the Minister for Natural Resources: is he aware of correspondence from the National Competition Council in relation to a submission made to the NCC by the Australian Conservation Council and the spurious claim yesterday by the conservation council's Tim Fisher that it throws a spanner into Queensland's dam-building agenda?

**Mr HOBBS:** Yes, I am aware that yesterday afternoon the Australian Conservation Council wrote to the National Competition Council. It is trying to stop any Federal funding that may be coming to Queensland. I think that members of this House should be aware of the antics of that particular group. I am sure that no-one in Queensland would want to support them for their anti-Queensland activities.

The press statement states—

"If the NCC finds that Queensland's Water Infrastructure package is in breach of nationally-agreed reforms, Queensland stands to lose possibly hundreds of millions of dollars in Commonwealth payments."

The press release continues—

"ACF campaigner Tim Fisher said 'Intervention by the NCC is very good news indeed for the many rivers threatened by new dams. It throws a very big spanner into Mr Hobb's dam-building agenda.'"

That group is trying to deny Queenslanders what they can rightfully develop. There is no justification at all for that action by the Australian Conservation Council. It quite clearly states in the COAG agreement and the National Competition Policy statement that, provided any subsidy that is given is transparent, there is no problem with that program going ahead. The same applies to water pricing, provided the Governments of

the day do what they have to do to ensure that assessments are done to ensure that additional subsidies, if they are necessary, are identified. That will certainly happen.

I turn to Commonwealth funds received by Queensland. The Sugar Industry Infrastructure Package is \$4.4m. The Walla Weir is nearing completion. Does Mr Fisher deny the people of Bundaberg a water supply in the middle of a drought? Is he saying that people should not have assistance to build water infrastructure? Consider salt intrusion into underground water supplies: it is far better to have surface water to replace the underground water that is salting up rather than to allow that to continue. What we have to do is make sure that we can get this funding through.

**Mr Gibbs** interjected.

**Mr HOBBS:** Very good. Mr Gibbs supports the Walla Weir. That is fine. I hope that we have bipartisan support against this move from the Australian Conservation Council. Does Mr Welford support it, too? I am sure that Mr Campbell would support it.

**Mr Welford** interjected.

**Mr HOBBS:** I will come to WAMP in a minute. Let me go further. Funding from the sugar infrastructure package is going towards an assessment of the three northern river schemes—the Herbert, the Russell/Mulgrave and the Tully/Murray. In relation to the Tully/Murray, for the first time we have a totally integrated planning process for sugarcane land so that the drainage and everything else is done properly on a sustainable basis.

Is Mr Fisher denying that those funds should go to that worthy project? That project will ensure that we do not have acid sulfate soils leaching into the river systems, the coastal streams and into the sea. These are very worthwhile projects. I do not understand how the conservation people can, in fact, continue to receive funding, particularly from Commonwealth sources. I do not believe that they should have the ability to try to deny to the States their rightful funding that they should be able to use.

I will move on to the WAMP process, about which Mr Welford spoke a little while ago. I want to make sure that people understand that, when we build these dams, they are built on a very sustainable basis. We are spending nearly \$13m on the WAMP process. That determines, through a scientific process, a hydrological model that carries out a full assessment of each catchment to determine what water is available for irrigation

and for urban, industrial or commercial uses. Those assessments will be carried out and the dams will be assessed for their final capacity after the WAMPs have been completed. On numerous occasions I have made it quite clear that we believe that the WAMP process is a good process. It is a scientific process and a good one.

### South Pacific Cruise Lines

**Mr BRADY:** I refer the Minister for Tourism to his 27 August promise in Parliament that in the event of South Pacific Cruise Lines collapsing he would ensure that the William Angliss 2000 company would "guarantee jobs within the hospitality industry within this State for all those people who have been trained." In light of the Minister's claim that the Queensland tourism industry under him is a big job generator, I ask: what good are his promises when official records distributed to CES branch managers show that as at 21 November, three months after this shonky cruise line sank without trace, only 50 of the 295 trainees have been found full-time jobs?

**Mr DAVIDSON:** I would like to take this opportunity to thank the tourism and hospital industry in this State for their efforts in finding employment for those trainees. The CES has confirmed to me that more than 1,000 job referrals were put to 295 trainees. The referrals for those positions came from companies such as the Brisbane Sheraton, the Brisbane Parkroyal, the Royal Pines Resort, the Hyatt, the Sheraton Mirage at Southport, the Cairns International and so on. There is a list of about 30 companies.

The latest advice that I have from DEETYA is that as at 14 November there had been 115 placements of trainees. As I understand it, discussions are continuing with Queensland tourism industry representatives and the trainees of the SPCL. We are hopeful that for those who are still seeking employment—and not all the 295 trainees are still seeking employment—positions will be found for them in the near future.

### Teachers

**Mr BAUMANN:** I ask the Minister for Education: can he inform the House just what is being done to attract more top-quality students to teaching as a career?

**Mr QUINN:** I thank the honourable member for his question. Education Queensland has a range of initiatives in place,

including advertising in the mass media, participation in the careers market and, of course, in informing Year 12 students of their career options.

However, one of the most important new strategies that we have put in place over the past 12 months or so has been the specialist teacher scholarships. Those specialist teacher scholarships are aimed at attracting and retaining within the teaching career structure of Education Queensland university graduates who have their first degree and then providing them with teaching qualifications so that they can become registered as teachers in our schools.

Last year, we started this initiative of going to the market and calling for expressions of interest through the universities for some 60 places. Those graduates will graduate from QUT early next year and then go into our high schools. Recently, we again went into the open market and next year we plan to spend half a million dollars trying to attract 60 recent graduates to this particular initiative. They will be trained in the areas in which we are short of specialist teachers, such as maths, science, English, information processing and technology. In that short period, we would have attracted and retained within our schooling system an additional 100 specialist teachers.

The universities that have been the successful tenderers this year for next year's intake are the Queensland University of Technology, the University of Southern Queensland and James Cook University. We are pleased that, for the first time, universities outside Brisbane have been included. Those universities will be attracting students in rural and regional areas who, in fact, would not have come into the teaching profession under usual circumstances.

The scholarships offer a full HECS-free place within the relevant course, a \$2,000 cash grant and a guaranteed job with Education Queensland for two years. In all respects, this is a good, honest incentive that we are putting in place to attract top-quality applicants to the teaching profession. A number of universities, such as the University of Queensland, Central Queensland University and Griffith University, missed out on this tendering round. They are all excellent universities and we have put them on our preferred provider list to fill any unfilled places at the other universities.

We are going out and putting in place an initiative that will, in fact, increase the number of qualified applicants coming into our

teaching profession. This is an excellent initiative. It has received widespread support from both parents and the prospective applicants. It enjoyed considerable support the last time. We accept that there will be more support this time and, hopefully, we can fill the 60 places that we have on offer. Once those people graduate from their one-year course, they will be with the Education Department for two years and they will be available to regional and rural Queensland where, in fact, for a long time we have had shortages in those particular specialist areas.

### **Shark Warning Signs**

**Mrs ROSE:** I refer the Minister for Tourism to the Department of Primary Industries' insistence that local councils erect shark warning signs at all popular tourist beaches, including on the Gold Coast, to protect the Government and councils against legal responsibility for shark attacks, and I ask: what is the Minister doing to reassure tourism industry leaders, who say that these shark warning signs will have a totally negative impact on their efforts to attract tourists to Queensland?

**Mr DAVIDSON:** It surprises me that it has taken the Opposition a month to pick up this issue. It arose about a month ago when Bob Brett rang my office to bring it to my attention. Unlike the member opposite, who represents an area on the Gold Coast and who I doubt has contacted the Primary Industries Minister, I immediately contacted Minister Perrett's office and, as I understand it, he has the issue under review.

### **Shadow Minister for Police and Corrective Services**

**Mr HEALY:** I ask the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing if he is aware of any statements by the Opposition's Police and Corrective Services spokesman that are inaccurate?

**Mr COOPER:** I thank the honourable member for the question, because it is that time of year when one looks back over the record to see just how many inaccurate statements were made. I place on the record that in many respects the Opposition and the Government have worked well together, especially in terms of the police powers legislation and on many other issues. That augers well for the people of Queensland. However, statements that are made throughout the year need to be accurate, otherwise people get the wrong idea. For

example, at Christmas time last year, the Government was accused of providing a very luxurious menu for prisoners.

**Mr BARTON:** I rise to a point of order. That press release from last year was the Minister's from the year before. I crossed out his name and put in mine.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I have made numerous statements in relation to frivolous points of order. I now warn the honourable member for Waterford under Standing Order 123A. If he makes any further frivolous points of order, I will remove him from the Chamber.

**Mr COOPER:** At Christmas time last year, the member for Waterford accused the Government of providing a luxurious luncheon menu for prisoners. However, it was exactly the same menu that the Labor Government had provided the year before. It is no use trying to fool the people all of the time. That simply does not work.

**Mrs Edmond** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Mount Coot-tha under Standing Order 123A for persistent interjection. We will have some order from both sides of the House.

**Mr COOPER:** Throughout the year we had a similar problem in relation to police numbers.

**Mr Livingstone** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Ipswich West under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr COOPER:** In January the member for Waterford said that police numbers were dropping. We took up the challenge and we delivered throughout the year. He said that police numbers increased in 1993 to 1995, but in fact they fell by 79. That was a misinterpretation of the figures, or maybe he just got it wrong. In the three years prior to that, numbers increased by only 29. Although the former Government spent \$1.5 billion of taxpayers' money on policing, we did not get value for money at all.

In March another blooper was made when it was claimed that six or seven police cars were used as a taxi service to take 2,500 US marines from various night spots in town back to their ship. That operation was organised between the police and the military police to ensure that the marines were taken back to their ship if they caused trouble. We were told that six or seven police cars were used as taxis by the marines. In part that claim was right; there is always such an arrangements in place in those circumstances, but only two police cars were used as was

previously arranged. That was done in proper and considered order.

In March the crime hotline was set up in Cairns. People in the north will know that the Opposition has attempted to continually beat up crime, especially in the Cairns area. When very few people, if any, used the hotline, the Opposition claimed that we never published the fact that that hotline existed. However, we advertised the hotline in a press release and the Cairns Post also published it, yet still we were accused of not doing so. People simply did not respond to it; they did not use it. That was another Opposition claim that backfired.

At the same time it was claimed that there were 40 police vacancies in the Cairns area. That figure was plucked clean out of thin air. The Opposition uses figures awkwardly. It makes them up as it goes along, which makes it very difficult for the people to know what is really going on.

In May it was claimed that the Ethical Standards Command would remove the independent investigation of police from the CJC. Again, that statement is incorrect. The Government knows and the Opposition knows that the CJC has control of police misconduct matters. That was the case then and it is the case now. That statement was meant to imply that the Government was taking control of police misconduct from the CJC, which is totally untrue.

In May it was also claimed that the police budget had been cut, when everyone knows that this is a record budget. Not only does the member for Waterford have problems reading figures, he also has trouble reading the Budget Papers, which showed a massive increase in police spending and a huge increase in the funding that was allocated to police numbers, making provision for an extra 252 police. It was another Opposition furphy that the budget had been cut; it is simply untrue.

The Government promised to provide 139 extra police in 1996-97, and the member for Waterford claimed that we would not achieve that target. Indeed, he challenged the department to reach that figure and we took up the challenge. Indeed, we were able to prove that we had provided 160 extra police. I pay credit to the honourable member, because he lost the wager and he paid up. I appreciate that, but I would ask the member to try to get the figures right next year.

### **Sunnybank Hills Ambulance Station, Training Room**

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I refer the Minister for Emergency Services to the recently established local ambulance committee at Sunnybank Hills and the promotion of first aid courses in the local community, which have proved to be so popular that a new dedicated first aid and training room needs to be constructed at the station in order that those courses can continue and that the day-to-day work required of ambulance officers not be disrupted, and I ask: why will the Minister not support the committee's request for funds to urgently construct a first aid training room at the Sunnybank Hills station? Why has the committee been told that it will have to raise the funds itself to construct this much-needed and overdue facility? How does the Minister expect this local ambulance committee to raise over half a million dollars to complete a project which is properly the responsibility of the Minister's mean-spirited Government?

**Mr VEIVERS:** That is a pretty complex and long-winded question. I will take it on notice and get back to the honourable member on the matter.

### **Port Hinchinbrook**

**Mr ROWELL:** I refer the Minister for Environment to allegations made in the media by conservationists regarding the supposed environmental damage in the Hinchinbrook region caused by acid sulfate and heavy metal concentrations from the Port Hinchinbrook development, and I ask: have those claims been refuted by the independent monitor for the project and what qualifications does the independent monitor have?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for the question because it relates to his own electorate. A few people made allegations two weeks ago. The first of the allegations that I will deal with came from the leader of the Queensland Greens Party, Drew Hutton, who made a statement that one would have to label as being mischievous, although it was certainly not untrue. He said that the area had the potential to produce huge amounts of sulfuric acid, which is quite true. The entire coast of Queensland has a capacity to produce sulfuric acid. If one looks to the origins of Cardwell properties, one finds that when the Opposition was in Government it employed engineers to determine how the project could go ahead. Part of the project looked at how to handle acid sulfate soils, because the project would have disturbed the

coastline. Mr Hutton's statement was aimed at getting some sort of notoriety for himself. It was not untrue, but it was certainly mischievous.

Jeremy Tager, of the North Queensland Conservation Council, also made a statement. Jeremy Tager simply alleged that the conditions of the agreement had once again been breached.

The member for Hinchinbrook would also recall another incident not too long ago when he and I were touring that part of north Queensland and we went to Dungeness, where I was fortunate enough to launch a new patrol boat for our marine park service. After I launched the boat, I was told that some people associated with the protesters of Hinchinbrook wanted to see me. Upon walking up from the boat ramp I was approached by a Ms Margaret Thorsborne—and she is near and dear to many people protesting against Hinchinbrook—who was accompanied by another chap who came forward with what looked like an old pizza box. He lifted the lid to reveal a dead mahogany glider.

What a coincidence! I happened to be going to Port Hinchinbrook on that day. He knew I was going to be at Dungeness. He said that he found a dead mahogany glider that had been killed on the road outside Keith Williams' development the night before. What a coincidence! Since then, it has been brought to my attention that the same gentleman, who is well known in the area, came before the courts.

Mr Speaker, I notice that the member for Logan, Wayne Goss, is back in the Chamber. It is nice to see you back on your feet, Wayne.

As I was saying, this gentleman who came to me with the dead mahogany glider—and he said he kept it in the fridge all night—was before the courts just the other day for possession of marijuana and an unlicensed firearm. So much for the standard of the people coming forward to try to create mischief in relation to a project which first received approval under the former Government and which, since that time, has been helped by us. We have been making sure that they comply with their environmental responsibilities.

Some time ago, the Premier met with the Prime Minister to try to overcome all of these problems and baseless allegations, in spite of the fact that 12 reports from different people have been prepared in two years. Finally, we put Professor Saenger in charge. Professor Saenger is a noted person in environmental matters. I wish to quote the letter he wrote,

because he was stirred up by comments made by the ABC. After giving a full list of publications, which I will table, he stated—

"I hope that you realise from the brief summary above"—

it took seven pages to list the publications—

"that considerable expertise resides in this Centre and that by choosing to ignore this expertise, your irresponsible journalism has resulted in what I have referred to as a 'beat up'. I look forward to a higher quality of reporting by the ABC if it claims to be 'our ABC'."

I table that document.

Interruption.

#### MEMBER FOR LOGAN

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (11.22 a.m.), by leave: I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition will join me, but I would certainly like to take this opportunity to warmly and sincerely welcome the honourable member for Logan back into the Parliament. It is good to see you back, Wayne. We wish you an ongoing recovery. I know that I speak on behalf of all members when I say that our thoughts have been with you in recent times. Welcome back to Parliament.

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (11.22 a.m.): I also join with all other members in wishing you well, Wayne. It is great to see you back. I have to tell you that things have not improved much around here in your absence. Now that you are back, we are expecting them to improve significantly. You have been missed by this side of the House, mate, and it is good to see you back.

Resumed.

#### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

##### Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Trust

**Ms SPENCE:** I refer to the extraordinary about-face by the Minister for Emergency Services on his promise in Parliament last week to table a copy of his department's report into allegations that the member for Mansfield breached sections of the Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Act in the granting of contracts worth tens of thousands of dollars to members of his family, and I ask: what reasons can the Minister give the Parliament for his sudden refusal to table that report that he has sat on for three months if the member for Mansfield has done nothing wrong?

**Mr VEIVERS:** As I have advised the House before—and I will say it again—my director-general commissioned an internal audit report into the allegations raised.

**Mr Welford:** Cover-up.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The member should listen to this. I am advised that on 14 August 1997 the report was forwarded to the CJC for its consideration. At this time, I further advise that the director-general has not yet received any communications from the CJC regarding this matter.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I remind you that the Minister's reply was a matter that I referred to you last week, I believe, as to whether the Minister is required to table that report in spite of the fact that it has been referred to the CJC. I referred that matter to you, Mr Speaker. I have not heard as yet a response as to your ruling in relation to that matter.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I shall bring my ruling down in due course.

#### **Ron Camm Bridge, Mackay**

**Mr MALONE:** I direct a question to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. In view of media claims by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Jim Elder, and the member for Mackay in the Mackay Daily Mercury in September casting doubts on the duplication of the Ron Camm Bridge, I ask: could the Minister give the House an update on the progress of this project?

**Mr JOHNSON:** I thank the honourable member for Mirani for the question. He has a very big job in north Queensland at present, being the member for Mirani as well as the member for Mackay. The member for Mackay has not been doing his job.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** It does not take much to get members opposite going.

**Mr MULHERIN:** I rise to a point of order. I find those words offensive and untrue. I have a letter from the Minister congratulating me on the work I have done to secure funding for the Ron Camm Bridge.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Mr Speaker, I find that offensive. However, in respect of getting on with the duplication of the Ron Camm Bridge, I thank the member for Mirani very much for his efforts. I thank also the Federal member for Dawson, De-Anne Kelly, for her efforts. Without the efforts of those two people, the Ron Camm Bridge would never have become

a reality. The former Federal Minister for Transport, Laurie Brereton—the good friend of the member for Capalaba—never signed off on it, and the member knows that.

I report to the honourable member for Mirani that, subject to favourable weather conditions, the Ron Camm Bridge duplication will commence in January 1998. This \$25m project will create 200 jobs in Mackay. As the member for Mirani well knows, Mackay has been a working man's city over a long period. As I said in this House yesterday, the Labor Party thinks it represents the workers. Again, it is this side of the House which has taken the lead in the representation of workers in this State. It is the National/Liberal coalition Government that recognises this. The member for Mirani knows what it is like to get dirt under his fingernails. That is why he has made this solid, sincere representation to get this project through. The new member for Mackay after the next State election, when he sits on this side of the House, will be supporting the member for Mirani in matters that are relative to this Government and the future Government of Queensland.

On Friday, 12 September, the front page of the Mackay Daily Mercury stated that this project was in doubt. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mackay put a fair amount of fear into the people there. I impress upon the people of Mackay that this project will proceed. It will be of great benefit to them. The future programs of the Department of Main Roads under this Government will make absolutely sure that we create jobs. That is what it is all about—jobs. Our capital works program is working.

I wish to put something else on the record today. I see the member for Thuringowa smiling in the crowd. The member for Mundingburra today showed me a document from the Townsville Bulletin in which the member for Thuringowa—and I thank him very much for this—stated that my colleague the Minister for Education and I have done more work in the past two years in relation to education and roads in that city than has happened over a long period. That has to be a plus for this Government.

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** I rise to a point of order. I find those remarks untrue and offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member has asked for a withdrawal.

**Mr JOHNSON:** But it is in the Townsville Bulletin, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am not interested in the Townsville Bulletin. The honourable member has found the remarks offensive and has asked the Minister to withdraw.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Mr Speaker, I cannot withdraw the remarks of the Townsville Bulletin. I withdraw, but I will read the article.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Has the Minister withdrawn?

**Mr JOHNSON:** I have withdrawn. The Townsville Bulletin states—

**An honourable member:** Table it.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I am running out of time. I will table that article for the benefit of the whole House. I thank the honourable member for Thuringowa. That will certainly enhance our chances of winning Thuringowa and of having the member for Thuringowa on this side of the House after the next election. I thank the member for that.

I table the document.

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

## NATIVE TITLE (QUEENSLAND) AMENDMENT BILL

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (11.31 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993, and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

### First Reading

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

### Second Reading

**Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (11.32 a.m.): I move—

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

These amendments to the Native Title (Queensland) Act mirror the amendments to the Native Title Act before the Federal Parliament. Both Bills mirror the 10-point plan developed by the Commonwealth via negotiations with the States, Territories and other stakeholders after the High Court's Wik decision last December. The provisions of this amending Native Title (Queensland) Amendment Bill 1997, which reflect the outcome of those discussions, will not

commence until the Commonwealth Bill becomes law.

The introduction of the Bill will ensure that Queensland can take advantage of the validation provisions of the Commonwealth Bill, as well as those provisions confirming extinguishment of native title over exclusive tenures at the earliest opportunity once the Commonwealth Bill becomes law. The Bill also removes provisions within the Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993 which have never been proclaimed and are now redundant in light of the Commonwealth Bill. In particular, the Bill—

validates those intermediate period Acts done between the date of commencement of the Commonwealth Native Title Act on 1 January 1994 and the date of the High Court's Wik decision on 23 December 1996 which may be invalid because of the existence of native title;

once the Commonwealth amendments become law, will operate to confirm that native title has been extinguished by previous exclusive possession Acts;

once the Commonwealth amendments become law, will operate to confirm the partial extinguishment of native title by previous non-exclusive possession Acts;

provides for the payment of compensation to native title holders in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Native Title (Amendment) Bill 1997 where native title has been extinguished or partially extinguished by an Act attributable to the State; and

omits those parts of the Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993 relating to the establishment of a Queensland native title tribunal, the use of the Wardens Court as an arbitral body, State acquisition Acts and a number of other provisions which are now redundant as a result of the Commonwealth Native Title (Amendment) Bill 1997.

Importantly, the Bill does not deal directly with alternative mining provisions to replace the right to negotiate. Matters relating to the right to negotiate must be approved by the Commonwealth Minister in accordance with the Commonwealth Native Title (Amendment) Bill 1997. In this regard, appropriate amendments are currently being considered in relation to the future use of the Wardens Court to hear and determine right to negotiate applications and alternative provisions to the right to negotiate. These amendments will be

introduced in due course. Finally, the Bill makes consequential amendments to the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991, the Fossicking Act 1994 and the Land Act 1994 to remove reference to provisions which have not been proclaimed and are now redundant in light of the Commonwealth Native Title (Amendment) Bill.

There have been extraordinary attempts by some to misrepresent the Commonwealth's 10-point Wik plan and the legislative response it developed which these amendments mirror. Some of the most offensive of those efforts revolve around accusations that it is racist and that those who propose it, or even those who support it, are racist. That is deeply offensive to those of us who are utterly convinced that these amendments are in the best interest of all Australians—are fair to all Australians.

I want to deal with that aspect of this debate first, because it is important—centrally important—to getting this issue in context and headed towards a reasonable resolution. We are only going to be able to make progress in this crucial debate when the great majority of Australians, who are concerned onlookers to this debate, understand just why the discussion between the major players—the ones most affected by it—has gone off the rails to the extent that it has. Because the people suffering as a result of these misrepresentations, make no mistake about it, are the Aboriginal people of this country and those most affected by their aspirations—the nation's pastoralists. These are the people trapped in the middle.

The parlous state of this debate is rooted in nothing other than the deliberate deception of pastoralists, in particular in 1993, and, ultimately, in what was the interlocking deception of Aboriginal Australians by the former Commonwealth Government, with that effort led by the former Prime Minister. The roots of division are not—and I emphasise "not"—in these amendments and that is readily established by any fair-minded person who studies what all of us, but particularly those groups caught in the middle, have been through over the past five and a half years since the Mabo judgment.

We were instructed by the High Court via the Mabo No. 2 findings of June 1992 that Australia was not terra nullius and that native title had, under considerable constraint from grants of the Crown, survived. The conventional wisdom, in interpretations of that judgment, was that native title was

extinguished by inconsistent grant—by Crown grants inconsistent with native title. Extinguishment was held to be to the extent of the inconsistency, so that where the grant was a grant of exclusive possession, the inconsistency with native title was total, and native title was totally extinguished. This meant that freehold grants, which are the highest form of grant in our system and which are grants of exclusive possession, were held, indisputably, to operate to extinguish all native title.

Further, it was widely held—not universally held, it must be said—that grants of leasehold were also grants of exclusive possession which, likewise, extinguished native title absolutely. Lesser grants were held to extinguish to the extent of the inconsistency, leaving open the potential for coexistence of native title. The greatest degree of interest in relation to the impact of leasehold on native title was understandably in relation to pastoral leasehold. Pastoral land covers some 75% of this State. The general view of that crucial question, as the Native Title Act was developed from 1992 through to late 1993, was that pastoral leases in particular, among many other forms of leasehold, had operated to extinguish all native title. But it was not clear cut.

Honourable members will recall that, in Opposition, I was among the few who issued a warning at that time, and it was this: the references by the High Court judges on this crucial issue in Mabo were obiter—effectively, comments in passing. The authority of grants to impact on native title was a peripheral issue in Mabo, and the matter was not conclusively decided in that case. In so far as the issue was discussed in the Mabo findings, the comments of the judges were ambiguous. Some justices, including the current Chief Justice and the former Chief Justice, held in Mabo that leases, generally, were grants of exclusive possession which did operate to extinguish native title. Others held that grants of exclusive possession would have extinguished native title, but were silent on what categories of grants might—or might not—be considered by them to be grants of exclusive possession. This doubt—about what grants were grants of exclusive possession—led the National Party in Queensland to warn, as early as 1992, that pastoral leases could not be held with any certainty at all to be safe from native title claim as the body of case law developed. For that accurate prediction we were labelled scaremongers, even though the Commonwealth's own legal advisers agreed.

But what we then had, as the Native Title Act was developed from these and other messages out of Mabo throughout the latter part of 1992 and throughout 1993, was an extraordinary—extraordinarily deliberate campaign by the then Commonwealth at the political level, with the charge led by the Prime Minister himself, to pull the wool over the eyes of pastoralists, to convince pastoralists absolutely that their leases had extinguished native title—that the allegedly scaremongering National Party was wrong. There were no ifs and there were no buts in this campaign.

The Prime Minister's clear, his unequivocal, message to pastoralists in that era was: your lease is a grant of exclusive possession. Native title has, without doubt, been extinguished by your pastoral lease. Time and time again he said it, without any qualification. In the face of all the advice, all the concern, why did he do that? How could he do that? The reason is as clear and as simple and as certain as it was totally dishonest and ultimately totally counterproductive and destructive of trust and reconciliation. He did it to ensure the passage of the Native Title Act.

The Prime Minister knew, by late 1993, that if he did not achieve passage of some sort of Mabo-based native title legislation by the Christmas of that year, concern about the potential extent of native title would be more widely felt, particularly in the pastoral community. He knew, and Federal Labor knew, that that would lead to a significantly greater campaign against the proposed Act in the new year of 1994, and the opportunity for a legislative response would have been lost, and then we would have been left with the development of native title via the common law.

The proof of the duplicity, the proof of the deceit of that campaign is totally incontrovertible. I will juxtapose just two of the many available quotations from the Prime Minister to illustrate the point. One is from October 1993 when the then Prime Minister said on ABC Radio's AM program on the morning after the pivotal 18 October Cabinet meeting—

"After the dinner break, and into the mid evening, I negotiated an agreement between the Aboriginal community and the National Farmers Federation on the question of pastoral leases, and I think with a very good outcome. What it will mean is that native title will be extinguished on pastoral leases, that is—

not to the extent of any inconsistency—but extinguished."

There are many more examples of that sort of comment from the then Prime Minister—not that he believed native title had been extinguished on pastoral leases or that he had negotiated extinguishment, as he implied on the AM program, but in a host of short, declarative statements which said: pastoral leases extinguish native title, full stop. Now compare that type of comment with what he said just a few days ago in an interview with the Weekend Australian newspaper where he said, in relation to why he did not confirm in 1993 that extinguishment in his Act—

"Because the Aborigines have got a right to test their common law rights before the courts, because there is some chance that this will still be there. Now my own view was that there was better than some chance."

If the then Prime Minister felt in 1993, as he admits now he did, that there was "better than some chance" for a finding of coexistence of native title, in Wik or in some other case, where was that qualification when he was selling his Native Title Act to the pastoralists? Why, if that is what he believed, did he say to pastoralists repeatedly that no native title attached to their properties, that it was, without doubt, gone? The answer is simple. He was deliberately deceiving them.

So what we had at the end of that process, by Christmas of 1993, was a deliberate, massively flawed legislative time bomb. It was sold to pastoralists as having a minimal impact. The rest of the rhetoric in which it was wrapped for the benefit of Aboriginal people was expansive. It was to be a catalyst for reconciliation. It failed, and it failed miserably, because failure was inherent in the Act—built into it! Aborigines were fulsomely promised land. They did not get it. Pastoralists were fulsomely promised security. They did not get it. State Governments were fulsomely promised a system for dealing with native title. They did not get it. Aborigines were fulsomely promised a social justice package to get to the real heart of reconciliation.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The Labor Party is so concerned about this issue that it stages a walkout. I ask the Leader of the Opposition: why does he not improve the tone of this place and leave us in peace? Why does he not walk out as well?

Aborigines were fulsomely promised a social justice package to get to the real heart of reconciliation. They did not get that either. What they all got—what we all got—was the legislative equivalent of quicksand. Against that background, who can blame Australia's pastoralists for now feeling with absolute conviction that they were deliberately, knowingly double-crossed by their Federal Government? Who can now feel any surprise that they are now venting their spleen in relation to Wik? Against that background, who can blame the Aboriginal people for feeling that they, too, were massively let down and deluded?

I say again, because this is crucial to understanding where we are now, the resentment based on unfulfilled false expectations, the conundrum we now confront, has nothing to do—nothing to do—with John Howard and his amendments, these amendments. They are the first reasoned effort to come to grips fairly with native title and with the implications of both Mabo and of Wik. The problem is the false expectations engendered by the Commonwealth in 1993.

We got a preamble which said leases extinguished native title. We had the ultimately meaningless recognition in the Act, via the validation of land dealings between the passage of the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975 and the enactment of the Native Title Act, that the issue of a pastoral lease was a "Category A" past act which operated to extinguish native title in that period. But we did not have surety of what that aspect of the Act implied, which was that all pastoral leases back to 1788 extinguished native title. And of course the Wik case was already in progress, with its claim for the possession, to the exclusion of all others, of 11 pastoral properties on the western side of Cape York.

The then Prime Minister knew that as he developed and as he debated the Native Title Act. The Federal Labor Party knew that. The Labor Government of the day in this State knew that. Everybody knew that. Pastoralists knew that, but they chose to believe their Prime Minister. And we ultimately had, via the Wik decision of 23 December last year, the findings of the High Court in that case which held that pastoral leases, or at least the two quite atypical pastoral leases in question, were not grants of exclusive possession and therefore did not necessarily extinguish native title, which could coexist. To the extent that native title could coexist, the rights of the pastoralist prevailed. That outcome, of course, was at odds with the impression the former

Commonwealth sought to have accepted by pastoralists in 1993.

I am simply not prepared to stand by and see the current Prime Minister cop it over Wik because the former Prime Minister set the stage—deliberately set the stage—for just the sort of reaction we have seen to the current national leader's proposed legislative resolution of native title. The amendments to the Native Title (Queensland) Act that I bring to the House today fully respect native title as established by Wik, as do the parent amendments to the Native Title Act now before the Federal Parliament. They do so far more honestly, far more openly, with far greater respect for the state of the common law than did the Native Title Act which, at its core, was dishonest. I will go through the key elements of this fair and this reasonable package one by one to establish to fair and reasonable-minded Australians that they are fair and reasonable and deserve their support. As people examine these amendments, they should try to see through the smoke and the flame generated first, and understandably, by the major players and more latterly, and unforgivably, by often ill-informed critics who have jumped in and fanned those flames of disappointment and anger. In that regard, I particularly welcome the recent comments by the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane, Peter Hollingworth, in rejecting a call for church-based opposition to the Wik amendments. His Grace said—

"... I'm suggesting that all of us, church leaders and politicians, perhaps might take a cold shower and look at the thing afresh. I don't think these complex and conflicting issues are much helped by what I might call the dewy eyed sentimentality of people of good will. I don't think that pious generalisation helps."

The first of the Prime Minister's 10 points seeks the validation of Acts between the enactment of the Native Title Act in January 1994 and the Wik decision of 23 December last year. There is a clear precedent for this aspect of the amendments. Honourable members will recall that, in relation to the Native Title Act, the then Commonwealth enacted validation of dealings in land from the passage of the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975 and the enactment of the Native Title Act in January of 1994—some 18 months after the Mabo decision. It should be noted that the validation in these amendments goes only to the Wik decision. Validation was done in 1993 because it was assumed,

commonsensically, that Governments which dealt in land that might have been the subject of native title, and which may have been dealt with in a manner, in this period, that was discriminatory according to the Racial Discrimination Act, could not have known that they were so doing. They could not know, between 1975 and 1992, that the High Court would hold that some of the land in which they dealt would be subject to native title because of a High Court decision that was in the future or—in relation to that period between the Mabo decision in 1992 and the enactment of the Native Title Act—how the Commonwealth would interpret it, and deal with it legislatively. So the Parliament validated those Acts and commonsensically allowed, in dealings in land in this period, that there had been extinguishment of whatever native title was there, despite the Racial Discrimination Act.

Exactly the same rationale, the same logic, applies now. Governments which acted in land between the passage of the Native Title Act in January 1994 and the Wik decision of December last year did so in line with the Native Title Act and the state of the common law it was explicitly based on. They could not, reasonably, have acted in any other way. Labor—or at least Labor federally—has signalled that it will not accept this. Amendments it sought to the amending legislation in the House of Representatives reject the validation provisions which repeat what Labor in Government did. We will no doubt see those objections emerge again in the Senate. The tortured logic behind this decision is that Labor suggests that Queensland in particular, but the States in general, should have dealt with native title in this period by invoking the future Act regime, including the right to negotiate; that they should have dealt in land in anticipation of the ultimate High Court finding in Wik.

Now, there are some very important points to make here on behalf of successive Queensland Governments in response to this quite silly proposition. The first is that the Government of Queensland, between the enactment of the Native Title Act in 1994 and February last year, was the Labor Government of the member for Logan—and of the present leader of the parliamentary Labor Party in this State. The approach of their Labor Government, post 1 January 1994 and right up to February 1996, when their Government lost office, was not to engage the future Act regime in relation to a range of activities, but particularly in relation to the issue of mining leases on pastoral land. And the reason it did not do so is simple and clear and reasonable.

First, the Government was simply acting in line with the Native Title Act as it then stood, and as it stands today. The preamble to the Act said leases—which includes pastoral leases—extinguished native title. There was therefore simply no basis for adopting the future Act regime, including the right to negotiate in relation to mining on pastoral land. On lesser tenures, the future Act regime was applied. Further, in defence of the previous Labor Government of this State, there had developed, from the point that the issue of pastoral leases was at challenge in Wik, a succession of decisions, judicial and otherwise, which consolidated the view that the Native Title Act was right—and that the Government was right, in adopting the land management procedures it was then engaging. They are worth mentioning to establish that the common law approach to this issue, as it evolved, continued to confirm the position adopted in the Native Title Act.

The National Native Title Tribunal, for example, issued guidelines for the acceptance of native title claims in relation to pastoral land in September of 1994 which limited acceptance of claims over pastoral leases to those jurisdictions where there was a statutory reservation in favour of Aboriginal access—and then only to the extent, generally, of such reservations. In essence, in the area of claims over pastoral leases, it became a traffic cop for pre-existing statutory access where that access existed. And that was a limitation on claims which simply ruled out claims in Queensland because there are no statutory reservations in Queensland leases in favour of Aboriginal people.

There were also a number of judicial findings which consolidated the formidable view in favour of the proposition that pastoral leases in Queensland extinguished native title. In February 1995, for example, Mr Justice French of the National Native Title Tribunal rejected an application for a determination of native title in relation to a claim by the Waanyi people of far north-west Queensland over a camping and water reserve which overlay, in part, the ore body at Century. Mr Justice French rejected that call on the basis that the grant of a pastoral lease around the turn of the century had extinguished native title. That decision was appealed to the Federal Court, where Mr Justice Spender referred it to the Full Federal Court, which found, in a majority decision in November of 1995, as Mr Justice French had determined, that the pastoral lease had extinguished native title.

And then in late January of 1996, we had, also in the Federal Court, Mr Justice Drummond's findings in the Wik case, which had started back in 1993. And again we had more judicial confirmation of the view that pastoral leases had extinguished native title. Mr Justice Drummond held, in January 1996, that the pastoral leases in question were grants of exclusive possession which had necessarily extinguished native title. So throughout that period we had no less than three separate judicial views that continued to enhance the view, held since Mabo, that pastoral leases had extinguished native title.

In this strong body of case experience then, the first solid inkling from the judiciary that there might, ultimately, be a possibility of a finding of coexistence came from the High Court in the Waanyi case when it overturned, on 21 March 1996, the rejection by Mr Justice French of the application for a determination that had been lodged back in 1994. And this was on the basis that the issue as to whether a pastoral lease extinguished native title was still alive in the Wik matter.

On the following day, on 22 March 1996, Mr Justice Spender granted leave for the Wik peoples to appeal to the Full Federal Court from Mr Justice Drummond's ruling. I then decided, on advice from the State's legal experts, to seek removal of those matters to the High Court on the basis that that was where the issue was certainly headed, and it was clearly in both the State and the national interest to have the issue decided, once and for all, as soon as possible. Notices of motion to that effect were filed in the Federal Court, and orders removing the matters to the High Court were made on 15 April 1996. The issue was subsequently heard mid year, and judgment was handed down on 23 December last year.

Now, the reaction of this Government to the sea change in the direction in which things were moving, as a result of the High Court declaration in late March last year, ought be clearly acknowledged by those who would criticise us for not abiding by the Native Title Act. That sea change led to rapid development, by my Government, of full compliance across-the-board with the future Act regime of the Native Title Act, and that included initiation of the right-to-negotiate process in relation to the Century project. I think from that chronology any reasonable person would regard the actions taken by both the former Labor Government and the current Government, since February 1996, as

absolutely responsible and absolutely in keeping with the Native Title Act and the developing common law. It is really quite gratuitous for the Federal Labor Party to now criticise the State Labor Party for its behaviour in this period and, frankly, really quite ignorant of some quite senior members of that party in that place to say that Queensland should have behaved in the same way in that era as the Western Australian Government. That is their principal argument: we should have done what the Western Australians did.

The position in WA was quite different to the situation that applied in Queensland. WA is a jurisdiction where there are reservations in pastoral leases for Aboriginal people to exercise certain rights which might equate with native title rights. For that reason, among others, the Government of that State adopted the future Act regime in relation to pastoral land. And that is the simple explanation. There is no comparison with the situation in Queensland.

Ironically, I might add, when engaging the future Act regime in this State did become appropriate in late March last year—and we did so promptly—we were criticised for doing so by the very same people who now say that Governments of Queensland should have been engaging the future Act regime since 1 January 1994. We were accused, by those same people, of overreacting by engaging the future Act regime. And that just goes to show how ridiculous is the position of some critics of the former Government, of this Government, and this amending legislation. Validation is a bedrock issue in any commonsense approach to this matter, for which there is obviously a clear precedent and a clear need.

The second of the 10 points embodied in these amendments proposes the simple, effectively procedural, confirmation of extinguishment by grants of exclusive possession. And again, this is a genuine attempt by the Commonwealth to accurately reflect the intent and lessons of both the Mabo decision of the High Court and the Wik decision. In Mabo, the High Court held that a grant of exclusive possession extinguished native title. That view was clearly upheld by a majority of the justices in Wik. The Federal Opposition Leader himself agreed with that core proposition in his contribution to the second-reading debate on the mirroring amendments in the Federal Parliament. Now I note that there is a body of opinion in the Federal Labor Party that disputes this, particularly in relation to Wik, that seeks to now re-write even this bedrock understanding—on

the basis of a couple of vague comments by a couple of their honours.

In the minority report of the Standing Committee on Native Title and the Aboriginal and Islander Land Fund, Federal Labor's Aboriginal Affairs spokesman, with support from Senator Bolkus, also of the Left, and the committee's deputy chair, sought to cast doubt on this well-established concept. They maintained that some of the justices in Wik left in doubt the extent of extinguishment that might occur as a result of inconsistency, preferring an interpretation of mere suppression for the term of the grant. With that proposition aside, which would logically raise doubts about the validity of the undertaking in the Native Title Act for non-revival, it is surely in everybody's interest to determine, as best as possible, what grants are grants of exclusive possession so that there can be certainty for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

Understandably, and despite the protestations of at least some in Federal Labor, the Commonwealth continues to hold that grants of freehold are grants of exclusive possession which extinguish. It is also the reasonable contention of the Commonwealth that a number of other forms of grants, including a number of pastoral tenures, are also grants of exclusive possession. And I say that because it has become one of the great fallacies in this debate that every form of pastoral tenure in Queensland equates to the types of tenure that have so far been examined in Wik. And this is an important point for all of those people out there, in Queensland and right across this country, who have swallowed some of the divisive propaganda from one side of this argument and are concerned that this procedural effort is somehow an effort aimed at extinguishment. It is not.

The two examples of pastoral leases in the Wik case, carefully chosen by the lawyers, are absolutely atypical of the vast majority of pastoral tenures in this State. They were particularly vast. They were particularly remote. They were unfenced. They were barely improved. They were hardly even taken up. They bear very little comparison at all with the average pastoral holding in Queensland. Consequently, via examination of the particular rights contained in grants and the statutes by which they were granted, and in close examination of the details of leases, the Commonwealth has developed the very considered view that the great majority of pastoral leases in Queensland—by number

but not, significantly, in area—must be regarded as grants of exclusive possession. That is not a land grab. It is not an attempt to extinguish native title. It is a fair-minded, thoroughly reasonable, and professional effort to delineate where native title does exist, for the benefit of would-be Aboriginal claimants and of pastoralists.

Several categories of leases, including pastoral development holdings, pastoral holdings, preferential pastoral holdings, and stud holdings are considered not to be grants of exclusive possession, and to be open to claims of co-existing native title. This leaves around 50% of the State of Queensland open to claim in a manner that embodies respect—fully embodies respect—for native title as delineated in the Wik judgment. If it is seriously the position of the Labor Party in Queensland that grazing homestead perpetual leases, grazing homestead freeholding leases, special lease purchase freehold, perpetual lease selections, purchase leases, agricultural farms, special leases, and term leases, and even mining titles freeholding leases covering the homes of mineworkers are not grants of exclusive possession, then I want to hear that from the Opposition Leader—and I want to see his legal opinions, because we all deserve to know where he stands on this quite crucial point—and why.

Does he believe it is justifiable to wrongfully expand the area of this State that is pastoral land—and that is open to claim—from the 50% of the State that the Commonwealth's amendments concede is held on non-exclusive tenures to the 75% that Federal Labor wants? Does he want to wrongfully expand the number of Queensland families subject to native title from the current 1,500-odd properties to over 15,000 because he is not prepared to accept that grants of exclusive possession extinguish native title? And if he does not believe that grants of exclusive possession extinguish native title, what does he say of the authority of freehold land to extinguish native title? And if anybody thinks that is alarmist—consider the view of the Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia. Because this is what Brennan, CJ, said on this topic in his minority Wik judgment—with Dawson J and McHugh J agreeing with him—when he put his and their view that all pastoral leases extinguished native title. He said, and I quote—

"If it were right to regard Crown leaseholds not as estates held of the Crown but merely as a bundle of statutory rights conferred on the lessee, it would be

equally correct to treat 'a grant in fee simple' not as the grant of a freehold estate held of the Crown but merely as a larger bundle of statutory rights ... and, if leases were of that character, an estate in fee simple would be no different.

Then in whom would the underlying or residual common law title subsist? Presumably, in the holders of native title. But such a theory is inconsistent with the fundamental doctrines of the common law."

The Government of Queensland believes, as does the Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, and two of his most senior colleagues, that the Commonwealth's list of exclusive tenures does not, in fact, go far enough. We have made our agreement with their view quite plain, repeatedly, and we do not apologise for it. Having said that, we accept the fact that the Commonwealth has felt it necessary to stick with the findings of the bare majority in *Wik* who were guilty—according to the Chief Justice—"of abandoning the whole foundation of land law applicable to Crown grants." Quite a republican move.

**Mr Bredhauer** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Cook that he has already been warned under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** But we do not resile, and the Commonwealth will not resile, from the bedrock proposition that exclusive tenures extinguish, and that those Queensland tenures listed on the Schedule attached to the Commonwealth Bill and to this Bill reflect a genuine effort to delineate exclusive tenures in this State. The Commonwealth has applied rigorous legal standards in determining those Queensland tenures that have been listed.

I make one more point in relation to the alleged extinguishment in relation to pastoral leases contained, or somehow implied, in this Bill. Scaremongers suggest the Queensland Government will embark on a program, under these amendments, to compulsorily acquire the rights of both pastoralists and native title holders wherever and whenever native title is established and then reissue freehold title to pastoralists as a means of defeating native title. Let me make it perfectly clear: there will be no such campaign by this Government. That is not to say that compulsory acquisitions of native title will never occur, in the same way as it would be a nonsense to say that the property of non-Aboriginal Australians will never be subject to compulsory acquisition.

But I say again, there will be no such campaign in Queensland.

The third point through which these amendments have been attacked by the Labor Party in the House of Representatives is based on a proposed ability of pastoralists to expand their pastoral activities without engaging the right to negotiate. And I will link that with the ALP's objection, at least federally, to what they incorrectly suggest is an end to the right to negotiate for mining on pastoral land in the Federal *Wik* amendments and to the fact that they provide no right to negotiate in the context of compulsory acquisitions for public works, either by Governments or by third parties. The significance of this tranche of objections by Labor in relation to the right to negotiate is not capable of being understood or being put in its proper context without first considering the genesis of the right to negotiate in the Native Title Act. Some of the proponents of this quite extraordinary right purport it is a common law right and an intrinsic part of the Commonwealth's response to the High Court's *Mabo* decision via the 1993 Act. That is poppycock. Even the Deputy Leader of the Federal Opposition does not press that claim. According to him, the right to negotiate is about economic empowerment, and that is much closer to reality.

The right to negotiate owes its power, if not its existence, to a backflip by the then Commonwealth in relation to the authority of a mining lease to extinguish native title—a policy decision that was taken to develop a process of economic empowerment of the Aboriginal people via the mining industry. To explain, at various times in the development of the response to *Mabo*, both the then Prime Minister and the then Commonwealth Attorney-General conceded it was the view of the High Court in *Mabo* that a mining lease extinguished native title. On that basis, there was no potential for Aboriginal people to lock into some form of economic empowerment via a land rights-based call on the profits of mining companies which was, throughout the development of the Native Title Act, one of their core aims. So as part of the deal-that-wasn't that was done in relation to leaving pastoral leases out in the cold while pretending they were not out in the cold, the Commonwealth provided some trade-offs for what, out of the other side of its mouth, it said it had not done. That is how stupid, how disjointed, it was. No real protection was offered for pastoral leases, despite the campaign that was waged to convince pastoralists to the contrary. So the right to

negotiate emerged as a form of compensation for something that had not, in fact, happened.

The billion-dollar land fund is based on the same tortured logic. These trade-offs for the alleged extinguishment of native title on pastoral leases included a right to negotiate in relation to mining projects, which first required a backflip on the Commonwealth's understanding of the extinguishment of native title via certain leasehold interests. I will table in that regard at the end of my speech a comment from the then Prime Minister on the Commonwealth's understanding of the extinguishment of native title via a mining lease and the backflip as confirmed by the then Attorney-General. It is not a particularly eloquent confirmation, I might say, from the then Attorney. In fact, it is a mess, but it is ultimately clear. He managed to get it all out, eventually.

So that was the root of the right to negotiate. It was an add-on to the Mabo decision. It was about economic empowerment, not Mabo. It is important now to remember that it had no intended application to pastoral leases at all because it was a founding assumption of the Native Title Act that pastoral leases had extinguished native title. It was assumed that its full weight would be felt, at least in Queensland, and in all jurisdictions where there were no reservations in pastoral leases for Aboriginal people, only on mining projects on vacant Crown land.

Having said that, the Commonwealth accepts that the right to negotiate ought continue to apply. That is what the amendments provide and that, given the genesis of the right to negotiate, is extremely generous. The fact of the Commonwealth amendments is that the full right to negotiate continues in relation to mining on vacant Crown land, which was the effective intended extent of it under the Native Title Act and on pastoral land. That situation is varied, potentially, if the States and Territories develop a regime for dealing with the right to negotiate on pastoral land, with the approval of the Commonwealth, which offers Aboriginal people the same procedural rights in relation to mining on pastoral land as are available to anybody else with an interest in that land. That is more than a fair compromise between the overreach of the right to negotiate that developed because of some of the many miscues in the Native Title Act and the new understanding of native title rights that has emerged from Wik.

An extension of the right-to-negotiate issue is also engaged in Labor's rejection of the proposed ability of Governments—Commonwealth, State and/or local—to guarantee timely provision of public services via compulsory acquisition of native title rights without a right to negotiate. These amendments propose that this ought be enabled through compulsory acquisition that takes place in exactly the same way as the property of any other Australian can be acquired by compulsory acquisition for this sort of purpose. I should say this objection by the Labor Party is extended to the compulsory acquisition of native title rights in relation to grants to third parties for the provision of public services.

There really is no rational basis for objection to this provision in the amendments. Aboriginal titleholders will be treated, procedurally, in exactly the same manner as other Australians with an established interest. Frankly, I do not think that any more need be said on that score to convince the general public of the reasonableness of that aspect of these amendments. Equality is surely reasonable.

The next objection of Labor is to the proposed restriction of access to claimed properties or land by native title claimants in these amendments to those claimants who had such access as at the Wik decision on 23 December 1996. This is a proposal aimed at protecting access by Aboriginal people, where it currently is in place, even if they launch a native title claim. Clearly, lodging a claim might impact on the relationship Aboriginal people have built up with a land-holder. It is not, and was not intended to be, an expansion of rights. Labor, federally, objects and says access rights ought to automatically come into play for any registered native title claimant. There is simply no justification for such an approach and it would be a nightmare in relation to multiple claims. Again, I think that for the purpose of establishing the fairness of this amendment, nothing more need be said to the average, commonsensical, fair-minded Australian of whatever colour, than this: the appropriate time for native title holders to exercise their rights is when those rights are established, excepting in those circumstances where they already enjoy such rights, and those rights clearly deserve protection. That is a commonsense and a fair outcome for all parties.

The Wik response also proposes a sunset clause for claims under the amended Native Title Act, restricting those claims to a period of

six years from enactment. Yet again, federally at least, Labor objects. It claims there is no point to a sunset clause, that native title claims not lodged under the Act in the designated period will simply be lodged later at common law. There is no argument with that. But that does not mean that there ought not be encouragement for claims under the Act to be dealt with as soon as possible in order to clear up as many claims as possible as quickly as possible. To argue otherwise is to argue in favour of not having a Native Title Act at all. It is an argument suggesting the entire issue should simply be left to the common law. The answer to that is that these amendments are a far more professional effort to bring about certainty as soon as possible by providing a legislative framework in which outcomes can be developed as soon as possible. If claimants want to use the common law approach, they will do it in the future as much as they do it now.

I would also suggest that it would be quite hypocritical of both Federal Labor and State Labor if it decides to support its current Federal position on this issue. The Whitlam-inspired Northern Territory Land Rights Act of 1976 has a sunset clause which is about to expire. The 1991 Aboriginal Land Act of the former Labor Government in Queensland has a sunset clause. Perhaps most interestingly, the former Labor Government in Queensland argued for a sunset clause in the Native Title Act when it was under consideration in 1993.

I quote from a letter to the department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet from the Office of Cabinet in Queensland in September 1993, which was written, in part, in the context of the absence of a sunset clause in the Commonwealth's then current legislative outline for the Native Title Act, and I quote—

"Ordinarily, and in order to introduce certainty about the existence or non-existence of rights, State/Territory/Commonwealth legislation provides for limitation of action periods.

An equivalent regime should operate in respect of the existence or non-existence of native title.

Accordingly, the Commonwealth outline should contain a sunset period of 12 to 15 years."

The case for a sunset clause is therefore clearly established by precedent, which is precedent established by the Labor Party.

The issue of compensation also needs to be covered. Compensation comes into play in

relation to a variety of Acts. They are known, and they are numerous, and they are just. The key point of argument from Labor is that the amendments set a cap on compensation of freehold value, subject to just terms. Queensland was one of the States which argued strongly before the Commonwealth's Wik task force earlier this year for compensation for native title to mirror the compensation arrangements applicable to all other Australians, whatever their colour, and whatever their station. To that end the States sought and achieved in the Commonwealth's response a cap on compensation payments set at the freehold value of land. Now that, in itself, is a generous proposition. While it remains the view of some that native title may equate, at the upper end, to the equivalent of freehold title, it is generally held that, even where it is found to exist, native title will be subsidiary to the rights established by other forms of grant. That is particularly the case in relation to pastoral leasehold, where their honours in Wik were quite clear on the fact that the rights of pastoralists prevail.

It is therefore the case that the value of native title rights will be somewhat—and possibly quite substantially—less than the property rights of the pastoralist. But again, what we end up with here is another important question for the member for Brisbane Central because, back in 1993, when the Native Title Act was being developed, and the then Commonwealth was considering the issue of compensation, the position adopted by the Labor Government of the day was precisely the positions adopted by the current Queensland Government in the negotiations relative to the Wik amendments.

I quote again from the same letter to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet from the Office of Cabinet which contained the call for a sunset clause in the Native Title Act. On compensation, that letter states—

"To impose a 'just terms' requirement represents the unbalancing of elaborate State/territory compensation regimes. Unless the 'just terms' requirement equates in effect to those existing regimes then it will mean that either native title holders or other 'landholders' would be treated unequally. Furthermore, 'just terms', particularly if it is taken to incorporate the concept of 'special attachment', has no upper limit and is unpredictable from the point of view of Governments seeking to make provision for the future quantum of compensation which may be needed.

The outline should also consider the cumulative effect on compensation for impairment which may ultimately exceed the cost of extinguishment.

Accordingly, the Commonwealth outline should provide for:

Commonwealth to use 'just terms' for its own jurisdiction.

States and territories to use their general compensation regimes which apply to the general community and cap the amount of compensation payable to what would be payable for the extinguishment of freehold (which is the greatest interest in land that Australian law knows.)

In addition to ensuring equality of treatment, this would also provide certainty as to the amount of compensation payable."

Those are not my words, but those of members opposite.

**Mr Bredhauer:** Whose words?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** There we have the principal argument for the freehold cap on native title compensation. They were the words of the member's Office of Cabinet. It remains the most cogent argument, and the argument the Government of Queensland continues to use.

Once again, there is a very relevant question in all of this for the member for Brisbane Central: does he back the rejection by the ALP federally of the policy position of his immediate predecessor on compensation, or is he prepared to get behind the State of Queensland in trying to treat Queenslanders equally? I note that in this House last week, by way of interjection, the Opposition indicated that what ostensibly makes the difference between their position then and their position now in relation to a sunset clause and on the compensation regime is the Wik case. The impact of Wik on these issues, given the views alive in the mind of the former Premier in 1993, when he was fully aware of Wik, simply escapes me.

The need to make more core points in some detail in this second reading have meant that I have not covered some issues of considerable importance, either in any detail or, in some cases, at all. Issues that have been neglected here will be taken up, in great detail, by other speakers from the Government side in this debate, when it resumes.

I want to conclude with some comments on two important issues. The first is an open

challenge to the Labor Party in this State to say where it now stands on these amendments. On a number of points raised, there is a record of support from the Labor Party of this State in Government. For example, in Government in this State the Labor Party—

Sought, at the time of the development of the native title Act, and in full knowledge of the issues and the potential outcomes in Wik, validation of all titles back to 1788—in fact, it was the Wik case, and the potential outcome, which prompted that call.

Labor sought, in the first instance, in full knowledge of the issues and the potential outcomes in Wik, confirmation by the Commonwealth in the Native Title Act that a pastoral lease extinguished native title and, in the second instance, actually amended the Native Title (Queensland) Act in November 1994, again in the full knowledge of the Wik case, to put beyond doubt the fact that a Queensland pastoral lease extinguished native title.

In Government, Labor in Queensland favoured a sunset clause in the Native Title Act.

In Government Labor in Queensland favoured a compensation regime which treated all people equally, regardless of race.

The question for the Labor Party in Queensland is this: are you going to back the mainly illogical, often contradictory, position of your Federal colleagues on the gutting of the 10 point plan—or are you not?

The final point I would like to make in introducing these amendments to the Native Title (Queensland) Act, is this, and I address myself to all Queenslanders, as well as to this House: please, do not brook misrepresentation of what is being sought by these amendments. I understand that there is a temptation, for those many Australians who believe, rightly, that the Aborigines of this country have been neglected, if not by the material extent of concern shown them—it is now at vast levels, at around \$2 billion a year—

**Ms Bligh** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Laming): Order! The member for South Brisbane will cease interjecting.

**Mr BORBIDGE:**—then in the quality and the nature of that effort. I understand that there is a temptation to fall prey to those who

claim—in ignorance or otherwise—that a deliberate distortion of rights granted in Wik, to expand them, may be a way forward; that we ought be generous to the Aboriginal people of this country via Mabo, via Waanyi and via Wik, beyond what is established, in order to make up for past injustices.

I would urge all of those people to not let their emotions rule their heads, because I would suggest that it is the recent historical vulnerability of this country to seek panaceas to this challenge—of the future of the Aboriginal people—that has got us in the mess we are in today. Two hundred years of at best misdirected policy has obviously been a disaster for many Aboriginal people. We are not going to begin the process of going in the right direction now by another rush of blood which says we must throw families on the land, miners and Governments into some sort of sacrificial blaze.

The solution to the challenges of Mabo and of Wik are not in expanding them beyond what they are. Land management in this country has to be based on law, not whims. Mabo and Wik based land rights is not a panacea, and cannot be an all-embracing solution for Aboriginal people.

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Yeronga will cease interjecting.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** We will be doing grave injustice to many other Australians if we try to distort reality to make it so. We will be only making mistakes in the present to try and deal with the mistakes of the past, and that is the treadmill we have been on for far too long.

If the majority of Australians want to do something about reconciliation, and I believe that they do, then we have to be prepared to share the load and not try to shove a distorted view of the facts and the real issues off onto a relative few in the bush. The nation has to do the job, and it has to do it together. For all the tension of the current situation, that process has, in a sense begun in this current chaos, simply by the very widespread recognition of the need to come to grips with the challenge and the pressure that has developed to try and do some things that can deliver real outcomes, even if the view of what can achieve that is, at the moment, itself distorted.

For all the significance of land to Aboriginal people, there are many other issues of at least equal importance, particularly given the limited opportunities that are realistically there for land rights in any reasonable and fair resolution of Mabo and Wik. The greatest is

simple acceptance. Others include improvements in health, education, and jobs. Such is the extent of dislocation that has occurred over the past 200 years, it is naive to think that even a few years of concerted effort, even genuinely reconciliatory effort, soundly based, rather than the largely symbolic, if expensive, effort of recent years, is going to be any sort of magic wand. It is going to be a long process, and we need to get started.

Misrepresenting this package of amendments is not a start to that process. It simply compounds the miscues of recent years, and those of long ago. There needs, first, to be rational recognition of the fact that these amendments are fair and that they generate, as the Prime Minister says, a reasonable balance between native title rights and the rights of all Australians. Then we can all get on with the job of developing the policies—in relation to general social acceptance, in relation to health, in relation to education and in relation to jobs and community infrastructure—for Aborigines that will ultimately do far more to fill the needs of more Aboriginal people than will ever benefit from land rights.

I commend the Bill to the House.

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (12.28 p.m.): I move—

"That notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders, the debate be now adjourned until the Federal Parliament has passed its Wik legislation."

**Mr Borbidge:** That was always the intention of the Government.

Motion agreed to.

## REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 29 October (see p. 3991).

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich) (12.29 p.m.): The Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill contains amendments to three pieces of legislation. Many of those amendments are relatively insignificant. The first area deals with the Financial Intermediaries Act. In particular, the operation of section 65(1) of that Act is clarified. We support that amendment.

The next part of the Bill relates to amendments to the Land Tax Act. They arise out of changes that have occurred in the way in which the Department of Natural Resources

undertakes the subdivision of land. The new procedures followed by the Department of Natural Resources, following certain legislative amendments, provide for separate valuations to be issued to approved subdividers for each lot in a plan of subdivision. They took effect from 1 July this year and that has applied to land subdivided since that date. In doing that, a concession which existed previously for subdividers under the old practice—namely, that one valuation was issued for the whole subdivided parcel—was done away with. At that time, a separate valuation was issued only after the lot was sold. The concession that had existed previously for those subdividing was lost. This amendment seeks to restore a concession, which is at the rate of some 40%. We also support that amendment.

The third area relates to the Stamp Act. There are a number of amendments, some significant and some less so, to the Stamp Act. The Stamp Act is one of the oldest pieces of legislation that remains on the statute books of Queensland. It is the State's answer to the complexities that occur in the Commonwealth income tax legislation. The Stamp Act is an important piece of State legislation. The first substantive amendment is designed to close a loophole which had been opened up through judicial interpretation of the Stamp Act, in particular with respect to section 54A(b) of the Stamp Act.

The Stamp Act provides for duty to be paid in respect of instruments which deal with the transfer of property or some other interest in a particular property, real or otherwise. By virtue of the determination of the court, certain transfers, trusts and settlements of property were held not to be subject to duty. The cost to the Queensland Treasury of that decision was about \$10m. It could certainly be the case that the revenue base of the State would be eroded rapidly were section 54A(b) not amended in this fashion.

Other amendments relate to provisions enacted a few years ago with respect to land-rich companies to ensure that no payment of double duty occurs in the treatment of land under contracts to purchase. This amendment allows the commissioner to reassess tax liability and make refunds where appropriate. A further amendment extends the operation of certain amendments passed in this House last year relating to duty on the transfer of instalment receipts and CHESS units in marketable securities and extending that to transfers in relation to share options and rights. We support all of those amendments.

One change close to the hearts of certainly the Labor members in this place relates to the imposition of stamp duty in respect of mobile homes. The amendments before the House provide for exemption from stamp duty in certain cases where mobile homes are situated or where they will be located in mobile home parks. It does not apply where there is a transfer of mobile homes owned by a park owner in the context of the sale of a mobile home park, as homes would not be positioned on sites in the park under relevant agreements. However, it does provide certain protections and exemptions to a group of people who perhaps are not among the most affluent in the community. Again, we support those measures.

In giving support to the Government in relation to this Bill, I wish to make a number of comments in relation to land tax and stamp duty in general. We have had much fanfare from this coalition Government in relation to land tax and its avowed determination to abolish that tax. When members opposite were in Opposition, we heard that they would do away with land tax in one fell swoop. However, in Government that turned into a 10-year abolition program.

**Mrs Sheldon** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** I remember that members opposite were saying that they would abolish land tax forthwith. However, similar to many areas of coalition policy, it became somewhat malleable. The Treasurer might care to recall that the certain concessions to be made in relation to land tax were to be provided in return for an employment program directed towards unemployed young Queenslanders. That is something which has been conveniently forgotten by the Government and the Treasurer in Government.

If the Treasurer doubts my recollection on that point, I can only refer her to her policy speech in the 1995 election. This is a clear broken promise on the part of this Government and Treasurer, because those who benefited through reductions in land tax received that benefit absolutely, and no corresponding obligation, as trumpeted in policy, was ever enforced in relation to those people who paid land tax being able to obtain their benefit in return for an employment program. That employment program promised by the Treasurer was going to be worth some \$70m. That promise was made when the Treasurer was in Opposition, but it quickly disappeared into the ether when the coalition came to Government.

What is the significance of land tax in terms of State revenue? At this time State revenues are under enormous pressure through, on the one hand, the High Court decision in relation to the business franchise fees—the excise collected in relation to tobacco, liquor and fuel. On the other hand, there is the general problem that has been around for some time of the vertical fiscal imbalance which occurs within our Federation. To put it simply, the States are called upon to shoulder the financial responsibility for the provision of various services far in excess of their own capacity to raise the revenue necessary to support that service provision.

At a time when tax reform is on the national agenda, what do we have from the Queensland Government? A commitment to erode further the already very narrow taxation base of Queensland! In respect of the submissions that have been made by a range of other conservative Governments in Australia, we observe that they see land tax as being a very important component of a proper and sufficiently broad revenue base at the State level. That leads me to wonder exactly where the Queensland Government stands in relation to the whole tax reform package.

I see from media reports that the faint-hearted opposition to a goods and services tax which was being offered up in this place by the Premier and the Treasurer seemed also to have evaporated when they got together with their Federal colleagues and colleagues from other conservative Governments around the country at the recent discussion on tax reform. I think the people of Queensland would dearly love to know what is going on with respect to the policy process of the coalition Government in this State when it comes to those very important issues of State taxation.

Does the Queensland Government want a State consumption tax? Does the Queensland Government support, as we can only construe it does from the media reports, a Federal move to a goods and services tax? Does the Queensland Government support a State income tax? And if it does not support any of those things, what does the Queensland Government actually support? The document brought forward by the Treasurer was long on rhetoric and short on detail. Perhaps the Treasurer might favour us this afternoon with some rather more specific comments in relation to the Queensland Government's position on this very important issue.

Let me remind the Government of the significance of land tax to State revenue. Last

year land tax collections actually exceeded budget to the order of some \$19m, with collections totalling \$238.7m in 1996-97. This year the Budget estimate for land tax, with the concessions that I have already commented upon, will see a diminished take by the State of some \$197.6m—at least that is the Budget estimate. However, going on the experience of last year, that estimate may well be exceeded significantly over the 12-month period. We will wait and see. I am surprised that the State Government is prepared to simply write off its books around a quarter of a billion dollars of revenue in this way and not tell us what it proposes to do to substitute for that part of its revenue base that it wishes so keenly to remove.

The other area that I wish to address in relation to this general issue of tax and tax reform is the question of stamp duty. Stamp duty is second only to payroll tax as a source of revenue to the Queensland Government from its own sources. As payroll tax collects over \$1 billion a year for the Queensland Government, stamp duty is not far behind. Last year stamp duty receipts totalled some \$971.8m, which exceeded the Budget estimate for the year by some \$38m. This year it is expected that stamp duty will see \$983m collected. Again, that figure may well prove to be as rubbery as last year's, with actual collections perhaps exceeding that figure and getting us much closer to the \$1 billion mark or maybe a little bit more.

It is important to note that over half of the moneys collected through the imposition of stamp duty relates to various property conveyances. It is a very important part of State revenue; likewise, it is a very significant impost on business activity in the State, because not only does it apply to property conveyances, but honourable members would know that stamp duty is paid in relation to the transfer of motor vehicles, insurance and a range of other areas in addition to real property transactions.

Here again there is a very important point. That is: on what basis do we levy stamp duty? I said before—and it has been the case in Queensland—that stamp duty attaches to a particular instrument, an instrument that is stamped. That has been the traditional view. Over the last few years there has been considerable discussion among the States as to the basis on which stamp duty ought to be collected. For six years now there has been an effort among the States to draft a common piece of stamp duty legislation. That does not mean that the rates at which duty is imposed

would necessarily be the same across the various States and Territories but, rather, that the legislative base be harmonised, that we have a common basis on which stamp duty is in fact collected and that the definitions are in fact the same and are recognised as the same whether it be in New South Wales, Victoria or Queensland. Certainly, it would be in the interests of business to have that harmonisation take place.

This process has been lengthy to say the least. As I said, it has been going on for six years now. This Treasurer has been there for a third of that time and it is by no means clear exactly what the Queensland Government's position is in relation to the harmonisation of stamp duty. Is Queensland going its own way, as was the favoured course of action under Treasurer De Lacy—that Queensland was not accepting the legislative direction that had been proposed in New South Wales and Victoria—or are we to believe from some of the utterances of the Treasurer that Queensland has changed tack and that Queensland is now more accepting of the direction that has been propounded in those other jurisdictions? No-one seems to know for sure. What is more, no-one seems to know where the end of this process is or where we are in this process.

Business would certainly like to know. We would certainly like to know and I am sure all members of the Parliament would certainly like to know. Is Queensland proposing to embark on a new basis on which to collect its stamp duty? Are we going to move more in the direction of transactions as such rather than instruments? Are we going to broaden our tax base in this process of legislative drafting? I think it is high time that the Treasurer gave us a progress report on the redrafting of the Stamp Act. After all, she can look back upon six years of work now—almost two years under her aegis as the responsible Minister. There would be no better time to have some information in relation to this very important issue than in the context of this Bill and in the context of the debate which is going on across the nation at present in relation to fundamental tax reform at the State and national level.

With those remarks, I reiterate that the Opposition supports the Bill before the House. We certainly will not be proposing any amendments to it at the Committee stage.

**Mr CARROLL** (Mansfield) (12.47 p.m.): As a member of the Treasurer's ministerial committee, I am very pleased to support the Bill before the House today. I want to just

mention two areas which the Bill covers. The first relates to the mobile home sales tax exemption and the second, the land tax concession. Queenslanders are already benefiting from the increases in the deduction and exemption levels for land tax and payroll tax made as part of this Government's 1997-98 Budget initiatives. Those measures further delivered on election promises to enhance Queensland's low-tax status by annually reviewing payroll tax and phasing out land tax.

The first measure is an important exemption for mobile homes. This Bill contains two additional concessional measures which will ensure that all Queenslanders continue to have the benefit of affordable housing options. This is not the first occasion on which relief has been provided to mobile home park residents. Late last year amendments were made to the Stamp Act 1894 to provide an exemption for the lease of a mobile home site in a mobile home park where the home is used for residential purposes. Prior to that amendment, people living in mobile home parks were disadvantaged by the imposition of lease duty which would not have applied if they had rented a house. The anomaly arose because of the legal separation of ownership of the land and ownership of the mobile home.

The present amendment addresses further anomalies arising because the owner of a mobile home is different from the owner of the land on which it is positioned. Ordinarily, a structure positioned on land is transferred with that land. Where one is transferred without the other, the way in which the transfer is achieved is critical to determining the stamp duty liability. This amendment fixes the problem by providing an exemption for the transfer of a mobile home situated or sold for situation on a mobile home site in a mobile home park. Transfers of the right to occupy a mobile home site in a mobile home park are also to be exempt.

Under the Stamp Act, agreements to acquire property are subject to conveyance duty unless the property agreed to be transferred comprises chattels only, such as a mobile home. In the case of an agreement for sale of a mobile home in a mobile home park, the common law rules of land law must be applied to determine whether the home is a chattel or whether it is a fixture and therefore part of the land to which it is affixed under the law as it presently sits. Those rules have been by no means simple or straightforward. Separate rules apply where the property is immediately transferred by the instrument. In

that case, the distinction between chattels and other property is irrelevant. As a result of these different rules, stamp duty liability in respect of a transaction involving mobile homes depends on the form in which the transaction is effected. In the majority of cases no liability to duty will arise as the mobile home will be sold under an agreement which attracts the existing exemption in the Act. However, there are residual instances under the Act where a duty liability could still arise if it were not for the amendment before the House.

Because of the variety of ways in which a mobile home may be transferred and the different ways in which those transfers attract the operation of stamp duties legislation, these residual categories make it difficult for a person transferring a mobile home in a mobile home park to determine the stamp duty consequences. Quite a few residents of mobile home parks are in their senior years and are unlikely to be familiar with stamp duties legislation or to have ready recourse to expert legal advice. Liability to duty would typically arise through an inability to obtain appropriate advice, and it is not appropriate that the tax apply in these circumstances. Accordingly, all transfers of mobile homes in mobile home parks and the assignment of a right to occupy a mobile home site under the Mobile Homes Act 1989 will be exempt irrespective of the way in which the transfer transaction is documented. This removes the anomaly in the legislation and ensures the affordability of a secure but independent lifestyle for those preferring this popular style of residence.

There are several mobile home parks in and near the electorate of Mansfield, so I have been aware of and seeking to resolve this concern for some time. I am pleased that our National/Liberal coalition Government has taken these steps to solve the uncertainty. The mobile home purchase is often a good starting package for young couples. We want to be sure that that attractive start to the great Australian dream of owning their own home is preserved and facilitated for these young people.

I turn now to the land tax alterations. Although the amendments to the Land Tax Act 1915 are directed towards land developers, the wider community will benefit from the indirect effect on land prices. Until recently, subdivided land occupied by a developer was treated as a single parcel. Only one valuation was issued for the entire parcel. As the developer sold each subdivided lot, a separate valuation was issued to the

purchaser for that lot and a new valuation issued to the developer for the remaining lots. This valuation method effectively conferred a land tax concession on the developers because the single value of the subdivided lots was less than the aggregate value of each of the lots in the new subdivision if valued separately. In addition, any enhancement in the value of the subdivided land resulting from works carried out by the developer was disregarded under the old system.

Earlier this year, the Department of Natural Resources introduced a new system whereby a separate valuation will be issued for each lot in a plan of subdivision. The scheme takes effect from 1 July 1997 in the case of land subdivided after that date. The time of subdivision is when the plan of subdivision is registered under the Land Title Act 1994. As a result of the move to a separate valuation for each lot, the concession for subdividers will no longer be provided by way of the reduced valuation. This had the potential to increase the land tax payable by a developer as land tax is levied for each financial year based on the unimproved value of land in Queensland owned by a person at midnight on 30 June, immediately preceding the financial year. The unimproved value of land is determined by the Department of Natural Resources.

This Bill preserves the existing concession by providing that, for land tax purposes, values of subdivided lots are discounted by 40% for the first financial year following creation of the lot by an approved subdivider. This concession is limited to the first year, as developers will generally have disposed of the subdivided lots by the end of that period, and I suppose it is some incentive for them to market the land at a reasonable price. So the result is that lots are correctly valued but there is this discount or concession to keep taxes down, for they have to be passed on to the land purchaser if this amendment were not made. With this amendment, persons wishing to build a home can continue to benefit from this Government's commitment to preserving Queensland's low-tax status. I think that just those two features alone of this Bill are a boon to Queenslanders. I therefore commend the Bill to the House.

**Mr HARPER** (Mount Ommaney) (12.54 p.m.): In rising to wholeheartedly support the progressive changes in this Bill, I would like to comment at the outset that this Government is totally and wholly committed to tax reforms and will continue to be totally involved in that process to ensure that the

people of Queensland benefit and that equitable tax systems come in.

In speaking to this Bill today I want to concentrate particularly on the reduction in compliance costs. This Government is committed to reducing the taxation burden on taxpayers. Tax concessions such as the mobile home exemption we have just heard about and the preservation of land tax concessions to developers, in addition to concessional measures announced in the 1997-98 Budget, are an obvious demonstration of this commitment. Less obvious, but no less important, are measures which reduce the cost to taxpayers of complying with taxation legislation. In this regard, the Bill contains two significant amendments clarifying various aspects of the stamp duty legislation. These changes will make it easier for taxpayers to identify their rights and to meet their obligations in relation to the payment of stamp duty. In particular, the changes will assist taxpayers to understand the circumstances in which a refund may be available and when a liability to land rich duty will arise.

Section 75 of the Stamp Act 1894 provides for the payment of an allowance or refund in respect of stamp duty paid under the Act. The right to apply for an allowance is available only where the stamp is unused, useless or superfluous to the person's requirements, the stamp has been inadvertently physically spoiled, or the stamp has been attached to an instrument which never has been of legal effect. Twelve circumstances are specified in which a refund may be made. In this regard, the commissioner has a discretion whether or not to make an allowance. The longstanding practice of the commissioner has been to make an allowance in cases falling within one of the 12 instances specified or in similar circumstances. On this basis, an allowance would be available, for example, where a mistake is made in preparing a document so that the document does not reflect the intention of the parties or where documents are of no legal effect. There has been some uncertainty in the meaning of the section which has given rise to disputes as to whether an allowance is payable. The amendments contained in this Bill ensure that the section more clearly identifies the circumstances of a refund, providing greater certainty and reducing the costs of compliance for taxpayers, once again helping the people.

I turn now to the amendments to the land rich provisions of the Stamp Act 1894. They

will benefit taxpayers in two ways. Firstly, they will clarify the operation of the provisions in relation to land under a contract to purchase and, secondly, they will extend the commissioner's power to make reassessments and refunds in relation to certain land rich assessments. The land rich provisions were enacted in 1988 to overcome minimisation of stamp duty by the acquisition of shares in land rich companies rather than the acquisition of the land itself. Previously, the acquisition of shares in a land rich company would have attracted duty at a flat rate of 0.6% on the net value of the shares, whereas the transfer of the underlying land would attract duty at normal and higher progressive conveyance rates of up to 3.75% on the unencumbered value of the land disregarding liabilities.

The land rich provisions apply to the acquisition of a majority interest of over 50% or a further interest over and above a majority interest in a land-holder corporation. The general test is that a corporation is a land-holder if it is entitled to land in Queensland having a full unencumbered value of at least \$1m and land represents at least 80% of the corporation's property. Duty is assessed at the normal conveyance rates on the proportion of the gross value of the land represented by the interest acquired. While the present provisions cater for land being purchased to be included in land to which a corporation is entitled, there are cases where uncertainty arises for taxpayers. This is because the common law relating to land under contract is complex and somewhat ambiguous and does not assist in deciding who is entitled to the land. The consequent uncertainty may create difficulties for taxpayers in applying the provisions and in calculating the amount of stamp duty payable. Uncertainty in the operation of legislation increases the compliance costs to taxpayers through, for example, the cost of obtaining expert legal advice. This is particularly relevant in relation to the land rich provisions which will ordinarily apply to corporations involved in high-cost ventures such as land development.

In addition to clarifying this area of uncertainty in the operation of the land rich provisions, the provisions of the Bill will extend the commissioner's existing powers to adjust assessments to reflect the ultimate ownership of the land and make refunds where necessary once the contract is completed or cancelled. Presently, the commissioner may make a reassessment and refund in relation to the rescission of contracts to purchase land. This adjusts the land rich assessment so that the corporation does not pay duty in respect of land to which it is subsequently shown not to

have been entitled. The amendment applies the same principle to enable the commissioner to exercise a similar power where a contract for the sale of land is completed after a land rich assessment was raised. However, to ensure that the intended anti-avoidance operation of the section is not eroded in relation to contracts for sale, any refund in this case will be subject to the commissioner's satisfaction that the event creating the right to a refund is not part of an arrangement or scheme for the avoidance of land rich duty. So the provision applies to help the taxpayer and also protect the State.

Sitting suspended from 1 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

**Mr HARPER:** A recent Court of Appeal decision has highlighted a deficiency in the Stamp Act's operation. Stamp duty under the head of charge "Declaration of Trust" or "Settlement, Deed of Gift or Voluntary Conveyance" is usually payable when property is subjected to a trust by a declaration of trust or settlement. Duty is assessed at progressive conveyance duty rates of up to 3.75% on the full unencumbered value of the property. The scenario considered by the Court of Appeal involved an arrangement whereby a number of properties worth in excess of \$280m were moved into various trust structures with a view to issuing units in the trust to the public. Over \$10m in stamp duty otherwise payable on subjecting the property to the trusts was avoided.

The Commissioner of Stamp Duties assessed duty in reliance upon section 54AB of the Act, which applies to a transaction which results in a person obtaining an estate or interest in land in Queensland where there is no instrument chargeable with conveyance duty. However, the Court of Appeal held that the section did not apply to these transactions. As the scheme is now in the public domain due to the Court of Appeal's decision, substantial revenue is at risk until this loophole is closed. Ultimately, the revenue cost of such schemes is borne by the wider taxpaying community. By removing the deficiency in the Act which provides this opportunity for avoidance, the amendments ensure that all taxpayers pay the correct amount of duty and that the majority are not disadvantaged by the minority.

I have covered but a few of the progressive moves in this Act, and I support the Bill.

**Hon. J. M. SHELDON** (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (2.32 p.m.), in reply: As I said in my

second-reading speech, this legislation represents a further valuable contribution to the goal of greater certainty and equity for taxpayers by a number of means. I thank members on both sides of the House for their valuable contributions and also for the support of the Opposition.

Firstly, the Bill clarifies the operation of a number of stamp duty provisions and updates the land tax legislation so that it keeps pace with developments in the Valuer-General's system of land valuation. Secondly, it removes a significant stamp duty loophole—

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Secondly, it removes a significant stamp duty loophole which would enable some taxpayers to avoid payment of duty and shift the burden of taxation onto others in the community. And thirdly, it provides an important concession to residents of mobile home parks, relieving them of the burden of stamp duty on the purchase of their mobile homes.

These amendments are important to ensure that Queensland's tax laws remain up to date. A good example are the changes earlier this year adopted by the Valuer-General in valuing newly subdivided land. As has been pointed out, without updating the land tax legislation, this change would adversely impact on land developers and, consequently, increase the cost of land to Queenslanders. The new concession provided in this Bill will eliminate that possibility.

Uncertainty in tax laws increases compliance costs for taxpayers who are required to seek expert advice to determine their tax liabilities. As stamp duty applies to business, as well as private transactions, this increases business costs and creates inefficiencies. Amendments in this Bill are aimed at removing uncertainty which presently exists in relation to applications for spoiled stamp allowances and the operation of the land rich company provisions relating to land under contract. Importantly, the changes in relation to stamp duty allowances are consistent with the longstanding assessing practice of the Office of State Revenue so that there will be no change in the circumstances in which allowances are presently made.

Honourable members on both sides of the House have confirmed that residents of mobile home parks have, for some time, been affected by a degree of uncertainty as to the

stamp duty payable on purchases of their mobile homes. I am pleased that this Bill will remove this uncertainty by providing an exemption for the transfer of a mobile home situated, or for situation, on a mobile home site in a mobile home park.

While the amendments in this Bill will significantly improve the operation of our stamp duty legislation, there would be benefits in rewriting the legislation so that it is more in tune with modern commercial practice. The Opposition referred to the stamp duty rewrite project begun some years ago under Labor and has asked for a progress report. When Labor was in power, the Queensland stamp duty rewrite was being undertaken independently of the joint rewrite project in which New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory were involved. As a result, when we came to power, the joint rewrite had been under way for some time, and a large number of policy decisions had already been taken defining its direction. There was, however, an opportunity to become involved in developing the conveyance duty model as the joint rewrite's exposure draft conveyance duty model was being reviewed following criticism of the proposals contained in their 1995 exposure draft.

This Government is well aware of the importance to the business community of, wherever possible, aligning State tax regimes and approved the Office of State Revenue joining in discussions with the other rewrite participants to develop the acquisitions model for conveyance duty contained in the exposure draft. As has been pointed out, conveyance duty makes up a significant component of all stamp duty revenue.

Significant development work was done throughout last year at officer level. However, New South Wales finally decided that it would adopt a more limited legislative model more suited to its tax base. Once that occurred, it was not possible to implement a national model based on acquisitions. The latest development is that New South Wales has introduced its own stamp duty rewrite legislation into Parliament this month. It is understood that the legislation will take effect from 1 July next year and that other rewrite jurisdictions are likely to adopt it as the base model for stamp duty legislation. However, Victoria and South Australia have already announced that they will need to modify the model in view of their different tax bases. Victoria has also indicated that it will be adding

certain anti-avoidance provisions to the model. The New South Wales model is likely to undergo further changes before it is implemented, and the Government will be monitoring developments as they occur. Once the proposals in New South Wales and other jurisdictions are settled, the Office of State Revenue will consider the legislation and report to the Government on the proposals from Queensland's perspective.

The shadow Treasurer has also commented on the appropriateness of the coalition's policy to abolish land tax over 10 years when there is a national tax reform agenda in progress. Honourable members will be aware that the Government has already made a number of amendments to the Land Tax Act in the form of three-yearly averaging provisions, increases in exemption levels and a general 5% rebate. So the coalition has certainly acted on its election promises and has implemented them in the two years in which we have been in power. Our policy always was that we would abolish land tax over 10 years, and we are well on the way to doing that.

The recent announcement by the Commonwealth Government of reform of the Australian taxation system is being carefully watched by the coalition Government, but the details of any reform package are certainly far from settled. It would be unreasonable to expect this Government to change its policy settings on the basis of what Canberra might or might not do. Obviously, once the Commonwealth's position is known, the Government will need to consider the impact of the national proposals upon its own revenue legislation and make decisions about future policy directions.

This Bill is another move by the Government to tidy up the State's various stamp duty laws. The Office of State Revenue has been working very hard and diligently to do that. At the end of the day, the people who will benefit from this legislation are the consumers: the business people, the ordinary people who pay taxes in their daily lives. I am sure that the increased clarity will be a boon to them. The amendment contains very able provisions to help a number of people across the tax spectrum.

Motion agreed to.

#### **Committee**

Clauses 1 to 14, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mrs Sheldon, by leave, read a third time.

### APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (No. 2)

#### Remaining Stages; Cognate Debate

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (2.42 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That so much of Standing and Sessional Orders be suspended to enable the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) being treated as cognate Bills for their remaining stages—

- (a) one question being put in regard to the second reading;
- (b) the consideration of the Bills together in Committee of the Whole House;
- (c) one question being put for the Committee's report stage; and
- (d) one question being put for the third reading and titles."

Motion agreed to.

#### Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from 18 November (see p. 4281).

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich) (2.43 p.m.): The Bills before us contain an authorisation of expenditures from the Consolidated Fund totalling in excess of \$449m, and, in respect of the Trust and Special Funds, a sum of \$2.7 billion for the financial year 1996-97. In relation to this unforeseen expenditure, in her second-reading speech the Treasurer indicated a number of reasons why the expenditure was of such magnitude. Certainly in relation to the expenditure from trust and special funds, a very large part of that expenditure is attributable to changes that took place in relation to State superannuation. Honourable members would recall that some months ago we enacted legislation that brought together a number of pre-existing superannuation funds. The moneys from those funds have since been outlaid into the new fund. Consequently, we see them appearing as expenditure items from the trust accounts. Almost \$1.1 billion of the \$2.7 billion from Trust and Special Funds expenditure is directly attributable to those changes to State superannuation. The other major change occurred as a result of the creation of WorkCover and the closure of the

old Workers Compensation Fund and the transfer of those moneys to the new WorkCover account. That accounted for a further \$1.4 billion of the expenditure that is covered in the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1997.

However, that does not account of course for the sum of money that is being authorised as having been expended from the Consolidated Fund. Of course, that falls into two basic categories. Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1997 authorises the expenditures of some \$448.952m in the Consolidated Fund. The Treasurer indicated that that unforeseen expenditure was largely attributable to a range of things, including natural disasters, the gun buy-back program for which there had been no appropriation contained in the Appropriation Bills that accompanied the Budget for 1996-97, and several other reasons for that unforeseen expenditure of such magnitude. There was also some \$239,000 expended in relation to the Parliament which, of course, is subject to Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2), which is part of this cognate debate.

To go behind those figures one has to have recourse to the Treasurer's Annual Statement, which was recently tabled in the House when these Bills were introduced. The Treasurer's Annual Statement for 1996-97 shows that the money that is the subject of this appropriation, the \$449m, was derived from two sources. One source was some \$60m worth of lapsed appropriations for the 1996-97 financial year, that is moneys that were allocated but which were not spent. Of course, that went back into Government and was then reallocated. The other source was from additional revenues generated by the Government over the 1996-97 financial year. That makes for some interesting reading, because I well recall that when debating this coalition Government's first Budget the Treasurer rose in the House and breached a fundamental election commitment that there would be no new or increased taxes in the coalition's Budget.

What did we see? We saw a raft of new taxes and increased taxes. Do honourable members remember the significant increase to bank account debits tax, a significant increase to tobacco tax, new charges on the motorist and new charges in TAFE? The Government proposed two new levies, one on oil and one on tyres on which, through its sheer incompetence in not adequately consulting with the community and in not being able to establish an administrative structure to deliver on those two levies, it failed to deliver and had

to abort during the ensuing financial year. At the time, the Opposition said quite clearly that those additional imposts on the people of Queensland were not only unnecessary but also unwarranted. What did the Treasurer's Annual Statement reveal? In relation to bank accounts debits tax, actual collections across the year ending 30 June 1997 exceeded even the Budget estimate by almost \$10m. In fact, there was an increase in collections under bank account debits tax of some 31.2% over the 1996-97 financial year.

The people of Queensland remember that broken commitment. They remember it every time they use their cheque accounts and they remember it every time they use a MasterCard or bankcard which is linked to their cheque accounts. Every time that they go to the bank and every time they use their credit cards, they remember Mrs Sheldon's broken promise that there would not be any increased taxes. Bank account debits tax is an insidious impost and one which the coalition Government chose to levy on the people of Queensland.

The other significant increase came through tobacco tax, which was significantly increased last year. In fact, collections through tobacco tax increased by 8.6% during 1996-97. Again, that was a breach of another election promise by the Treasurer and the coalition Government. It took them only seven months to breach the fundamental promises that they had made only 12 months before.

**Mr Beattie:** They were called commitments, too.

**Mr HAMILL:** They were called commitments. They were the things on which the Premier claimed he had a contract with the people of Queensland. But what do we find? In the first Budget of the Premier and the Treasurer, there was a breach of contract that the people of Queensland will no doubt pursue at the polls next year. They will not forget that breach of trust.

What else lies behind such a significant increase in State revenues in the last financial year? The answer is: the coalition Government's milking of Government owned enterprises and corporations. I well remember that when the Treasurer was in Opposition she accused the then Labor Government of fleecing Government corporations to bolster the Budget. The Treasurer has turned that into an art form. Dividends paid by Government owned corporations in 1996-97 actually increased from \$348m to \$675m. That represents a very significant increase in the

funds being siphoned out of the public sector enterprises of the State.

When one adds to that the fact that Government owned corporations were paying tax equivalents as well as dividends and that the level of tax equivalents rose from \$115m to \$270m in that year, we can well understand why the Treasurer found such an enormous sum of money to commit to the unforeseen expenditures that we are seeking to ratify in the Appropriation Bills this afternoon. That represents a windfall to the Government of in excess of \$400m. Where did the money come from? It came out of such places as the electricity industry, Queensland Rail and the ports. Industry ought to understand that the Government exercised certain choice. It went for increased taxes and increased dividends when it could have provided lower prices to Queensland business. It went for revenue at the expense of the public sector corporations in the same way as it went for the hip pocket of the Queensland taxpayer in terms of the tobacco tax, the BAD tax, extra charges on motor vehicles and so on. As I have said, the people of Queensland will not forget this high-taxing Government, which has no regard whatsoever for probity and for its own election commitments.

On the subject of broken promises, here is a doozy: on 19 March last year, flushed with pride at having just become Treasurer of the State, the honourable member for Caloundra addressed the Conservative Club in Brisbane. Copies of this speech have become collector's items, because within its pages there is broken promise upon broken promise. We will continue to remind the Treasurer of those broken promises on top of broken promises. It is a great speech to read now in order to reflect upon the chaotic financial management that has become the hallmark of this ramshackle coalition Government. The broken promise that I wish to canvass particularly this afternoon relates to capital works. We hear a lot from the Treasurer and the Premier about capital works, but let us see whether the Government actually works in the way that the Treasurer promised it would. In March 1996 at the Conservative Club, the Treasurer said—

"In capital works, year after year"——

**Dr Watson** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** The member would not want to walk out on this. This is vintage Sheldon. This is a rare drop and members opposite will savour every moment it. The Treasurer stated——

"In capital works, year after year"——

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** I know that some opposite find the Treasurer hard to swallow, because they tell me that all the time. However, they should listen to her words——

"In capital works, year after year the former Government failed to spend the funds it allocated. The Coalition will make sure that the entire capital works budget each year is in fact spent—that the roads, hospitals, schools etc are built and services provided to the community."

That is a very important quotation, because in the Estimates committee hearings of last year we probed the Treasurer on the very issue of carryovers. We found that, in direct breach of that commitment, no less than \$462m worth of expenditure was carried over from the 1995-96 Budget to the 1996-97 Budget. Does Mr Beattie remember the eagerness with which the Assistant Under Treasurer rushed to the floor to tell us exactly how much of that \$462m was actually capital expenditure?

**Mr Beattie:** I remember.

**Mr HAMILL:** Mr Gray was very helpful in those Estimates committee hearings. He told us that no less than \$178m of capital works money was left unspent in that Budget and carried over into 1996-97—\$178m of funds that the Treasurer said would certainly not be carried over because it would have all been spent on roads, schools, hospitals and services. Of course, it was not spent.

What about this year? The Treasurer's Annual Statement for this year reveals not that there was no carryover, in other words, it did not reveal that the Treasurer had actually honoured her commitment of last year. To the contrary, the level of carryovers this year is greater than last year, with \$469.169m being carried over.

**Mr Beattie:** She did it again.

**Mr HAMILL:** And in style! This from a Treasurer who told us that there would be no carryovers!

The question arises—and this information was not contained in the Treasurer's Annual Statement: exactly how much of that \$469m was in fact the capital carryovers that the Treasurer said she would not carry over? We find that the Government has become increasingly sensitive in relation to the issue of capital works spending or, should I say, capital works non-spending. The Treasurer would well recall my keen interest in this matter because, over a number of months, I have asked her a

series of questions about the progress of the Government in delivering its Capital Works Program. Many departments have great difficulty in actually managing the moneys allocated to them for capital works.

The business community was also getting on the back of the Government and complaining bitterly about its non-performance. We have since found that the Government has been running a new line, namely, "We've been overspending our capital works." Woe betide anyone who wants to try to get the figures from the Government! The Treasurer will not answer the questions. She says, "Refer to the Budget papers." The Premier, who in his Ministerial Program Statements this year claimed that he had a unit established to monitor capital works spending, says, "No, I can't answer that question. You have to ask individual departments." Yet that does not stop the Premier beating his chest and claiming record allocations and approvals in, say, the month of October, as he did in this place but a couple of days ago.

It makes it very difficult to get to the heart of the issue when the Government will not divulge its figures. On the subject of the non-divulgence of figures, interestingly, this year the Treasurer's Annual Statement did not contain the audited and certified statements of departmental expenditures that have customarily been included in the Treasurer's Annual Statement. What were we told? We were told, "No, you look at the individual annual reports of the departments." That requires a bit of work and a fair bit of patience, but I am not a slouch and I have enormous patience. I went back through all of the annual reports to find what I could find.

The trouble is that we are debating this Bill today, yet the Department of Main Roads and the Department of Transport have yet to table their annual reports. I understand they may have been given some sort of extension. However, had the Treasurer complied with the normal practice, we would not have had an absence of information from this debate, we would have had the certified statement in the Treasurer's statement which was tabled in this place about a week ago. In spite of the absence of information in the case of two departments that have a very significant capital works budget—we are talking about the whole of the roads program for the State and all of the transport infrastructure in general—we can nevertheless piece together a picture of this Government's performance in relation to capital works.

What do the annual statements reveal? They reveal many things. In the case of Sport and Recreation, about \$5.5m worth of capital works were carried over—not spent. In the case of Families, \$4.5m in capital works moneys for child-care centres was not spent. Those services were not delivered. This morning in question time the Police Minister bragged about his performance. He has nothing else, but he does have front. \$1.6m in police capital works was not spent and not delivered. What was the Treasurer saying about police stations? \$1.6m for police stations was carried over, according to the Police Service annual report. The next one is a real doozy. Mr Deputy Speaker, this one will knock you out. \$43m in the Corrective Services capital works budget was not spent. I have to wonder whether that money was supposed to have been spent on lights, sirens and barbed wire to keep in the prisoners, or on the locks for the gates that are not locked.

**Mr Beattie:** Brendon Abbott knew about that.

**Mr HAMILL:** I am sure he did. He would have noticed that \$8m worth of expenditure earmarked for Wacol was not spent and that \$3.8m earmarked for Lotus Glen in north Queensland was not spent. I cannot resist this one: is this not the Government that has been running ads saying to kids, "Don't be naughty, otherwise you'll end up in jail"? \$28m for juvenile detention capital works was not spent. This is the Government that gave us "tough on crime". It ought to start being tough on its departments in respect of delivering capital works for services which the Government claims it is delivering.

Just when Government members may have thought I had concluded, I will give the House a couple more examples. In the Department of Local Government and Planning, \$40m worth of capital moneys, largely for water supply and sewerage, was not spent—more capital works that simply did not occur. In the Department of Natural Resources, \$14m for major water infrastructure projects was not spent. In the Department of Primary Industries, which also has responsibility for the Boating and Fisheries Patrol, some \$3.8m under the vessel replacement program was carried over as part of the amount carried over in capital works, as was some money for vehicles.

What a litany of neglect from a Government that has been trying to boast about its performance in delivering capital works! As I said, we have an incomplete set of records here thanks to this Government's

obsession with secrecy in relation to these matters. I have one more example for the Government, and this one is probably the piece de resistance. It relates to carryovers in the Building Trust Fund as mentioned in the annual report of the Department of Public Works and Housing. I am delighted that the Minister is in the Chamber, as is his defrocked predecessor. Page 148 of the annual report, under the Building Trust Fund, states—

"Expenditure was lower than anticipated mainly due to a decrease in the Client Capital Works Program totalling \$174.296 million."

The best is yet to come. It stated further—

"The decrease was mainly due to clients underspending on their capital works projects."

Thankyou, Ken Davies and the Department of Public Works and Housing! That director-general has been extraordinarily kind to us this year. He has really done a lot for the Opposition. What he and his department have not done is a lot to deliver the capital works program of the Queensland Government.

**Mr Beattie:** Those capital works confirm everything you have said about them.

**Mr HAMILL:** It does, and it indicates a fundamental mismanagement of what is a very important part of the Budget. The private sector in Queensland derives enormous strength from the dollars which the public sector entities spend, whether they be statutory authorities or through the appropriations in the Budget—the sorts of appropriations we are debating this afternoon. We see that this is pretty rich coming from a Government that talks about delivering its Capital Works Program when we look at the performance as written not by the Opposition but as contained in the Government's departmental annual reports. This mismanagement of the Capital Works Program has been the defining feature of the Borbidge/Sheldon Government. This was the very Government that, when it came to office, decided to apply the freeze.

**Mr Beattie:** They keep denying it.

**Mr HAMILL:** Yes. When we have recourse to the Treasurer's speeches, we see that is tragic. On the very same page in the Treasurer's speech last year when she said that there would not be any capital works carryovers she told the audience at the Conservative Club lunch—

"Specifically, I have written to all Ministers instructing that a temporary

freeze be put on all initiatives of the previous Government until the review is completed."

That freeze went on for months——

**Mr Beattie:** And months.

**Mr HAMILL:**—and months. In the meantime, a lot of construction activity in the State ground to a halt at a time when the State needed a boost that only the public sector could deliver in terms of capital works spending. It was a freeze which was accompanied by the Government's abandonment of an accelerated Capital Works Program designed to give the Queensland economy the stimulus it needed. For a Government to claim—as this Treasurer and Premier now do—that there was no freeze and that it really kept its Capital Works Program up and running, is it not passing strange that on the anniversary of the freeze, on the anniversary of the announcement that the new capital works ice age had arrived in Queensland, we found that two-thirds of the way through the 1996-97 financial year less than half of the capital works expenditure from the Consolidated Fund had actually been spent? That was information which came in answer to a question that I placed on notice before this dopey lot woke up to the fact that, by putting the information down on the record, they were being hoist upon their own petard in relation to their non-performance. In fact, by the end of May this year, capital and current expenditure from the Consolidated Fund was actually running \$500m under budget. So much for sound and responsible budget management!

Earlier this week we heard the Premier going on about alleged inconsistencies in the Opposition's critique of the Government's poor performance in relation to capital works. The Premier claimed that the Opposition had suggested that there had been a freeze on capital works spending. From the Treasurer's own words, we see that indeed there had been a freeze. Then the Premier suggested that I had somehow done a backflip, that I was criticising the Government for overspending on its capital works budget at the end of the 1996-97 financial year. That is not so. At that time, I did say that the Government's level of spending as recorded at that time was unsustainable, and I stand by that observation.

The Queensland Government claims to have spent around \$2 billion in the month of June this year—in one month. That is about double the average monthly expenditure across the other 11 months of the financial

year. In fact, we had gone from a situation in which this Government was around \$500m underspent at the end of May to the Budget being overspent in excess of \$400m. That is why we have got this legislation before us now. This is the unforeseen expenditure. What of this massive capital works and general spending that we saw in June? It has quickly petered away. In fact, if we look at the September quarter just concluded, we find that the level of spending from the Consolidated Fund has gone back to the levels that we saw prior to June 1997. The average monthly expenditure in July, August and September has gone back to about \$1.2 billion per month—a far cry from the \$2 billion which was chalked up in June.

What is also instructive is that all the old offenders are back in town. All of the policy areas of the Government's endeavour which we had exposed as letting the side down throughout 1996-97 are back in the business of letting the side down again. The most significant of those is Health. Health is now over \$100m under budget in terms of its spending in the year to date; in fact, it is almost \$120m under budget. The Health Minister is in the Chamber; perhaps he would like to tell us how his Capital Works Program is going. I would have thought that about half of that expenditure would have to be on capital works, or is he not paying the salaries of doctors, nurses, health professionals and administrators? I would have thought that much of Health's budget would have to be paid week in, week out and that it is more than likely that it is the capital side of the budget which is lagging.

Out of all the old offenders, is it not appropriate that Police and Corrective Services are in there? They are also one of the poorer performers.

**Mr Horan:** You made a fool of yourself last year. Are you going to make a fool of yourself again?

**Mr HAMILL:** I will come to the Minister on that point, because obviously he has come in late and he has not been following the line of argument. There is a bit more in store for the Minister.

In relation to law, order and public safety, the Minister who failed to spend his capital works on police stations last year and the Minister who failed to spend over \$40m on secure detention centres for juveniles and adults is currently administering an area of budget which is over \$60m below budget. For a Government that prides itself on its support for the rural sector, Natural Resources, Primary

Industries and so on are lagging by about \$20m below budget as well. The first item that I highlighted in relation to underspending was in sport and recreation. Guess what? They are at it again.

**Mr Beattie:** At it again.

**Mr HAMILL:** They are at it again. For a Government whose priorities are well known in not supporting adequately the disadvantaged in the community—those in need of public housing and of additional support—social welfare and housing is not performing either.

Given this picture, how could it be explained? Even some of the commentators who are usually sympathetic to the Government criticised Treasurer Sheldon's Budget this year, describing it as throwing the economy over to vaudeville in recording for the first time in memory a deficit within the Government sector. How can we explain a situation in which all the evidence shows chronic underspending and lapsed expenditure on capital works with a Government that is running around claiming that it is actually spending its Budget? Again, we need to have a look at the official figures.

I refer the Treasurer to the Financial Outcomes Report for 1996-97 which she tabled—another Queensland Government glossy. In particular, I refer her to table 3 which appears at page 20 of that report and to that area of the table which deals with capital outlays by the State Government sector and especially to that expenditure on new fixed capital assets. I am glad that her Parliamentary Secretary is a good secretary and is looking up the line for her. It makes interesting reading. Mr Harper will confirm that for 1996-97—that is the far right column—a sum is recorded there of some \$3.169 billion of expenditure on new fixed assets. It is correct, is it not, Mr Harper?

**Mr Harper:** Yes.

**Mr HAMILL:** I am pleased that we agree on the reading of that table. That happens to also be the figure which the Treasurer may have inadvertently used because it was probably in a press release—not necessarily in her speech—reported in one of the financial journals recently as being the expenditure on the Queensland Government's capital works in 1996-97. What is really fascinating is that, given that my analysis this afternoon has really been about the Government's non-performance in capital works, we can actually cross reference that particular figure to the Budget papers.

There is a table in the Budget papers for this year—Budget Paper No. 2 for 1997-98. I refer the Treasurer to page 134 of Budget Paper No. 2, which contains a table which is also the economic transaction summary for the State Government sector for 1996-97. The Budget estimate as adjusted was for expenditure on new fixed assets of \$3.588 billion. I further refer her to the estimated actual expenditure—these are the Budget papers which the Treasurer brought down in May this year—for 1996-97 on new fixed assets. It was rendered in that table at \$3.479 billion. Both of those figures are significantly greater than the actual sum which the Treasurer's document—her Financial Outcomes Report—reveals was in fact spent. In fact, actual new capital expenditure—in other words, her Capital Works Program—came in at \$419m, or 11.7% below budget last year.

That was from the Government that claimed to have spent—indeed, overspent—its capital works budget. Even more extraordinary is that, when she presented her Budget papers which included her estimated actual expenditure—and I presume that that figure would have been derived at around April this year; I am giving her the benefit of the doubt here—the actual figure of expenditure still came in \$310m below the estimated figure made two months out from the end of the financial year. That is 9% below her estimate.

Surely, she cannot have performed so terribly badly in the space of eight weeks. I will tell her what that does. It actually confirms the analysis that I was undertaking in relation to the overall management of her Budget in 1996-97. As I stated, at the end of May her level of expenditure was shown as being some \$500m—half a billion dollars—below her Budget estimate. So what happened? How is it that on one measure she can show \$2 billion worth of expenditure in one month, but on her official measure she showed that her capital moneys actually underperformed so greatly—by some \$400m below her Budget estimate? I want to quote further in relation to those statistics. That table to which I have been referring is a very important one, for it states at page 139 of Budget Paper No. 2—

"The intention of the GFS presentation is to provide an assessment of the financial implications of government outlay and revenue policy decisions. The transactions are analysed and presented in such a way as to draw out their economic impact."

It goes on to say—

"Capital expenditure involves the creation of infrastructure and other assets which add to the capital stock of the State."

In other words, the analysis we are undertaking here is an analysis of the economic impacts of the Government's budgetary decisions.

So despite all the bravado such as we saw from the Premier this week when he was rabbiting on about various approvals being made in October, the economic impacts of the Government's Budget are nothing like those that it claims. In fact, it is very like the Premier's statement. He was claiming that simply giving an approval to a project automatically delivered the project and all its economic benefits and impacts—whether it be employment or whether it be the economic stimulus that a Capital Works Program can deliver—where that simply is not the case. Really, all the Government is succeeding in doing is adding to the crisis of confidence which is already out there in the community. The community as a whole knows that services are not being delivered. The community as a whole knows that, for example, courthouse projects in Rockhampton, Cleveland and Southport are still to be delivered. They know that the juvenile detention centre has not been built, and they know that police stations are not being delivered. As they know that, then they question the veracity of claims that everything is sweetness and light and that here we have a Government that is on top of its task of managing its Budget.

The Government undershot its capital budget last year by \$420m, and its official statistics bear that out. How, then, can we have confidence—any confidence at all—when the Government claims that this year it will deliver a capital program worth in excess of \$4 billion?

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** I take the honourable member's interjection. How can any sane person have confidence that the Government will be able to lift its level of actual capital expenditure by 28% this year? I suggest that it is just another example of good old-fashioned conservative smoke and mirrors. It is one thing to announce a grand figure for capital works; it is quite another thing to actually deliver. Last year the Government missed by \$420m. By how far will it miss this year, because nothing has changed in terms of its management? In fact, if anything it has got worse because it has a back bench which is absolutely terrified

of the electorate and of facing the electorate. There are a few people sitting on the front bench who rather like the ministerial leather and are already sensing that their removal from it will be a most traumatic experience indeed.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** But a pleasant one for us.

**Mr HAMILL:** It will be a pleasant one, because we actually have some very clear commitments, something which the coalition did not have when it came to office. At the top of our commitments is the economy and jobs. When we look at the record of this Government in relation to jobs, it is a pretty poor one. In what was the powerhouse of the nation, we have seen little real jobs growth over the past 20 months. We saw the Treasurer's estimates for job creation in her first Budget fall away dramatically from the 50,000 jobs that were promised. We have seen an unemployment rate which has stuck up there between 9% and 10%, with little prospect of improvement. Youth unemployment is an absolute tragedy, with one third of youth who are seeking work being unsuccessful in their job search.

**Mr Mitchell:** Primary industry is very good.

**Mr HAMILL:** I am concerned about primary industry and I am concerned about the resource sector, and I am also concerned about the tourism sector. For those members of this place who seem to be living in the false hope that the budgetary strategies that this Government has been pursuing will finally kick in in time to save their electoral hides, then I suggest they think again, because not only are there problems on the domestic scene—and we see them in terms of high rates of unemployment, of sluggish activity in the housing sector, of patchy results in retail sales, as the Minister for Small Business would tell us if he got the right set of figures—

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** The member may well guffaw at that. It is tragic, but it is true. Even the Minister responsible for the business sector cannot get his facts right.

We also see low growth in private consumption and investment and, overall, exports are patchy. But what is happening externally? Two of our major trading partners are embroiled in a major currency meltdown. We saw the fourth-largest broking firm in Japan go belly up. The Korean economy has major structural problems such that it is seeking an economic assistance package. Is

that not the market for Queensland coal? Is it not the market for a range of our other primary products? Is it not the source of a lot of tourism into our State? Already economists are saying that the economic woes of our near neighbours may take a half to 1% off economic growth across the whole of the country next year. Well we may ask what impact that will have on Queensland, with our economy even more exposed than that of other States and Territories.

This comes at a time when the people of Queensland have been crying out for leadership and getting none. They cry out for leadership, but what do they get from this Government? They get stunts—stunts like the one we saw today, when the Premier came in here with a speech about 16 times longer than the Bill he was introducing in relation to native title. There has not been one constructive utterance from this Government in relation to that whole native title issue.

When a responsible Government would be out there creating certainty, all this Government does is go out there to create strife. When a responsible Government would have had as its No. 1 priority facilitating employment opportunities for Queenslanders and their kids, what did we get from this lot? We got a petty-minded approach which turned off the capital works. And then, when it allegedly turned the tap back on again, it still did not spend the allocations.

Queenslanders deserve much better than what they have been dished up over the past 20 months. Queensland's economy is fragile. Members should not forget that it is fragile. Those factors at work, both at home and abroad, represent major challenges to us all. Unless this Treasurer has the gumption to face up to those challenges then, frankly, she does not deserve to sit where she does. The people of Queensland have watched her closely over the past 20 months.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** They don't like what they see.

**Mr HAMILL:** They do not like what they see. And what they see is not very attractive, either.

This Government lacks leadership and direction. What members are debating here this afternoon is a testimony to that lack of direction and that lack of leadership. Yes, we have unforeseen expenditure of over \$400m. But what we have here is a Government that has its priorities all wrong—a Government that makes commitments but does not deliver them; a Government which, in a mad flurry to

try to make some of the books look good, threw the Budget to vaudeville—as the commentators said—and spent money on everything. Someone who was a doorknob manufacturer probably did well in June, because I reckon that this Government bought up big on doorknobs. I would bet that someone who sold a pile of blue metal to the Main Roads Department did well, but that blue metal is probably still sitting beside a road somewhere. Someone in public housing probably got new hinges on their doors and a new driveway because this Government was so desperate to spend the budget.

**Mr Connor:** I wasn't there.

**Mr HAMILL:** The member knows as well as I do that they were the sort of silly priorities that came to the fore when this Government ought to have been putting in place the real infrastructure—the real economic infrastructure and the social infrastructure—which improved the quality of life in Queensland and which created jobs. That is the tragedy of all this. It is a tragedy of lost opportunities—a tragedy of a Government that does not know where it is going, except for the fact that it knows that it is going to go down at the next State election. And there are lots and lots of Queenslanders out there who will be along to give it that little extra push to make sure that it goes down in a screaming heap.

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (3.34 p.m.): This Treasurer oversees a Budget which is characterised by waste, mismanagement and wrong priorities. It can find more than \$200m to remove the tolls on the Sunshine Motorway, but it cannot find the \$32m recommended by its own inquiry to bring the Ambulance Service up to standard. That is the sort of wrong priority I am talking about. It can find \$6m for politically tainted Government advertising, but it cannot find any extra money for the disabled. Indeed, I understand that, next February, we will have a repeat of the glossy \$400,000 booklet that was produced last year. This Government can find that sort of money, yet we have long delays when ordinary Queenslanders cannot get access to an ambulance. It cannot find money for that, but it can find money for self-promotion to get re-elected. It can find \$14.5m for the Connolly/Ryan inquiry, but it cannot stop a skyrocketing number of people waiting too long for hospital operations. Those are the sorts of wrong priorities of which this Government is guilty.

Let us look at the major achievements of this Treasurer and this Government: seven new or increased taxes. That is a high-taxing

Government. What about all those pensioners, all those low income earners, all those small-business people and those other ordinary Queenslanders who have been required to pay increases in the bank account debits tax, which strikes at the heart of ordinary Queenslanders from Coolangatta to Cape York? That is the sort of legacy of this Government: seven new or increased taxes.

But what happens when this Government comes under any criticism at all? We saw the performance yesterday by the Premier, who attacked the Courier-Mail because it made some assessment of the hypocrisy of the Treasurer's position in relation to net debt. He attacked the Courier-Mail and used that attack as a vehicle to try to get better coverage. This Government used it as a backdrop in the lead-up to the State election to try to improve its coverage. I say again to the Courier-Mail: do not be intimidated by the bullyboy tactics from the Premier, who seeks to stand over the Courier-Mail to get better coverage in the lead-up to an election.

Wendy Armstrong, the backroom secret person, sits down and writes all this material for the Premier, who then comes in here to denigrate anyone who has any opportunity, and takes that opportunity—which is a democratic right—to criticise this Government or the Premier. For example, the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner was doing her job, yet she was denigrated by this Government because she had the audacity to do what? To express an opinion! This Government will not tolerate criticism. Its incompetence is manifest, but it will not tolerate criticism. And every time this happens, Wendy Armstrong is in the back room writing attacks for the Premier in Parliament, as we saw yesterday.

Let us look at the other issue: jobs. During its time in office, this Government has witnessed a deterioration in the number of full-time jobs. There has been a dramatic drop in the number of full-time jobs in this State. When the Treasurer comes in here and talks about jobs, she really talks about part-time jobs, not full-time jobs, because, under this Government, the mismanagement has been so bad that there has been a drop in the number of full-time jobs.

After considering the performance of this Government, I agree with the shadow Treasurer. It is not about actually performing for Queensland or Queenslanders. It is about stunts. It is about spending money on advertising to get re-elected—television ads, unlimited expenditure—at least \$6m, and that

is only until Christmas. We will end up with more expenditure.

Today the Premier came in here and introduced a Native Title Bill which was totally unnecessary—another stunt. And while he was introducing it in Queensland, what was happening in the Senate? The Federal Government has basically pulled the Wik legislation in the Senate to deal with what it obviously regards as more important Bills.

**Mr Foley:** What a contrast.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Exactly. What a contrast. The coalition in Canberra is retreating in relation to the Wik legislation. As I understand it, the words from Senator Hill were to the effect that, if they get time, they will come back to it. So I ask members to look at the contrast. There is a clear contrast between what is happening at a Federal level and the stunts that are being pursued here at a State level.

Let us consider the issue of mismanagement. The very contents of this Bill are evidence of the mismanagement of this Treasurer. The second-reading speech tells us that one of the major reasons for the large level of unforeseen expenditure was supplementation of departmental budgets for enterprise bargaining outcomes. That is despite a massive increase in the Treasurer's Advance Account from \$100m in 1995-96 to \$259m last financial year. When we queried that massive increase, the Treasurer said it was needed to fund, among other things, enterprise bargaining outcomes that were to be negotiated throughout the year. As it turned out, only \$70m of the \$259m was used for enterprise bargaining outcomes; yet the Parliament is now being asked to approve an unspecified proportion of more than \$400m in so-called unforeseen expenditure.

The question must be asked: what happened to the remaining \$190m in the Treasurer's slush fund? Was it used for natural disaster relief payments? They account for only \$40m. The truth is that there is a range of expenditure items for the Treasurer's pet projects, such as \$2m for the Audit Commission Implementation Unit, and other items that should have been foreseen and budgeted for. Perhaps that is from where the coalition is funding the \$6m of self-promotion in an attempt to get re-elected. Labor managed to keep control of unforeseen items with \$100m in the Treasurer's advance. This Treasurer needs two and a half times that amount. Even then, we are confronted with a further appropriation of hundreds of millions in unforeseen expenditure. That is a clear

illustration of the mismanagement of this Government.

Is that money ending up in services? The answer is: no. I have already referred to the ambulance issue. I table for the information of this House a series of news reports that go back to when we last had a crisis in the Ambulance Service. That was in 1988 when the National Party was last in office. I table those news articles for the information of the House, because that is a trend among conservative politics in this State, that is, they do not provide adequate money for services. This is a clear illustration of the continuing behaviour that was very much prevalent until 1989 and the election of the Goss Government. We have certainly turned back the clock in relation to funding for the Ambulance Service. It has been almost 10 years. The last crisis was in 1988; in 1997 ambulance officers have to force the issue. The crisis is not just in ambulance services.

I turn to the crisis in Queensland's public hospitals where, under the coalition Government, record numbers of Queenslanders are being forced to wait too long for their operations. The misnamed Surgery on Time policy has been such a disaster and so ineffective that the Health Minister has restricted news of its failure to only half a page in the 76-page Queensland Health annual report. The crisis is so bad that, although the report is for the period of July 1996 to July 1997, the figures given are for only the six months to December 1996, because they got even worse in the six months from January to June. This Health Minister, who will go down in the history of this State as one of our worst, has operated on the figures and not provided operations for the needy.

In trying to find reasons why Queensland could have confidence in a coalition Government, on 20 February 1996 the member for Surfers Paradise promised that this Government would cut waiting lists in hospitals. The Government has failed to cut waiting lists as promised by the Premier. The incompetent Health Minister has not only failed to cut waiting times, the number of people waiting too long has blown out. I know that he has been able to run a smokescreen so that this matter has not seen the light of day. It is about time that the Courier-Mail spent some time examining what is this Minister's track record in relation to waiting lists and not making excuses for him. This tragedy for Queenslanders has not been adequately examined. I suspect that Logan Hospital,

where the Minister admits that there is a long waiting list for people to even get on the list for a Category 2 operation, is not alone. Ninety-seven per cent of Queenslanders waiting for an operation are on Category 2 and Category 3 lists. Although the Minister tries to hide the figures by focusing on Category 1, I will explain the current state of Category 2 and Category 3 lists. Leaked figures show that more than 3,600 Queenslanders are now waiting more than the medically recommended 90 days for Category 2 operations. In October last year, the number of people waiting too long in that category was about 1,800. That figure has doubled: from 1,800 to 3,600. In other words—and I stress this point—the number of people waiting for too long has doubled in the last year. That is the legacy of this Minister. That is not good enough. It is a disgrace. The number of people waiting more than the medically recommended year for Category 3 operations has also blown out. Under the Borbidge Government, well over 10,000 Queenslanders are now waiting too long for an operation. I warn this Minister and the Treasurer that we will be pursuing those issues publicly so that Queenslanders know exactly what is going on.

It is not good enough to pull the sort of stunts that we have seen being pulled. At the Prince Charles Hospital, the Treasurer and the Minister for Health turned up for a media stunt. They got the local bulldozer and workers out for that stunt. What happened when the media stunt was over? The bulldozer went and no work started. Talk about a stunt at the Prince Charles! They have had an overrun of the budget at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. One of reasons for that is that this Minister insisted that there be a crane on site. "Macho man" wanted a crane on site, so they trotted out a crane. It cost a fortune to put a crane on site. When the media stunt was over, out went the crane. Now the PA budget is blowing out.

**Mr Horan:** That's part of the capital works. You know that is not part of recurrent.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Listen to the Minister squeal. He will squeal, all right, because it is about time that we spent a little bit of time exposing what he does in Health, which, I can tell honourable members, is not in the interests of this State. We will inherit a legacy from him that will take us some time to sort out. We will sort it out because we will make sure that Queenslanders get a fair go.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** They can squeal all they like, but they know that this Minister will not get away with it.

I turn to debt. In two short years, the Treasurer has turned an underlying surplus of \$1.4 billion into an underlying deficit of \$99m. For the first time in years, the State's net debt is forecast to increase over the course of this financial year. I know that the Treasurer does not like using the net debt measure, but the Premier does. By the Premier's standard, her Budget for this financial year is eroding the financial strength of this State. Whether one uses net debt or includes contingent liabilities, it does not matter: the issue is not the absolute number but the trend in the measure over time. The trend under Labor was a progressive reduction of State debt by \$6 billion over six years of Government. In the latest Budget, the Borbidge/Sheldon Government reversed that trend for no apparent reason. There is no clearly stated policy about why debt is increasing under this Government. This Government is going down the road taken by Victoria and South Australia. I refer to what I said last night in the debate on the Electricity Amendment Bill (No. 3). The Government pulled \$850m out of the electricity industry and put half of it into recurrent expenditure. The Treasurer refers to some of the appropriate comments that I have made in relation to infrastructure funding; yet she is borrowing money from the electricity industry and putting it into recurrent expenditure.

We can observe extra debt piling up due to Main Roads taking on the responsibility for the Sunshine Coast Motorway debt. Last year, Main Roads' debt increased by \$81m. We have seen the first evidence of the use of the Horan debt. \$700m of additional hospital capital works will be funded by debt to be repaid out of hospital operating budgets. The Minister knows that that is how it works under his scheme. That will become the Horan debt, the Horan tax. Queensland Health's debt increased by \$20m last financial year. That will be the legacy of the Health Minister. I put it on the record today that we warned the people of Queensland of what the Horan debt is doing to Queensland Health.

The State's contingent liability for statutory bodies and enterprises has increased by \$1.3 billion, or 15.5%, in one year; yet, according to this Treasurer, more debt is a bad thing. She says one thing, but she does another. Treasurer Sheldon is putting Queensland on the bankcard. When I put forward a considered proposal about how debt could be legitimately used to fund important social and economic infrastructure, a proposal that has received widespread support from industry and business, I was attacked publicly

by the Treasurer. I would never put the debt money that has been raised by the Treasurer into recurrent expenditure, but the Treasurer has no difficulty at all in doing that.

The Treasurer claims that nothing more can be done to boost capital works spending in the State. As the shadow Treasurer has confirmed today, last year she underspent her capital works budget by \$400m and most projects, including most of those in Health, are behind schedule. Had I remained as Health Minister, many of the hospitals that are now behind schedule would have been close to being finalised. The Minister who is now leaving the Chamber knows that. All of those projects have dragged, and Health capital works projects are almost two years behind. This is about delivering hospitals. It is not about promises; it is about delivering the capital works.

The Treasurer claims that there is no need to use debt to support the infrastructure development that this State desperately needs, but she is behind the times. She says that on the one hand and on the other hand she takes money out of the electricity industry and puts it into recurrent expenditure. The extraordinary hypocrisy of that is breathtaking. Her own Commission of Audit report supports the responsible use of debt to fund infrastructure along precisely the same lines that Labor has now committed itself to. We will do that in a very cautious, conservative way, but we will provide infrastructure because out of infrastructure comes development, out of development comes growth, out of growth comes jobs and out of that comes hope for our young people. Fred Argy's report to the Infrastructure Association of Queensland advocates the same approach that I have advocated, as do most economists and financiers who have any commitment to good government.

The Treasurer says that she has embraced the Commission of Audit's fundamental principle of the maintenance of the State's net worth. I refer the Treasurer to pages 25 and 26 of Volume 1 of the Commission of Audit report, which states—

"Where a capital project offers sufficient economic and social returns ... a case can be made to fund such projects from debt ... Only in this way will the State's net worth be maintained for the future Queensland community ..."

Labor's policy on infrastructure and debt is the only way to maintain the State's net worth, yet the Treasurer criticises us and puts money that is borrowed from the electricity industry into

recurrent expenditure. That is exactly what happened in Victoria. As a Treasurer, Mrs Sheldon makes a good physiotherapist.

The Treasurer has committed her Government to massive expenditure and propped it up by reefing \$850m out of the electricity industry and by forcing it to take on more debt. The Treasurer has overseen a \$1 billion increase in dividend and tax payments from Government enterprises, despite protesting early in her term that it was irresponsible to erode the retained earnings of those enterprises. She has pushed for the split-up of the electricity industry and is only now realising that the reductions to efficiency that that entails will jeopardise the \$550m in annual dividends and taxes to the Budget. A sum of \$550m in annual dividends and taxes to the Budget is now in jeopardy as a result of the split-up of the electricity industry.

The Treasurer is backing herself into a corner. Queenslanders should not expect a lot of information on how the Budget is going between now and the next election. The last thing that the Treasurer wants now is scrutiny of her appalling mismanagement.

A lot of intelligent people who have examined the finances of this State and who are not associated with my political party but who are perhaps more inclined to associate with the Treasurer's political party are now saying to the shadow Treasurer and to me that they are concerned about how the finances of this State are being run. They are concerned about the borrowing of money, particularly from the electricity industry, and putting that debt into recurrent expenditure. They are warning us privately that we will need to examine the books carefully when we come to Government, which we will do.

This is a great State. It has provided leadership over many years. Under this Government it has slipped behind, not only in terms of unemployment but also in terms of growth and all other major indicators, whether that be sales or whatever. I give a commitment that when we return to office some time next year—and, frankly, in the interests of this State, the sooner the better—we will be returning Queensland to its position as the leading State in Australia.

**Mr HARPER** (Mount Ommaney) (3.54 p.m.): Once again we have a clear example of the Opposition's negative attitude as it tries to tear things down when they are going well. I guess one should expect that an Opposition that is desperate to get back into Government will not give us any praise. However, one would at least think that they

would stick to the facts and address the issues as they really are. The fact is that the Budget for the current financial year is designed to maintain Queensland's low tax position. We have reduced taxes and we are delivering on our promises to the people of Queensland, and the people of Queensland appreciate that. Record capital works are provided for in this year's Budget, following on from last year's, and that is, of course, creating jobs.

The Opposition has failed to recognise or will not recognise the amount of job creation that has gone on in Queensland, which far surpasses the record of any other State. Last year, the Queensland Government created well over half of the jobs that were created in Australia as a whole. The Opposition has failed to recognise the number of people who are flowing across the border and putting pressure on job creation, yet the Government is still meeting that demand and creating jobs for those people. However, as I have said, an Opposition that is desperate to get back into Government will not give praise where praise is due. By now, we should be used to the Opposition's negative way of addressing these matters.

Once again, the red herring of money from the electricity industry was dragged across the floor of this House. By golly, that red herring is starting to get pretty old and smelly by now! It should have been kept in the freezer that a member was talking about earlier in the day.

Opposition members conveniently forget the \$1.3 billion-odd gift that they made to their friend Paul Keating when he was Federal Treasurer. No matter what members opposite try to say, that gift was not designed to help Queensland. That gift was to help their mate get out of trouble with his Federal Budget. With the stroke of a pen they gave away \$1.3 billion of Queenslanders' money. That was not done to create permanent capital works and resources for Queenslanders, as this Government is doing, or to create jobs in Queensland, as this Government is doing. That was done to help their mate, former Prime Minister Keating, so that he could retain his position.

These two Appropriation Bills, which are debated every year, are really of a technical nature. A legislative process is required to formally appropriate supplementary supply for the services of the Government and the Parliament. The separation of Parliament's appropriation from the remainder of the Budget is seen as a demonstration of the independence of Parliament from the

Executive. The Governor in Council authorises the unforeseen expenditure under section 25 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977, pending supplementary appropriation by the Legislative Assembly, which is the process that we are now going through. Explanations relating to the unforeseen expenditure are provided by the accountable officers in the general purpose financial statements prepared under section 40 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 and they are included in annual reports in accordance with section 37(b) of the Act. Despite their interjections and comments, I wonder how many members opposite have read that Act.

I turn now to a couple of salient issues, starting with Trust and Special Funds. While at first glance it may seem that the changes in the Budget amounts are rather large, running into the billions, that is because of the change from the old Workers Compensation Fund to WorkCover Queensland and the transfer of the moneys from the old fund into the new, and also the revitalisation and the changes that were made to the superannuation scheme necessitating the transfer of funds from the old structure to the new structure. During the year we also had uniform gun control expenditure, which was unforeseen. As part of this Government's pledge to look after the State and the people who work for the State, changes were also made to enterprise bargaining expenditure by various departments.

The matter of underexpenditure within the Police and Corrective Services budget was raised. I am particularly pleased that one part of that Budget was underspent. I refer to the new jails that are to be built at Wacol. Money was underspent in the 1996-97 year because this Government cares about people. We stopped and listened to the people; we wanted to hear what they had to say. We were prepared to delay those essential works until we had worked through all the issues with the people in the community—my constituents—to ensure that we addressed their concerns, which we did by shifting the prisons from the original site. That is why the work was delayed by several months, and that is why in the 1996-97 year there had been an underexpenditure. I will return in a moment to what is happening in that area.

I wish also to speak about the new juvenile detention centre. Under this Government, the Corrective Services Minister took over that centre from the former Department of Family Services, in which it

used to reside under the former Labor Government. We found that no structure or philosophy had been put in place and nobody had looked at what was needed for these young people to ensure that the centre we built for juvenile detention was the right one.

Minister Cooper did the right thing. He had his board and various people look at this issue and work it through with the community to come up with the right answers. The people involved are very appreciative of that. That is why there has been a delay in regard to the juvenile detention centre. Similar to its approach with respect to the Wacol jails, this Government listens to the people and takes into account what they want, their desires and thoughts. Now that both of those projects are under way and on the go, they will be fast-tracked to ensure that those much-needed centres are built and brought into operation as quickly as possible. That point needs to be taken into account.

I wish briefly to address a couple of matters in which all Queenslanders would be interested. If we look at the current outlays for the 1996-97 year of \$10.651 billion, we will find that Education, under the very capable Minister, spent 27% of the current outlays budget. The Health Minister and his department spent 21%. That is a total of 48% for just those two key areas. That goes to show that this Government cares about people. What portfolios do more for people and care more about them than Education and Health? So 48% of the current outlays were spent in those two areas.

Similarly, we can look at the capital works outlays of \$3.42 billion. When members opposite were in power they would never have dreamed of spending that much money. Despite the juggling of figures by the Opposition spokesman, \$3.42 billion was spent. That represents a 21% increase over the 1996-97 year, or \$584m more. Nothing was said about that record increase of 21%. Obviously, members opposite cannot comprehend or come to grips with those increases. They realise that they would not be able to compete with that, given the way they run their budgets.

Let us break down that capital works spending. Some 35% of that amount was spent on transport and communications for the people. Education spent 11% of that amount. Schools are being built and improvements are being made to schools. I am happy to say that, next year when we look at the figures, a fair bit of that expenditure will have been on the new high school at

Jindalee, which I am very pleased about. Spending on Health accounted for 9% of that figure.

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** We well remember the Opposition's postcard deception during the last election campaign. We well remember its lies. The member for Inala can mimic me all he likes. He well remembers the damage that that postcard did to Labor's campaign. After the election was over, the gentleman whom I happened to defeat said that he did not want those postcards. He was skulking around this place again yesterday talking to the member for Inala. He is after me, but I am quite happy about that. The damage done by that postcard—

**Dr Watson:** Peter Pyke only has one friend in this place, and that's the member for Inala.

**Mr HARPER:** I am sorry for the member for Inala. That postcard well and truly put into perspective the Labor Party's claims that we were going to sell the hospitals. What have we done under this Government and Minister? From the top to the bottom of the State and out west, we are rebuilding our hospitals. As I said, spending on Health accounts for 9% of the capital works budget.

Education has a total budget of \$2.776 billion. We spent \$2.812 billion. We overspent on Education. We care about kids and we are giving them an education. Yet people could be forgiven for thinking that we had well and truly underspent in that area, given what the Opposition is saying. Once again, let us look at Health, which has a budget of \$3.011 billion. We spent \$3.070 billion. We overspent in that area by \$59m. We are getting on with the job of reducing waiting lists and making sure that people have adequate health care. As part of that Health budget, as with many other departments, enterprise bargaining with the staff was included. This Government also took on the responsibility of funding the dental health system. This Government wanted to make sure that Queenslanders were looked after in that regard.

Due to time constraints, I will not say any more. However, the results speak for themselves. The results are reflected in bricks and mortar and in the services delivered to the people. It was a fine Budget and it was well spent. I support the Bill.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE** (Ipswich West) (4.05 p.m.): This Government has its priorities all wrong. A few moments ago the member for Mount Ommaney mentioned using facts. It is

a shame that a lot of members opposite have not used facts, particularly when they speak about unemployment. The member for Mount Ommaney said that his Government was doing a great job in respect of reducing unemployment. However, if we look at the official statistics that I have here—these are not my statistics, but statistics prepared by the department—we see that they are quite disturbing, particularly in relation to a number of unemployment districts, namely, Ipswich, Goodna and Inala.

As at 30 June 1996, the number of people in the area receiving unemployment benefits was 9,035. As at 30 September, 8,885 people were receiving unemployment benefits. That means that over the past 15 months the best this Government has been able to do is to reduce unemployment by 10 people each month. That is pitiful. Members opposite run around the State and country saying what a great job they are doing. I think everybody is awake to them. By the middle of next year, I am sure members opposite will have found that out the hard way.

In respect of the electorate that I represent, if we are going to do anything about unemployment we need to attract industry to Ipswich. I acknowledge that that is not easy to do. We have been trying to convince this Government that there is a way of doing that.

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** It would be good if the member for Gympie listened instead of interjecting. If he did so, perhaps he might learn something.

In respect of unemployment, if we are going to make big inroads in the West Moreton area we will have to do our best to attract industry to Ipswich. The only way we will be able to do that is to build an industrial estate on serviced land. I appreciate that every member of Parliament wants an industrial estate in his or her backyard and that that is not necessarily achievable in all areas, because industry may not want to go to some places. However, Ipswich is 50 to 55 minutes' drive from the heart of Brisbane. We are in very close proximity to ports and airfields. Ipswich is ideally suited to industry.

Our big problem is that we do not have serviced land in the area. It is all well and good to think that councils or the free enterprise system should put those resources in place. However, they do not always have the financial resources to do so. There is an enormous amount of land in the Ipswich area.

Unfortunately, none of it is serviced. We have been able to identify land in the area of Willowbank and we have convinced a company to take an option—

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I hope we have the member's support as time goes on, because that would be in the best interests of everybody in this House.

**Mr FitzGerald:** I helped get the racetrack there.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** That is good. I hope the member can convince some of his colleagues that they should support us in relation to supplying services to this land.

**Mr Hamill:** Fitzy's the Minister for Small Business and Industry!

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** Perhaps he should be; the other one is not doing very well at the moment.

A company has taken an option over that land at Willowbank for the next two and a half years. It is 265 hectares in size and it is in very close proximity to a rail line. That land needs to be serviced by power, water and roads. We cannot expect the local authority to pay out all of the money for that work. This Government has a responsibility to play a leading role in that project.

We are certainly committed as an Opposition. When we come to Government next year, make no bones about it, we will play our part in attracting industry and putting in the services that are required. I am not the only one who has been pushing some of these issues. Some of the Minister's own people in the department have certainly agreed with what we are saying. In fact, I will read from an article that appeared on 7 April this year in the Queensland Times. It states—

"Ipswich has two years to provide enough serviced industrial land or it will face a jobs crisis, according to a State Government business representative.

Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry ... Ipswich manager Bruce Garbutt said the issue was vital for jobs growth.

'If we don't have the land for industry, you are reducing the potential for jobs growth,' he said.

'If we don't do something about it in the next two years it would be critical.'

That is not us saying that, that is somebody from the Minister's own department acknowledging that there really is a crisis. We

have very high unemployment and very high youth unemployment. All of us want to find a place where our children can get a job or an apprenticeship.

I wrote to the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry. I will just read part of that letter. It states—

"Minister, Ipswich has a very high unemployment rate and an industrial estate could help provide much needed employment for many residents of this region.

Therefore, I would appreciate it if you could advise:

- a) is the State Government interested in purchasing more land for development into industrial estates;
- b) will the Government be purchasing any land for future Industrial development in areas such as Ebenezer?"

Ebenezer is in very close proximity to Willowbank. I received a letter back from the Minister in June of this year. It states—

"Thank you for your letter ... regarding the supply of industrial land in the Ipswich Region.

In response to your particular concerns, I would advise as follows:

- a) the State Government has no plans for the purchase of more land in the Ipswich Region for development into industrial estates, and
- b) the Government has no plans to purchase land in the Ebenezer area."

It is very disturbing that the Minister wrote back telling us that. We have done all the work for him in finding the land. A company has already taken an option over the land. I really find it difficult to understand why this Government advises the department that it really should be spending its money in Gladstone. I wonder why. The letter goes on to say—

"With particular regard to the Ebenezer area, we have identified this area as having long term potential to accommodate a significant volume of industry, however there is currently no external infrastructure provided to the land, ie. power, water, sewerage and roads. Much of this area is currently being ... mined."

We certainly knew that, but this is the reason that we wrote to the Minister saying that people are now interested in doing something

about it, but this Government needs to play its part as well. He goes on to say—

"In conjunction with the Ipswich City Council, we have identified other areas of land ... however this land is also unserviced."

For crying out loud, what good is unserviced land to us? The Minister's own department has advised me that an industry which would have provided 360 jobs looked at coming to Ipswich just recently. I can tell honourable members that 360 jobs would have been very welcome. The fact is that that industry finished up going somewhere else because there was no serviced land, and that is a tragedy. I wrote back to Minister Davidson on 3 September. That letter states—

"Dear Minister,

Earlier this year I wrote to you regarding the purchase of industrial land in the Ipswich Region and received your reply dated 17th June 1997 advising that the State Government has no plans for the purchase of industrial land in this area.

Minister, let me assure you, I will not accept No as an answer on this issue!

On Thursday 28th August I personally spoke to you, during the Parliament sitting, and you gave me an undertaking that a senior representative from your Department would"—

make contact with me and inspect land at Ebenezer, and that there would be continuing discussions between the Minister and me. I look forward to those continuing discussions. The people certainly came and visited me. I have not had any feedback since then and the Minister has certainly not come and paid us a visit, either. We certainly look forward to the Minister coming along and playing a part in that.

Talking about other areas that this Government could improve on, we need a community recreational centre in Ipswich. Under the former Goss Government, Tom Burns and people from his department actually came out and looked at a site at a suburb called Wulkuraka. The Minister actually wrote back to us, thanking us for bringing it to his attention and informing us that he had given us \$1.3m. He thanked the Leichhardt community area for bringing it to his attention. The Leichhardt community group, along with council representatives and the local police, held meetings and actually drew up plans in relation to what this particular centre should look like.

If we are going to help reduce crime, we have to deal with the causes of crime. Some of the young people in some of the suburbs do not always have a lot to do. In this particular case, this community centre would have been absolutely ideal. The Minister had approved it; I have a letter of approval for \$1.3m. Unfortunately, that money evaporated in the Budget. Perhaps it finished up going some way towards paying for the tollway on the north coast. However, I had hoped that this particular Bill might have provided that \$1.3m in funding so that we could actually help the people in our local area.

Police is an area that we hear so much about. We hear the Minister bragging regularly—as he did in the Parliament this morning—about the additional police who are going to be sent to different areas. We certainly appreciate extra police, but in the area that I represent so far three announcements have been made that we will receive an extra 15 police at Christmas time. The sad part is that, over the past 12 months, approximately 30 police have left or retired. That means that, even after we receive those extra 15 police, we will still be 15 short. The Government really needs to play a part in doing a little bit more.

I turn now to hospitals. I am pleased to see the Minister for Health in the Chamber. I have real concerns about the amount of money that the Government is putting into the redevelopment of the hospital in Ipswich. I have said this in the House before. When we were in Government, structural engineering people were telling us that the high-rise building at the Ipswich Hospital was structurally unsound. Even though it was not safe back when we were in Government, this Government has decided not to replace the high-rise building but to do other work to the facade. One really has to question the motives behind that. I hope that the Minister is telling us the truth when we question these changes. I have real concerns that budgetary cuts have been made to what was to be the redevelopment of the hospital and that in some way we will finish up with an inferior development.

We all know that if we are going to reduce waiting times in Queensland hospitals, we need more operating theatres. That is certainly the case in Ipswich. Regrettably, the freeze that the Treasurer imposed on the Budget a couple of years ago put the work at the Ipswich Hospital back 12 months. We acknowledge that that work is coming on now. However, I call on the Minister to examine the

plans for the hospital and make sure that corners are not being cut in relation to the facade work on the high-rise building. I suspect that that is the case. This Government has its priorities all wrong, and Ipswich certainly is not getting its fair share.

**Mr CARROLL** (Mansfield) (4.18 p.m.): In speaking on the two secondary appropriation Bills for 1997, I want to give a brief report on what is happening in the Mansfield electorate, what has taken place since I was elected and to outline some of the many achievements of this coalition Government. In my first speech, I set myself a number of goals as to how I wanted to help the people of my electorate. I believe that our Government has achieved those or has done everything reasonably possible toward achieving those objectives.

My recent spring newsletter to the Mansfield electorate, though not a glossy or flash publication like some I have seen, certainly informs the constituents of updates as to this Government's policies and actions and shows some of the many things that I have been doing in my capacity as their representative. I enclosed with that last newsletter a survey form and a reply-paid envelope. The response from the electorate has been quite amazing. It has been a very satisfying exercise. I am endeavouring presently to respond to each and every one of those enormous number of people who had the courtesy to let me know their interests and concerns.

On the law and order front, I am pleased to work with very effective Neighbourhood Watch groups in the electorate. I pay tribute to the hardworking folk in those groups, which serve to alert the community to the need to be vigilant against crime. Several of such groups have undertaken crime audits in their neighbourhoods. This has been a benefit not only to the local police but also to the people living there.

Government has an important role to play in ensuring the safety of our citizens. It is important that I remind the House of the numerous reforms which have been put forward by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Denver Beanland, and passed by this Parliament. Those include doubling and in some cases trebling the maximum sentences for sex crimes; penalties for wilful damage, stealing and fraud have been boosted; and the offence of breaking and entering and committing another offence will now attract a penalty of life imprisonment, up from 14 years. This coalition Government has also legislated to ensure that those criminals convicted of

serious crimes will have to serve at least 80% of their sentence before being eligible for parole. I have trumpeted those reforms in other speeches in this place, so I will not repeat myself today.

What did the Opposition do when those reforms were before the Parliament? It voted against them. I speak there of the reform to the Penalties and Sentences Act in particular and the juvenile justice legislation. When the people of Queensland called for a tougher stance on law and order, the Opposition voted against such proposals. It decided to stand with the criminals of our society. The people of Queensland were speaking, but the Opposition was not listening.

Being tough on crime is good, but it is not enough unless there are police on the beat to help enforce the laws. Only last week I rose in this place to congratulate the coalition Government on delivering increased police numbers. This Government has delivered a total of 385 new police officers in 1996-97, and each year we will continue to see increases in the numbers of serving police officers.

The people understand, I think, that this Government has a job creation rate second to none in this great country of ours. No other State can boast a job creation rate like Queensland. We have come a long way from the days when the Opposition was in Government and the unemployment rate sat at 11.1%. It is, however, very important that we do not talk down these achievements. I am sure all members of Parliament agree that we are talking about real people's lives, and we need to work together to improve that rate even further. It is no use the Opposition trying to create havoc in the electorate for cheap political points, because that does nothing to help those people. We need to have a positive and optimistic attitude which can be readily embraced by those we represent. In the Mansfield electorate I have worked with local business and community groups to be part of the solution there, regularly keeping in touch with local business people, particularly through the local chamber of commerce.

I have campaigned hard to see the QE II Hospital restored to its former glory from its virtual closure under the Opposition when it was in Government. There were many of us who fought hard for that. I would like to again pay tribute to the late Clem O'Keefe, who was a tower of strength on this issue. He led very hardworking volunteers in the hospital auxiliary to raise funds for specialised hospital equipment while catering to the needs of

patients and staff. The auxiliary knew the benefit of that hospital to local people and fought with us to see it restored. We now have the amazing revival of the QE II. As a Government we have committed ourselves to ensuring that the hospital can serve the people of the south side of Brisbane. We have set aside \$11m in capital works expenditure and additional recurrent expenditure of \$9m. As I informed the House last week, the QE II recently was the recipient of \$305,785 for new hospital equipment. The hospital is now serviced by an additional 68 full-time equivalent doctors. It is a far cry from the days when, under the Opposition closure program, on one weekend there were only nine patients in the hospital.

This Government has been active in education. I am proud to have some of the greatest schools in the State located in the electorate of Mansfield. They have dedicated staff and equally dedicated communities supporting them. I attend many of the P & C meetings and am in regular contact with the teachers and principals by other means. Recently, the Minister for Education visited several schools in the electorate. In a hectic schedule, the Minister was treated to breakfast, beautifully prepared by the students from Rochedale State High School. The Minister also inspected the new science block at Mansfield State High School, completed recently by the State Government. An unusual highlight of the day for the Minister and a project that he was particularly interested in seeing was some blue crayfish which are being raised by biology students at Mansfield State High School.

In considering youth, we cannot help but be reminded of the fact that the youth suicide rate is unhappily high. Benjamin Disraeli once said that the youth of our nation are the prosperity of our future. There is no doubt about that. I have taken a particular interest in this topic and commend to members a paper written in 1994 by Paul Scarr, a Young Liberal, titled "Youth suicide: 200,000 lost years". It was adopted not only by the Young Liberals in Queensland but also across the nation as a hard-hitting expose. It is an extremely well researched and sobering account of the blight that youth suicide is on our community.

I want to acknowledge in that area the terrific work of the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care. His department, through a number of programs, is hitting at this problem, and I am sure that we will not see the youth suicide rate increase. Of course, Ministers Santo Santoro and Bob Quinn and

their departments have also seen to the implementation of programs that encourage in young people some hope for the future and an ability to take on whatever work they might be interested in.

In regard to careers and the advancement of our economy, I want to mention again a topic which I have spoken about before, that is, the Eight Mile Plains Technology Park. It is the only one functioning properly in the State. I have mentioned the Queensland Manufacturing Institute there, which works closely with the Queensland Centre for Advanced Technology on the north side.

This Government has seen many very large and, to some extent, unexpected issues arise during its term. We have seen the guns debate, which occupied an enormous amount of time and required special legislation. An enormous amount of work was put into that by Police Minister Russell Cooper, and I pay credit to him. We also had to tackle the complicated issue of native title. We saw Queensland's Bill in that regard introduced today. I am unable to speak on that because it is before the House. We saw a whole raft of issues in the public arena provoked or brought into public debate by the Independent Federal member for Oxley. I have spoken on those issues on a number of occasions before. Our Government's clear focus on multicultural affairs and the smooth management of those issues has been the subject of debate not only by me but also by others.

The CJC was another big concern for this Government and has occupied an enormous amount of the time not only of CJC staff but also of the members of this Parliament. We have been pleased to have three pieces of legislation in particular passed which hopefully will remodel the CJC into the effective crime fighting organisation that it was intended to be. Other significant legislation passed by this Parliament includes the Criminal Code, which was a long-overdue and comprehensive review of that particular Code. We also saw the Children's Commissioner Act implemented and the Children's Commission established and operating very well. All of these involved an enormous amount of work and much debate.

As to the coalition Government's achievements—I believe that they can be summarised as record spending on health, education and police. Waiting lists at hospitals have been dramatically reduced. We have tougher laws for serious criminals. I believe that over 90% of the election promises that we

took to the people in 1995 have been delivered in about 20 months. There is a very helpful little booklet available which summarises in 106 pages the more important of those changes, either implemented or sponsored by our Government.

By the way, I believe that it is very fruitful that we can have this debate on the supplementary Appropriation Bills. It is far better than the position that prevailed in 1995, when the then Treasurer, Mr De Lacy, gagged debate on that legislation. Unlike that Treasurer, our Treasurer has explained the basis for this adjustment to approved expenditure, and we have the benefit of the debate before us.

I turn now to some of the works that have been undertaken in the electorate of Mansfield. We have seen excellent roadworks completed and many others under way, either with work actually physically obvious on the street or in the stage of consultation. I refer to two very beneficial additions to the highway network: the southern bypass, which is taking enormous numbers of vehicles off Mount Gravatt-Capalaba/Kessels Road; and the Capalaba bypass on the eastern side of the electorate. As well, the alleviation of flood problems on Logan Road and the southern part of the electorate near Underwood Road has been a great improvement to traffic in that area.

The Rochedale landfill continues to be a matter of interest to some in the electorate, mainly those living near it. It was a novel structure for Queensland. Careful attention is paid by the Department of Environment and the Department of Health to the licensing conditions and compliance with those. I have taken an interest in that, of course, because it is in the electorate I represent and also because I serve as chairman of the Gurulmundi Landfill Management Committee, which has had some interesting times. The work there has been a little truncated recently because of the imminent closure of the Willawong waste disposal depot in Brisbane. I pay tribute to the cooperation of the Department of Environment and the Brisbane City Council in working towards a point where that rather unpopular place will be closed. I pay tribute also to private enterprise, which has happily undertaken the challenge of providing plant to properly and safely dispose of toxic waste.

I also want to mention briefly the work undertaken by the two parliamentary committees upon which I serve. The Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review

Committee has been very busy looking at the Bill of Rights. In the course of our rather hectic trip to Canada, we examined not only the way in which the Bill of Rights there operates but we also saw the enormous amount of litigation which has been provoked by that piece of legislation. We also took the opportunity to have a close look at the way in which that country is handling native title claims. I also took the opportunity to have a close look at the Ottawa busway system, which is what is being implemented in Brisbane by agreement with the Brisbane City Council. I am certain that that will be a great benefit to the people of Mansfield when it is implemented.

I have mentioned some of the work of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. I think that can be seen in the legislation which has been passed by this House. However, members need to remember that we have a fairly heavy onus of constantly monitoring the work of the CJC. I believe that the effectiveness of members in this House can be seen from the very great volume of work undertaken by the parliamentary committees. They are in addition to policy committees, on which members serve almost behind the scenes. Many hours are spent in checking legislation and making sure that it is right before it comes before the House. In that regard, I want to mention the very pleasing resurgence of interest in issues before the House by churches and church leaders. We have seen some more evidence of that recently in discussion about native title legislation. Archbishop Peter Hollingworth of the Anglican Church and Catholic Archbishop John Bathersby have not been afraid to speak out on relevant public issues.

Speaking of bluntness—I was not afraid to speak up on the issue of rumour mongering about a rail freight line going through the electorate of Mansfield and very quickly spoke to the Minister. I was happy to go out and speak to the people from the CARE organisation at Parkinson to make sure that their interests and concerns were effectively put before our Minister. I am pleased to say that he acted responsibly and sensibly to cancel the plan to have a huge rail depot at Parkinson.

I also want to mention the interest of our Government in ensuring that businesses focus on the importance of Queensland's place in the Asia/Pacific region. That is the underlying focus of the attention of Ministers Bruce Davidson and Doug Slack as well as the Premier. I am pleased to see that. There is no

doubt that our future lies with that area, which I have mentioned before.

I appreciate the value to the social fabric of the community of a large number of sporting organisations and schools in my electorate. I am pleased to be patron of several of those sporting clubs, and I am pleased to be able to do little things, such as ensure that the baseball club was able to secure one of the surplus buildings from the Rochedale State High School. These are just some of the little things in which I know that many other members of Parliament become involved, but we can really maximise the use of the resources of those volunteers.

The presence of the Belmont rifle range in the electorate I represent has also been a matter of interest to me. I have been out there on a number of occasions presenting trophies and prizes and attending social functions. I have been pleased to recommend to the Minister a plan for the improvement and development of facilities there. I believe that it has the potential to be an enormous sporting centre for the south side of Brisbane.

I also pay tribute to the fact that the Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Trust recently celebrated the gathering of its one millionth dollar, that is, \$1m spent on capital improvements there. That is a great milestone for the trust. I congratulate the trustees upon their hard work in achieving that. I want them to know that we will continue to support them in their work.

Time expired.

**Mr DOLLIN** (Maryborough) (4.38 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bills and to point out some problems that I have within my electorate. Firstly, I wish to mention a letter that I received from the Poona Ratepayers and Progress Association, which has asked for my assistance. The letter reads—

"Dear Mr. Dollin,

Over the past two Easter weekends the Poona Ratepayers and Progress Association Inc have conducted very successful Family Fishing Contests, with all the proceeds going towards the eventual building and equipping of a much needed Community hall/Clubhouse for the benefit of Poona residents and visitors.

We have recently been advised by the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority, that under the Fisheries Act 1994, Fisheries amendment regulation No. (3) 1996 ... we now require a permit to conduct a Fishing Competition at the

cost of \$250 plus \$10 for every person entering the contest.

Our entry fee for the past two years has been \$5 Adult, \$2 Child and \$12 per family making it a inexpensive fun weekend for the average family, payment of the QFMA fees would make it uneconomical to run the Competition.

Cancellation of the Poona Easter Family fishing contest will disappoint the several hundred people who attend from the Wide Bay region and the Poona community who have worked very hard to raise money for the Hall and the recently formed Poona Rural Fire Brigade.

I have written to the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority requesting exemption from the fees and we would be grateful for your support in bringing this matter to the attention of the Minister for Fisheries."

I appeal to the Honourable Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry, Mr Perrett, to consider seriously the request of the Poona Ratepayers and Progress Association, as funds are raised through the sponsoring of the family fishing competition. Participants are mostly working families. It is a fun day for those families. Fish caught are few indeed. The fees sought for this competition would be more in line with the Orchid Beach tailor fishing bash on Fraser Island from which fishermen return with freezers filled with fish, which results in thousands of fish being taken. In contrast, this low-key family event returns the takings to the Poona community, as explained in the letter from the Poona Ratepayers and Progress Association. The funds would go towards a much-needed community hall and the recently formed Poona Rural Fire Brigade. Programs such as those save the Government many thousands of dollars and look after the community. I ask that the Minister look into that request as soon as possible to allow for the event to go ahead by Easter.

I turn to a matter of concern to those wishing to access public housing in the Maryborough electorate. This Minister and this Government are now asking prospective tenants of public housing to provide details of a previous private tenancy for a minimum of six months on a form known as a landlord certificate. I must express my deep concern about the possible implications that that will have. I am suspicious enough to believe that that is an underhanded attempt to reduce the ever-growing public housing waiting list. The Minister will need to respond with the right answers to many questions before I will

believe otherwise. I am not sure whether that form is being used across Queensland, but I know that it has surfaced in Maryborough where the waiting list for public accommodation is alarming.

The first question that the Minister will need to answer is this: will this form be a requirement to obtain a bond loan as well as for accessing public housing? If a prospective tenant is unable to secure the completion of this form, or if the answers are less than satisfactory, will that negate their applications and deny them access to public housing? I will quote from a question on the form—

"All aspects of tenancy are/were satisfactory

payment of rent—yes/no

care of property—yes/no

any neighbourhood problems—yes/no

and if tenancy not satisfactory or has been terminated, please give details."

The Maryborough district has been and still is a low income town with high unemployment. Many of those people are waiting to access public accommodation. Often many do not possess a high standard of living skills and often they cannot cope with budgeting for higher rents in the private sector, even with rent allowance. If an emergency developed and they fell out with the landlord in relation to rent, they would not get a good reference. Should that then exclude them from obtaining permanent, suitable and affordable accommodation in the form of public housing?

The private rental sector now has a black list system on computer Australiawide, which excludes clients from renting if they are listed. I understand that the Attorney-General has been consulted regarding that system as it allows landlords and agents to list clients on any pretext, sometimes trivial and disputable. Clients are denied access to the list to ascertain why they are on it. As a result, prospective clients for public housing may well be blacklisted because of an unsubstantiated claim by a landlord. I ask the Minister: will prospective clients have their names struck from the waiting list on the word of a private landlord or agent without redress? Public housing has not had the need for that requirement before; why now? Who is expected to house those who do not pass that test? Will they be forced to live out of cars or in shanties in the bush as was the case years ago?

I am reliably informed that prospective tenants with a debt will have their names struck off the waiting list if they do not immediately enter into a contract and maintain it to pay off their debt. I hope that that is not the case for those who are in financial difficulty and are sincerely making an effort in these difficult times to repay the debt. Public housing is provided for low income, low socioeconomic groups and the disadvantaged to ensure that those people are able to access affordable, more permanent and suitable accommodation. I hope that this is not a cynical exercise to shorten the waiting list of people who are less likely to be able to defend themselves. I believe that this form will discriminate against prospective tenants who will not know who made a complaint against them, nor will they know what the complaint is. They will have been found guilty without a judge, jury or trial. Those complaints may well be considered an infringement of a person's human rights. I call on the Minister for Housing to allay the fears of many people in the community of Maryborough who are on the public housing waiting list by withdrawing this potential black list form, so that they will have equal opportunity to access affordable and suitable accommodation.

Under this Government, the only housing that Maryborough has received was that financed in the May 1995 Goss Budget. That had a freeze placed on it. Those few buildings, costing \$3m or \$4m, have now been built. Not one other single building has been built in Maryborough to accommodate people requiring public housing. I hope that, in the next Budget, the Government will be much more generous to Maryborough in that regard.

**Hon. J. M. SHELDON** (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (4.46 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions. The contributions of members on the Government side of the Chamber were certainly more succinct. I particularly thank the member for Mount Ommaney and the member for Mansfield, not only for the conciseness of their speeches but also for the quality of their speeches. Unfortunately, that was sadly lacking in the contributions of the shadow Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition.

The Bills are of a technical nature only. A legislative process is required to formally appropriate supplementary supply for the services of the Government and the Parliament. We are debating both of these Bills at once. The separation of Parliament's appropriation from the remainder of the

Budget is seen as a demonstration of the independence of Parliament from the Executive, which is very important. The Governor in Council authorises the unforeseen expenditure under section 25 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 pending supplementary appropriation by the Legislative Assembly. Explanations relating to the unforeseen expenditure are provided by accountable officers in the general purpose financial statements prepared under section 40 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 and are included in annual reports in accordance with section 37(b) of the Act.

I will not comment on most of the issues raised by the shadow Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition. They were totally unrelated to the Bill and were farcical in content. I would like to draw to the attention of the House an article in the Australian by David Fagan headed "Crunch time for battling Beattie". One paragraph in that article is particularly informative for the House, considering the nonsense that we have heard from the Leader of the Opposition. The article states—

"During his brief period as a Minister, Beattie distinguished himself by throwing money at the hospital system in defiance of the financial rigour imposed by his predecessors, most particularly the Left's Ken Hayward. Now he is constantly reminded of the Budget blow-out over which he presided in his six months in the Ministry."

I think that really does say it all.

Motion agreed to.

### **Committee**

#### **Appropriation Bill (No. 2)**

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

#### **Appropriation (Parliament) Bill**

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bills reported, without amendments.

### **Third Reading**

Bills, on motion of Mrs Sheldon, by leave, read a third time.

## **ADVANCE BANK INTEGRATION BILL**

### **Second Reading**

Resumed from 28 October (see p. 3874).

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich) (4.52 p.m.): The Advance Bank Integration Bill is one of a range of Bills that has been introduced in this Parliament to facilitate the merger of banking entities. The Australian financial system is undergoing considerable change as what were once non-bank financial institutions are taking on the responsibilities which were once the preserve of banks. Similarly, some of those institutions are becoming banks. We have seen the merger of a number of middle-sized banking entities with other banks of a similar size. We have also seen a number of bank mergers, such as the recent Bank of Melbourne and Westpac merger.

As I said, the Parliament has considered previously legislation similar to this legislation and it has considered that in a bipartisan manner. This Bill facilitates the merging of Advance Bank and the St George Bank in terms of its assets in Queensland.

The Opposition supports the Bill. In doing so, I would appreciate the Treasurer advising us in her reply as to what consideration is being sought by way of a payment of stamp duty to the State through the provisions of clause 10 of the Bill. This Bill is not a controversial measure. As I said, it has the Opposition's full support.

**Hon. K. W. HAYWARD** (Kallangur) (4.53 p.m.): As the shadow Minister has said, this Bill is essentially a machinery Bill that has been introduced as a result of the takeover of the Advance Bank Australia Limited by the St George Bank. The effect of this Bill is to enact the transfer legislation to ensure that assets and liabilities are transferred from the Advance Bank to the St George Bank. This Bill simply makes that process easier because, through this Bill, the banks do not have to identify individual assets on an item by item basis. Members could imagine what a difficult exercise it would be if that had to occur as part of the merger process.

However, the issue that is raised through a Bill such as this is that bank mergers will continue as technology advances. Through that advancement in technology, banks seek to maintain and develop long-term customers. Who would have thought just a few years ago that we would now be able to undertake home shopping on the Internet. Banking institutions play a major role in that process. We have had recent examples of the ANZ commencing an Internet shopping trial and the National Australia Bank forging US Internet operator links. The purpose of those moves is to gather and retain long-term and committed customers who undertake banking

transactions so that not only can the banks maintain their market share but also so that they can increase their income through the fees and charges that are involved.

Essentially, the nature of banking is changing, firstly, through technological growth and Internet transactions. That change presents us with a number of challenges. I think one of the basic challenges that it presents us with, as we have seen through the recent Suncorp-Metway merger and also through the merger of the Advance Bank and St George, is a change in the fabric of society. The number of bank premises is decreasing and the traditional function of banks, that is, making cash deposits and withdrawals available at a particular bank, is becoming rarer and rarer. As the number of banking premises in towns and cities throughout Australia decreases, that has implications in the short and long term for those towns and cities.

The other great challenge that occurs through the changing nature of banking has been for regulators and law enforcement. Many of the activities that can occur on the Internet, such as pornography or gaming, can involve a bank in facilitating transactions. That presents substantial challenges for regulators in our society. Of course, the issue of tax collection comes into question because activities on the Internet can occur without scrutiny. For instance, gaming on the Internet poses questions of fairness to people. At least if people bet through the TAB—whatever people may say about it—there is a guaranteed distribution to the punters.

I mentioned the changing nature of banking, the technological growth that is occurring and how banking is keeping up with that growth. That reminded me of a comment by the Premier which appears in today's paper. He stated that our State was irresistible to businesses that choose to locate in Queensland. However, one of the businesses that the Premier did not mention is a computer Internet company known as GSD Pty Ltd, which I am informed is operating from premises in Brisbane. That company operates the second largest Internet pornography site in the world. So Queensland really is moving ahead, if it really wants to move ahead, in that particular area. I am informed that the turnover of that business is estimated at \$700,000 a month, or \$25,000 a day. I will not go into the detail of what has been told to me about how GSD operates or where its web site is, because I guess the less people say about these things the better. My point is the

relationship with the banks, because the fee is paid by way of a merchant facility, in other words, via a credit card.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stephan): Order! The member will come back to the Bill.

**Mr HAYWARD:** I am talking about the meaning of the mergers and what that will eventually mean for the changing nature of banking and the very fabric of our society. The people involved type their MasterCard or their visa card details into the computer, which means that the web site permits the person to look at more descriptive pictures. Originally the pictures displayed were of similar quality to that which could be seen in magazines purchased from a service station. However, I am told that that has changed significantly in the past year. This issue is important because the banks become involved when GSD prints out the credit card details and delivers the data to its bank for payment. The bank then debits the person's credit card with the payment of some \$10 or \$15—whatever the fee is.

**Mr Hamill:** Which bank?

**Mr HAYWARD:** I will come to that. The terms of access are usually three to six months with automatic monthly debits. I will not tell members where the branch is, but the main banker of GSD Pty Ltd is the recently merged Metway Bank. Metway provides the merchant facility by means of a licence from the National Australia Bank.

**Mr Hamill:** Is this one of the enhanced range of services the Treasurer spoke of?

**Mr HAYWARD:** It could be interpreted to be that. It fits in with the Premier saying yesterday that our State is irresistible to head offices, many of which want to locate here. In this case, Queensland is irresistible to a company that is known as the second largest Internet pornography site in the world. I do not think we should be overly proud of that.

The Metway Bank does not have its own merchant facility as such, but it estimates that its account is worth \$120,000 a year in fees alone. GSD Pty Ltd delivers the details of the people who have paid to access the web site to the Metway Bank, which then credits the account of GSD. The person's bank statement shows a debit via the National Australia Bank.

As I said before, the issues are about the challenges that face the nature of banking. We have experienced an explosion of technology. Banking institutions face great challenges, as does society generally, as a result of that technological explosion. Of course, as we have talked about today with

this legislation, those changes are simply outpacing legislators and, as regulators, we are coming from well behind.

In conclusion, in the case of Metway Bank, of which the State Government owns a significant proportion, it seems to me that to significantly reduce pornography on the Internet would simply be a matter of advising the bank not to provide the means by which the web site provider is paid. As I said, I am not an expert on this issue, but I know that because of the great advances occurring in technology we often come from behind in many areas. However, in this case we are behind, because I assume that the Government is in a position to simply advise the bank that it is not to provide the means for such things to occur. It was a pleasure for me to speak to the Advance Bank Integration Bill. I commend it to the House.

**Hon. J. M. SHELDON** (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (5.03 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions and I also thank the Opposition for its support of the Bill. The Bill will recognise and support the transfer of the undertaking of Advance Bank Australia Limited in Queensland to St George Bank Limited. The transfer will be effected by the Bank Mergers (Advance Bank) Regulation 1997 (New South Wales). The transfer could be achieved without the Queensland Bill. However, the Bill overcomes the need for the identification and transfer of individual assets on an item by item basis. The Bill will further achieve continuity in customer relationships, as well as providing protection for persons dealing with either bank in respect of transferred assets and liabilities.

The Bill will exempt transfer transactions from Queensland stamp duty which would normally be payable, on the condition that a lump sum in lieu of the duty is paid to the Consolidated Fund by St George. The amount of that payment will be determined by the Governor in Council. The Office of State Revenue is currently in the process of finalising a figure for the payment in consultation with St George. In answer to a question asked by the shadow Treasurer: at this stage it is estimated that the amount will be in the vicinity of \$5,800,000.

In relation to debits tax and registration fees payable under the Land Titles Act 1994, the Motor Vehicle Securities Act 1986 and the Bills of Sale and Other Instruments Act 1955, St George has agreed to pay such fees on an as-needs basis.

The State's policy in the past has been to assist merging banks by enacting transfer legislation, most recently demonstrated by the Bank of New Zealand (Transfer of Undertaking) Act 1997 and the Challenge Bank (Transfer of Undertaking) Act 1996.

St George has requested that the legislation be operative by 31 March 1998 in order to enable the coordinated transfer of undertakings across all jurisdictions.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Clauses 1 to 15, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mrs Sheldon, by leave, read a third time.

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 30 October (see p. 4096).

**Mr SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton) (5.08 p.m.): Before I speak on the Bill, I place on record my thanks to the Government for granting me a pair this morning so that I could attend the funeral of the late Deputy Mayor of Rockhampton. I appreciated that courtesy from the Leader of the House and, of course, the Whip, who both bent over backwards to assist me in that regard. It was a very solemn and sad occasion for me to lose a mate of 40 years. This morning at the ceremony, I placed on the record my appreciation of the Government's courtesy. He was a great bloke and will be a great loss to the city.

The Bill before the House amends 11 Acts. I have grave concerns about the apparent growing trend to continually bring omnibus Bills before the Parliament. When first introduced, I thought that the idea was a good one because the intention was to deal with matters of a minor nature, not policy matters. However, the Bill before the House amends so much legislation that it is a bit rich to ask honourable members to digest it all. It is beyond the powers of anybody in this place to adequately research and be completely on top of that level of detail.

I have put about 200 hours into getting around this Bill as best I can. However, I offer no guarantees that some nefarious intent of the Government has not escaped my notice. I

place that caveat on what I am about to say. I do not believe that democracy and the people of this State are well served by the continuation of this trend. Yesterday, the debate on the education legislation was marred because of the complexity of the Bill. If minor amendments are to be made to a number of Acts, it is appropriate that they be dealt with in this fashion.

For example, the Body Corporate and Community Management Act brought in this year is a huge Act. I defy any member to stand up in this debate and fully explain that legislation. I doubt that the Minister, as capable as he may be, is entirely across that issue. That is why we have amendments to that Act today. It is so remarkably complex that even lawyers who deal in that area and from whom I sought advice admitted to confusion. I do not know that we will ever get it right, but some of the amendments put forward today may go towards doing that.

I have also received complaints from unit owners and their associations that they have not received adequate consultation on this piece of legislation. They tell me that the first they heard about it was when they got a phone call from me. I do not think that is good enough. Although the Minister can boast that the client users were consulted, the people who own properties should have received some consultation as well. That goes to the nub of the argument completely. The unit owners believe that this legislation leaves them out in the cold and that, basically, the Government is interested only in the body corporate managers and the REIQ. I would like to hear from the Minister when he sums up whether that is correct.

I hope the amendment to section 51 ensures that a community management statement is required for each plan of survey. That is a complaint that unit owners have put to me. They are happy that it has been addressed. I also note that the Bill guarantees that the standard module applies to unit plans under the 1980 Act. Apparently there was some confusion that plans brought in under the previous Act were not subject to the Act passed a few months ago.

I note that the amendments to section 170 ensure that limitations to new schemes only are lifted. Again, that is a plus. On this side of the Parliament we have two major concerns about the proposed amendments. Firstly, the amendment to section 91 proposes to remove the words "elected annually" and to replace them with "chosen". That reminds me of the biblical statement that many are called

but few are chosen. I am very suspicious of any move that takes away the prerequisite to demand an election and to do so annually, because we are dealing with complexities and rorts that have gone on over time in relation to these developments. I ask the Minister to clarify this position and to make very clear to this Parliament exactly what the effect of removing the words "elected annually" will be.

I thank the Minister for the briefing that I received from a member of his staff. At that briefing I was assured that the words "elected annually" were changed to "chosen" merely to comply with the wording in the regulations. I accept that on the surface, but I believe that, as this may be tested in law at some stage or another, we must have a definitive statement from the Minister in his summing up. I ask the Minister to so do, and we will reserve our right to support that provision during the Committee stage.

The other amendment that has members on this side of the House concerned is that to section 268, which effectively extends the exemption date for RISs from three to six months. When this Act was first brought in, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee had something to say about this matter. It is of the view that RISs should not be exempt; if the Act is such that it requires RISs, no such exemption should be granted. I understand that from time to time Governments need to make that decision.

This House allowed that exemption to occur for three months. That time has now expired. We are being asked to extend it for yet another three months. Again, I notice that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee has opposed that. Similarly, I am also of a view to oppose it, unless the Minister can give me a convincing argument as to why that will occur and why, if it does not occur, it will not serve as a disadvantage.

I am not an authority on this and I am the first to say that we do not have this sort of problem in Rockhampton, because there are not a lot of units there. I came across this issue for the first time in my role as the shadow Minister responsible for this Bill. It seems to me that the problems are with the regulation modules and in relation to the enthusiasm with which some of the, one might say, less honourable people in the real estate industry seem to be enticing and advising body corporate management to go from the standard module into the accommodation module. I know that the Minister outlined in his second-reading speech what he thought should be the ground rules for so applying. As

I understand it, that was not quite caught up in the regulations.

I have received a number of contacts from unit owners indicating that they are being advised by property lawyers and the like to move from the standard module, which is highly regulated, to the very loosely regulated accommodation module. That is of grave concern to unit owners. If the intention of the Minister at the time was to have accommodation modules in respect of properties for rent or lease, I think that position needs clarifying. I think that would be revealed if an RIS were done.

I draw the Minister's attention also to a letter that I received from one of my colleagues who, in turn, received it from a constituent. That letter outlined the difficulty that people are now encountering when they come to sell their units. The Act passed some months ago required a disclosure statement to be made. That is fair enough. If we sell a place, we have to expect to disclose what we know. That is nothing new. That was on titles years ago and, for some reason, it disappeared. In this case, a woman sold a unit and was advised that, before the sale could go through, she had to comply with the disclosure statement. She asked what that entailed and was told, "You'll have to get a form." She contacted the body corporate company, which supplied her with a statement at a cost of \$40.

That woman got a form from the REIQ and, because it was so complex, she required the services of a solicitor to fill it in. That cost her \$160. I checked with the Minister's department and was advised that there was no necessity to fill in that form. I think the message is going out to these people that they need to fill out the form. The real estate agents are saying, "Unless you fill out that form, we will not sell your premises." Because it is beyond the capabilities of ordinary people to fill out those forms, they incur more legal costs. I know that that was never the intention of the Minister. Perhaps I might be so bold to suggest that the Minister needs to take up that matter with the REIQ or some other body, because some involved in the industry are putting the weights on people when they are selling their units. This woman was \$200 out of pocket just to get the sale under way.

I also have here a letter from a Mr Fancourt. He sent this letter firstly to the referee and secondly to a member of the Minister's staff. I seek leave to table this document.

Leave granted.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I believe that the document concerned is a shocking indictment of the current system. There are allegations of a cover-up and of some \$20,000 being misappropriated by a body corporate manager. When this person tried to do something about that, he had to get a solicitor and spend \$1,000 to find out that he was right—that \$20,000 was missing. The rorts that these people seem to get up to is beyond belief. I note that he has written to the Minister via one of his policy advisers as well as to the referee. I ask that the Minister provide me with an answer to that at some stage so that I can reply to that person, because it is of grave concern to me. My colleague the member for Lytton will speak at further length about the RIS.

I move on now to the amendments to the Forestry Act 1959. I have a sense of déjà vu because about six months ago I stood here as the shadow Minister on a Bill that was brought in by the Minister for Primary Industries to amend that particular Act. I remarked at the time that I thought he looked after plantation forests and that the Minister for Natural Resources looked after native forests. I do not know just who looks after what, and I do not know whether they do, either. Needless to say, a couple of errors were made in that amendment Bill which mistakenly took a couple of things away. This Bill puts them back; that is no problem.

The Bill also toughens up the provisions allowing for material to be seized, documents to be taken as evidence and so on. I am all for that. I do not think any person in this House who is aware of the importance of the sandalwood industry would not be. I know that the member for Charters Towers has a very extensive operation in his electorate at Richmond run by a Mr Easton Jones. Mr Jones has complained to me over a period of time about the fact that he cannot make ends meet because he is competing with sharks and poachers. I am all in favour of anything that moves to stamp that out.

It is appalling that it has gone this far. I am told that the industry is on the brink of collapse. We have a valuable market up in Taiwan. The poachers are supplying C grade material which is damaging our standing in that market. I understand that we are also competing with Malaysians who have been dropping a lot of wood onto that market. I passed on a message to a member of the Minister's staff the other day to speak to Mr Jones. His complaint was that on a number of occasions he had raised incidents in which

large amounts of sandalwood had been taken on the backs of trucks and nothing had been done about it.

I also point out that we are always going to have a problem in this regard while there seems to be no control on the taking of sandalwood from freehold land. These people get a permit to take sandalwood on freehold land and then they proceed to poach it off Crown land. I am prepared to assist in any way I can to come up with an answer to that. I am sure that the Minister, whose electorate would have a lot of product in it, is acutely aware of that. I am told that this industry will collapse within the next 12 months unless something happens to combat that. That would be a great pity. I am sure that the member for Charters Towers would agree that that industry employs some 20 people in Richmond and it is on the brink of collapse because of illegal behaviour. I hope that this particular provision assists in that regard.

I note that the amendments to the Land Act of 1994 increase appeal periods from 28 to 42 days; that is okay by me. That brings it into line with other sections of the Act. I also note the change in the provisions of appeal to include only the grounds of appeal and to eliminate the facts relied on; I do not see much problem with that as well. However, a lawyer friend of mine suggested that that may bring about a number of flippant appeals from people because they do not have to actually put up some facts about their complaint; they can merely lodge an appeal without substantiating the facts. I would like to hear the Minister's comments on that.

I notice that a right of appeal against conditions of a tree clearing permit is provided in the Bill as well. We on this side of the House believe that everybody should have the right to appeal against a judgment made against them. I cannot see any reason why that cannot apply for tree clearing permits. I would like to hear what the Minister has to say about the fact that anything up to 60% of tree clearing is starting to occur on freehold land. I would be interested to hear just how the Minister intends to comply with the recent agreement that he signed with the Federal Government and whether or not he is going to bring in tree clearing guidelines for freehold land as a result. A further amendment to the Land Act 1994 allows a lower rent for permits for investigation. I understand that that is happening already, so there is no big drama there. In fact, it may assist in speeding up the EIS process somewhat.

I notice that there are further amendments to the Land Title Act. One in particular clarifies the law in relation to easements by bringing them into line with similar provisions that exist in the Land Act. I cannot see any problem with that. People whom I have spoken to in that regard have told me that that provision was very confusing as it appeared to contain two standards in subdivisions. The provision which tightens up caveat law so that the caveator will have to seek the leave of the court in the event of the registrar rejecting his or her application makes sense. As I understand it, at least a few years ago there was a rush of vexatious litigants who wanted to spoil somebody else's deal. That seems to have dropped off, but I am advised it is still an ongoing problem.

The first of the amendments to the Valuation of Land Act 1944 validates the issuing time of valuation notices. It increases the appeal objection and display periods from 28 to 42 days. I think that that is reasonable. It also removes sugar cane assignments from valuations. Again, that is a sensible move, especially in light of the deregulation that has occurred in the sugar industry over the past 12 to 18 months. I am, however, concerned about the Minister's proposal for his department to engage private valuers. I want the Minister's assurance that this will not be the crack in the door that will allow for outsourcing of the conduct of valuations so that, ultimately, he will get rid of valuers from his department and hand the service over to private enterprise. That is of concern to me.

**Mr Lucas:** There is the potential there for terrible conflicts of interest.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** That is a valid point. There is a potential conflict of interest problem that arises with the use of outside valuers. I am sure that the Minister knows what I am speaking about there. However, I do understand that there are occasions when that is required, but it needs to be kept very much on a small scale. I certainly would not like to see the State using this particular amendment to basically outsource the undertaking of valuations in this State.

The amendments to the Valuation of Land Act 1944, the City of Brisbane Act 1924 and the Local Government Act 1993 are perhaps one of the greatest provisions of this legislation. For the benefit of honourable members, I point out that they will mean that the victims of domestic violence who need to be anonymous to a larger degree to protect themselves from attack from disgruntled spouses will have the right to have their name

removed from the land register, including council titles. It is currently very simple—and the Minister for Families would be aware of complaints of this nature—for people to locate a family for the wrong reasons. They merely go to the local council or to the Lands Office and have a property search done and find out where those people are. This amendment will entitle the registrar to suppress their names. It is a great move. It is a pretty shocking indictment on society that we have to go to that length, but I applaud the Minister for doing it.

I am cognisant of the time. There are other speakers on our side of the Parliament who want to make a contribution. It is a shame that we cannot devote more time to this Bill and that it is being debated at the end of the session. I appreciate that the Minister has commitments tomorrow. We want to assist in getting this legislation through. I seek the Minister's assurance that he has not pulled a swifty on us.

**Mr LUCAS** (Lytton) (5.31 p.m.): As my colleague the honourable member for Rockhampton indicated, the Opposition does not oppose the Bill, but we have a number of difficulties with some of its provisions. My colleague has explained the Opposition's position in his usual very concise and erudite manner. I will dwell on only one or two issues.

The first issue I want to raise is the provisions in the Bill that seek to amend section 268 of the body corporate legislation to increase from three months to six months the time for exemption for the requirement for a regulatory impact statement. That provision was opposed by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee. In an attempt at justification, the Explanatory Notes state—

"The amendment will allow sufficient time for the remaining regulation modules to be finalised."

I am sorry, but that does not seem to me to be a justification. That might be a reason why the Minister wants to do it, but it does not contain any justification that would allow this Parliament to decide whether what he is requesting is reasonable.

I am very concerned, as are other members of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, about the manner in which regulatory impact statements are treated in this State. In Victoria—which is in many respects the leader in legislative scrutiny—under a Liberal/National Government, about 20% of all regulations are subject to regulatory impact statements. In Queensland, not 20%,

not 10%, not 5% but 0.5% of our regulations are subject to regulatory impact statements. That is nothing short of a disgrace. It is instructive to examine the comments by the Victorian Parliamentary Law Reform Committee on this matter. It stated—

"The Victorian ORR"—

Office of Regulatory Review—

"estimates about 20 per cent of regulatory proposals coming to their attention via RIS drafts are either modified substantially or withdrawn resulting in cost savings running into tens of millions of dollars. The 20% figure would underestimate the effect, in that many poor proposals do not proceed beyond a rough draft. Similarly, a [United States Environment Protection Agency] analysis of their experience with Cost Benefit analysis estimated that it had saved the economy \$1,000 for every \$1 spent doing it."

That is the purpose of an RIS. Some public servants seem to think it is something that stands in the way of their drafting subordinate legislation. But in fact an RIS is of benefit to the community because it forces public servants to examine whether a regulation is in the best interests of the community. This Government claims that it is interested in cutting red tape and reducing the costs of business. That is exactly what an RIS is designed to do. Under this legislation the Government is seeking to exempt itself further from the process.

As I said, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee opposed this provision. The Minister came back with some attempt at justification which did not satisfy the committee. Time does not permit me to go through it in detail because we want to finish the Bill by 6 p.m. However, this is very, very disappointing. This Government needs a bit of education on the benefits of regulatory impact statements. Certainly the business community would benefit greatly from them if we had a little bit better than 0.5% compliance with them.

The amendments to the Valuation of Land Act provide for increased appeal rights. For example, the time for inspection of valuations has been increased from 21 to 42 days, there are better procedures for late objections and an increased appeal time from 28 to 42 days. Those amendments are very important. During my short time in this House a number of constituents have approached me about their valuations. Many parts of my

electorate have beautiful sea views that people are very keen to take in, and quite divergent valuations are often given. Sometimes people do not have enough knowledge of their valuations or, indeed, the ability to compare them. The Minister might want to consider introducing something like a consumer's guide to valuations. Perhaps consumers could hire a video from the library and learn of their rights in relation to their valuation. That might assist them.

One other small point about which I will speak in more detail at another time is the question of lessees' rights under valuations. Members might realise that most commercial leases provide that the tenant pays the rates the landlord is charged. Most rates are assessed on the unimproved valuation of the land, so the tenant of a commercial premises has a very great interest in what the unimproved valuation of the property is, but at the moment they have no capacity to object to it. They do not even have to be told of it. Some consideration should be given to what can be done for those small-business people. Most small-business people who have commercial premises do not own them; they lease them. This Government claims to defend their interests—

**Mr Schwarten:** Petrol stations, for example.

**Mr LUCAS:** Exactly. At present, tenants do not have access to valuation objection procedures.

Amendments are being made to the Land Title Act concerning easements and caveats. I am told that they have the support of the Queensland Law Society. The easement provision is particularly important, because it now will require creation of an easement to be by a written instrument with a plan showing the location. Anyone can then go to the Titles Office, obtain a copy of it, examine it and satisfy themselves. That is very important.

Finally, I want to touch briefly on the amendments to the Water Resources Act. There are a number of important amendments to that Act. Clearly, unauthorised drilling in a country of such scarce water resources as ours is a great concern. The tightening up of licensing and prohibiting people from using unlicensed drillers is eminently supportable. There is one provision that causes me some concern. I refer to clause 151. We were told in the briefing that the Minister's departmental staff so kindly gave us that the current 90-day period for temporary permits to take water is too short. The Bill seeks not to increase that to

120 days or 180 days but in fact quadruples it to a year. It is my view that that is too long for a temporary water permit. If a problem exists with the 90-day time period, that is understandable and we should consider increasing it. But when it is being increased fourfold without very strong justification, that is just a little bit too much. There are many other things I would like to say, but I am cognisant of the time pressures on us so I will leave it at that.

**Hon. H. W. T. HOBBS** (Warrego—Minister for Natural Resources) (5.38 p.m.), in reply: I thank the Opposition for its comments on this Bill. I thought they were constructive. Quite a lot of issues were raised. The shadow Minister said that this is quite a large Bill. I agree with him. It is a nightmare to go through it, and I spent a lot of time doing that as well. It is one of those things that builds up after a while. We have to try to get as much legislation through as we can. However, what tends to happen is that these things build up over a period and they must get through and suddenly we end up with a whole pile in the one go. It is a large omnibus Bill, and I certainly appreciate the courtesy that the Opposition extended in examining it thoroughly.

I will now deal with a few of the issues that I believe are important in this particular debate. In relation to the amendments to the body corporate community management legislation—that body corporate Bill has been many, many years in the making. It was a nightmare to go through. It was started when members opposite were in Government. No doubt many a Minister lost a lot of hair over the whole thing. At the end of the day we pulled it together, and I believe that we ended up with a very successful Bill that has received wide acclaim in the community. Because of the conflicting interests, right from unit owners to developers—

**Mr Schwarten:** They are the ones who are dirty on you.

**Mr HOBBS:** It is very hard to balance them all up with the managers and developers as well. I believe that we do have a good mix. We just have to trial it now. I have made it quite clear that if we see any problems, we will come back in 12 months' time and do an evaluation of it and perhaps make some amendments. Many of these points that we knew we had to change arose during the implementation period. This included some minor amendments. I suppose that we could have done better with the consultation process. However, we felt that most people were aware of the issues. Being a minor Bill,

we thought that would be okay. However, I take the member's point, and we will certainly do better next time.

Concern has been expressed about the word "chosen". This is an important point, because people perceive it as a breaking down of what they already have. However, we have a set of words that probably will explain it a little better. I am talking about the concern in relation to the replacement of the words "elected annually" with the word "chosen". I am advised that the reason for the change is to bring about consistency between the wording of the Act and the regulations. The logic of the reasoning is seen when consideration is given to the words in the standard regulation module. For example, section 8 of the standard module says that Part 9 is to provide "for ... the choosing of the members" of the committee. Section 11 says that the "choosing of the members of the committee must be done in the way provided in this division unless the body corporate decides by special resolution that the members are to be chosen in another way." Section 12(1) also provides that the members must be chosen by election. Identical provisions are used in the accommodation module regulation as well.

**Mr Swarten:** If it says "chosen by election", you're right.

**Mr HOBBS:** Yes.

For the purpose of consistency, the amendment should also have application in the commercial and small schemes modules, which are still being developed. The ultimate choice in the method of choosing a committee rests with the body corporate. At the end of the day, there is certainly no hidden agenda with this. We are quite genuine in that.

**Mr Swarten:** They will still have the right to elect the committees of those corporate structures?

**Mr HOBBS:** There is flexibility in there. They can do that.

**Mr Swarten:** They are not prevented from doing that?

**Mr HOBBS:** I do not believe that they are prevented from doing that. No, that is quite correct. The flexibility is there. It is giving them more flexibility.

**Mr Swarten:** They are not prevented from doing it?

**Mr HOBBS:** No.

The other very important issue that I need to mention relates to the regulatory impact statement. It is important to understand that

the successful operation of the legislative package to date—developed through an extensive consultation process which has driven and moulded the entire body corporate and community management legislation package—the ongoing consultation process in developing the remaining regulation modules and the absence of additional costs to the community render the imposition of an RIS counterproductive. It is for these reasons that the legislation provides for exemption from the RIS process. The original body corporate legislation did exempt the RIS because of the huge consultation process that we had gone through. The amendment does not extend the limitation to future regulation modules. Rather, it will allow the current legislative package, disclosed to the Parliament, to be completed in the shortest possible time.

**Mr Swarten:** So you won't be amending the standard module or the accommodation module under that exemption?

**Mr HOBBS:** We want to roll them all into one. Yes, we do, when that finally gets through. The other modules are similar. The standard module is a big one. It is the one that has taken all the work to get through. The other ones are smaller but very similar. They do the same thing.

The delay in developing the modules, which has inadvertently taken them outside the exemption period, should not be used to impose an unnecessary RIS process. To impose such a process will cause significant time and financial imposts on developers as well as time delays on bodies corporate wishing to avail themselves of the benefits of these modules. In fact, the compliance with the RIS process at this stage of the legislation package would mean that, at the earliest, the remaining modules would commence in mid to late March 1998. Such a delay, I would suggest, would be unacceptable to the community titles industry. That is the main problem there.

Members have spoken about sandalwood. I agree that we need to do some work on that. A lot of work is to be done. The DPI does marketing and the DNR does the native forest side of it. We are looking at that at present. I believe that we need to do a review of what is happening in that particular industry, but that mainly comes within the DPI's responsibilities.

The Land Act extensions from 28 days to 42 days have been discussed. That is very good. As to the right of appeal provisions—the need to state the facts relied upon when the

appeal is lodged is being dispensed with because this is considered too onerous at the time the appeal is lodged. The facts still have to be advanced at the hearing, but this gives the appellant more time to prepare the case.

**Mr Lucas:** For an ambush.

**Mr HOBBS:** Not necessarily for an ambush.

As to other issues relating to the sale of a unit and the disclosure of that \$160 charge on that particular lady—yes, it is disappointing when that sort of thing happens. We will take that up with the REIQ.

**Mr Schwarten:** I know how these things happen.

**Mr HOBBS:** It is a difficult one. We do what we can to try to make sure that we make things as simple as we can for people, but at the end of the day—

**Mr Schwarten:** They think that to conform with the law they have to fill in that form. Your department tells me that is not the case; they can provide a statement of disclosure themselves.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is right, yes.

The outsourcing of valuers has been mentioned. We are obviously very conscious of that. We believe that the amendments that I have put in place after the review of the valuation system here in Queensland will give us a much better system of valuation. I agree with the member for Lytton that there are some real problems in using unimproved capital value as a basis for determining taxes. I have a problem with that. However, that is the system that is in place at present. We may need to do some more work as a Parliament to try to improve that, and I am sure that we can do that. My intention is to put in place a process whereby at least that system is consistent across Queensland. I believe that it did break down. Treasury also must understand that there is a need to fund those areas adequately. That has not been done in the past—by all Governments—and it is my intention to really drive that home. We do need to be able to put in place a first-class system.

The other point raised by the member for Lytton related to the licensing of drillers. I agree that this is something that we really have to put in place. We must ensure that the skills of those drillers are right. I have noticed that, on the downs, a lot of holes have been drilled, and then they have just been left if they are not working properly. Water is going in there, and it is cascading between the

different layers. This creates pollution of the water in the different layers and aquifers. That certainly has not been the right thing to do.

The member for Rockhampton raised some questions, the answers to which he wanted tabled. I do not have that information with me. I will look into that and see what I can do. I will get back to him on that. An important reason for the extension of time for valuations under the Land Act from 28 days to 42 days was consistency with other Acts. Another reason is that people were not given enough time. We felt that that was an important aspect. The amendment makes the system fairer. There is nothing worse than trying to get one's valuation in on time and missing out by a few days.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Hon H. W. T. Hobbs (Warrego—Minister for Natural Resources) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 24, as read, agreed to.

Clause 25—

**Mr LUCAS** (5.51 p.m.): I will raise a point that I neglected to mention when we were discussing the exemption of the RIS. A helpful contribution was made at the Australasian and Pacific Conference on Delegated Legislation by Stephen Argument, a commonwealth public servant and author of a text in that field. It is important that that point be driven home to the Government. Mr Argument stated—

"The reasons why I was impressed by what I discovered in relation to Victoria was that one of the advantages of having something like a Regulatory Impact Statement process is that it forces the bureaucracy to go through various steps in order to get their delegated legislation into force. I have often thought that it is a great advantage if you can effectively force the bureaucracy to think a little more before it does things. The more they are allowed to just go out and act and take legislative type action without having to go through any sort of formal process or any thought process, the greater chance there is for mistakes being made and for ill thought out legislation being made."

That says it a lot more concisely than I could say it. I will not add any more.

**Mr HOBBS:** I thank the member for that point. It is important that the community has a good look at legislation. That is what the RIS is all about. There is no intention to circumvent that process. It is always a rush to try to get

the damned stuff through. That was the case with this Bill particularly. The process went on for so long and there was much consultation. I take on board what the member says. There is a need to communicate well with the public about legislation, because some of it is very complicated, as was the case with this Bill. The member for Thuringowa would have been involved with this legislation. Perhaps he has less hair now because of the body corporate legislation. An enormous amount of work was done in relation to that.

**Mr Lucas:** It must have worried him more than it worried you.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is right. We take on board the member's point.

Clause 25, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 139, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

**Mr HOBBS** (5.53 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 71, after line 16—

insert—

'Amendment of s 37 (Control of certain quarry material)

'139A. Section 37(3), from 'to the owner' to 'is situated'—

omit.'"

Amendment agreed to.

New clause 139A, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 140 to 174, as read, agreed to.

Clause 175—

**Mr HOBBS** (5.54 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 90, lines 8 to 13—

omit, insert—

' (4) If a police officer believes on reasonable grounds that a person has not complied with an authorised officer's requirement under subsection (1) or (3), the police officer may take the following steps—

- (a) the police officer may ask the person whether the person has a reasonable excuse for not complying with the requirement;
- (b) if the person gives an excuse, the police officer may ask for details or further details of the excuse;
- (c) if the person does not answer the question or gives an excuse the police officer reasonably believes is

not a reasonable excuse, the officer may—

- (i) tell the person that the officer is considering arresting the person for failing to comply with the requirement; and
  - (ii) require the person to state the person's name and residential address (or, if the person has no residential address, an address at which the person can most likely be contacted); and
  - (iii) if the officer reasonably suspects a stated name or address is false—require the person to give evidence of the correctness of the stated name or address;
- (d) the police officer may arrest the person without a warrant if the officer reasonably believes—
- (i) the person has not complied with a requirement of the officer under paragraph (c)(ii) or (iii); and
  - (ii) proceedings by way of complaint and summons against the person for an offence against section 224D would be ineffective.'"

The Scrutiny of Legislation Committee had some concerns in relation to the process involved when an officer apprehended somebody. The legislation introduces a power of arrest without a warrant for alleged offences against the Water Resources Act 1989. We need to explain why that power has been introduced. In the past, the department's efforts to investigate alleged offences have been frustrated by individuals who refuse to provide a name and address. For example, in late 1995, departmental officers observed a person destroying riverine vegetation in a section of a water course. The unauthorised activity resulted in the permanent destruction of the vegetation, which was recognised by the local government as an area of high conservation value. The person refused to talk to the investigating officers, ignored a notice to stop the unauthorised activities and assaulted a departmental officer. Had the power to demand a person's name and address and the power of arrest been provided to the officer under the legislation, the total destruction of vegetation and the assault of the officer may have been preventable. Similar difficulties have been encountered in a number of localities in Queensland. The apparent lack of ability of my department to

protect our natural resources in a manner that satisfies community expectations must be addressed by amending this legislation.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 175, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 176 to 180, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

### Third Reading

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

### MINISTER FOR TOURISM, SMALL BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

**Hon. R. J. GIBBS** (Bundamba)  
(5.57 p.m.): I move—

"That this House views with alarm the incompetent handling of the Tourism, Small Business and Industry portfolio by the Minister, in particular—

- (1) his failure to carry out adequate probity checks on the Sunbelt sponsorship disaster;
- (2) his failure to secure jobs as promised for 295 trainees after the South Pacific Cruise ship debacle;
- (3) his back-stabbing of QTTC Chair, Frank Burnett, to give his job to Sally Anne Atkinson;
- (4) his failure after 11 months to appoint a CEO and his inability to provide certainty and stability to senior members of his executive service; and
- (5) his international embarrassment over the rhino safari tour of South Africa."

The year 1997 was not a good year for the Minister for Tourism and the Government. It started out with Sunbelt and got worse and worse. I am not one to gloat, but, as shadow Minister, I knew about the Sunbelt debacle well before the Minister. Out of some generosity to a new Minister learning the job, I gave him ample opportunity to correct in this House his statements in relation to the financial position of Sunbelt. On 14 July he said—

"I was advised ... over a period between February and March that Sunbelt was ahead of its payment schedules.

...

I was continually updated and briefed."

In this Parliament, he was like a cracked record playing the same line over and over again. The reality of the situation in relation to Sunbelt was stated in a letter dated 10 November 1997 from the liquidator P. G. Downie, chartered accountants. The letter states—

"I have clearly established that the company was insolvent at 31 December 1996 ... and the company was deemed to be insolvent at all times after that date."

Well before Sunbelt signed the agreement to be the Indy sponsor on 4 February 1997, Sunbelt was insolvent.

On 27 March 1997, the Minister assured the House that appropriate and proper inquiries into Sunbelt had been made at the time that the contract had been struck. As Sunbelt was insolvent as at 31 December 1996, as it is proven in the liquidator's letter, the Minister has misled the House. He has told the House the wrong information and, over a period of months, he has misled the people of Queensland. He has had ample opportunity to correct his statements, but he has failed to put the correct position on the record. This matter should now be referred to the Privileges Committee of the Parliament. Misleading the House is very serious.

Jeffrey Stauber and his brother have the reputation of being the biggest shonks on the Gold Coast. They have systematically ripped off many Australians and many international investors with real estate scams going back years. Stauber has left a trail of financial disasters, yet this is the company that was signed as the Indy sponsor. It is a disgrace! The liquidator has stated that debts that have occurred since 31 December 1996, and which remain unpaid, total \$3.2m. In the schedule that lists the debts that have not been paid is an amount for \$619,985 to the Gold Coast Motor Events Company. I have no doubt that the Sunbelt saga will result in several court actions, but this does not in any way excuse the sheer incompetence of the Minister for Tourism, nor does it excuse his staff and the officers who did the so-called checks on the company. There is no excuse for this debacle and the Minister is the one who is ultimately responsible.

South Pacific Cruise Lines is like a horror story gone wrong. From start to finish, this Minister has become the laughing-stock of the Australian tourism industry, from the champagne launch of a cruise line company that was run by two former bankrupts who did not even have a ship to the devastating reality

to the 295 trainees, all long-term unemployed people, who have been stranded by yet another harebrained scheme gone wrong. There are 295 trainees in the community who were given the promise of a job, 295 people who were given the hope of a career on a cruise liner that was sponsored by this Minister. Yet the Minister has done nothing, nor has his department, to get the trainees jobs. All of them were fodder for his stupid scheme and fodder for his incompetence. They were the innocent victims of a process of maladministration and failure in his department and his ministerial office to fully scrutinise the company, the directors and the financial support for the venture. On 27 August 1997 in this House, the Minister stated—

"About three weeks ago, I met with William Angliss, who is the TAFE training provider from Victoria. He assured me that, if this proposal fails and SPCL was unable to fill its commitment to provide the cruise ship business for this State, it would guarantee jobs within the hospitality industry within this State for all those people who have been trained."

I find it extraordinary that a Minister of the Crown, with the full resources and budgets of the Public Service behind him, could come into this place as he did today with information dated 14 November 1997 to be faced by an Opposition with its meagre resources and be presented with more up-to-date figures dated a full week later. If that were to happen to me, I would regard it as a political embarrassment of the first order. I would be kicking butt within the department like one would not believe. The Minister's figures are out of date, his attempts to cloud the issue by quoting referrals rather than real jobs is pathetic, and his refusal to face up to his failure to have William Angliss, DEETYA and the CES to find those trainees jobs is outrageous.

For the Minister's information, the latest figures are that 50 of the 295 trainees have found full-time employment, 50 are working as casuals and the Federal Government is again forking out taxpayers' dollars through Jobstart to keep a further 28 trainees on the Jobstart program. If those kids go to Christmas without the Minister having delivered them jobs, as he outlined in this House, I can assure him that the Opposition intends to hound him all the way to the election next year.

South Pacific Cruise Lines showed that Queensland has gone back to the bad old days of the 1970s and the 1980s when the white-shoe brigade reigned supreme and

where the quacks and bankrupts were somehow able to deal direct with Ministers of the Crown. It is clear that Vanstone was the fall guy for this crazy scheme, as without the clear support of this Minister and the Queensland Government, it would never have got off the ground. The Premier should have followed the Prime Minister and sacked the Minister for Tourism, but did he not want a by-election that would have been devastating for the Government. In fact, my information is that the Minister was called before the Premier and that he, in fact, asked for the Minister's resignation and that he refused to go. The Minister threatened to resign to cause a by-election, which the Premier could not cop. That is why he is surviving in the Ministry today.

The Minister for Tourism could not have written a better obituary for Mr Frank Burnett of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation than he did yesterday. The Minister stated—

"My agreement with Mr Burnett was that he would remain chairman until a time that suited me to make a change."

That is a disgraceful act of treachery for the Minister to be indulging in. The Minister also stated that he would be considering further changes in the next five months to six months. That is in defiance of a Westminster convention that the Government make no major appointments or changes to statutory bodies prior to an election. Apart from the obvious plan to appoint Sallyanne Atkinson, is the Minister also going to appoint some of the defeated Liberal candidates in the last Brisbane City Council election? Is it jobs for the boys and girls of the Liberal Party? Is it the girls brigade of the Liberal Party, Sheldon, Atkinson and company, demanding a slice of the cake before it disappears at the next State election? Whatever acts of backstabbing and treachery occur, the Minister can be assured that I will know about it and I will continue to expose them in this House.

The Minister has been an abysmal failure with regard to his portfolio responsibilities. On 8 August 1997, an advertisement was placed in the Queensland Government Gazette for the position of Director-General of the Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry. It has a salary of \$151,095. It has not been filled. To date, no-one has been appointed to that position. On 11 July 1997, the position of Deputy Director-General was advertised in the Department of Tourism, with a salary of \$120,000 to \$128,000. To date, that position has not been filled. Also on 8

August, three SES 2 positions were advertised. The positions were as executive directors for service delivery, coordination and review, and strategy. To date, none of those positions has been filled. I am advised that public servants, some of whom would be eminently qualified to be appointed to those positions, have not even applied for the jobs as they do not want to be associated with the incompetence of this Minister. Many of those public servants have good track records in their departments. Why would they risk those track records to work for this harebrained Minister whose portfolio has been irreparably damaged by Sunbelt, the rhino affair and South Pacific Cruise Lines? I understand that the Minister has been offering the position of director-general around town for some time. That position has also been offered to people in the private sector. No-one wants to work with a failure, no-one wants to have his or her own reputation smeared by association with this failed political clown.

The KPMG report on the Minister's department outlined numerous inefficiencies in the department. Some of those inefficiencies are that strategic planning is a low priority and carried out poorly, communication with senior management requires significant improvement and that the numbers and levels of management are excessive. The report goes on and on. The most interesting outcome in the KPMG report is that—

"A vision for the Department has been determined by the Minister in conjunction with the ... Premier and the Office of the Public Service. This vision was conceived before May 1997."

It was not a vision, it was a nightmare. The department has no director-general and no SES appointments have been made. The department is lurching from crisis to crisis in response to claims that I make in the Parliament. It is like playing chess with the bureaucracy, except that the department runs more to the tune of the shadow Minister in an attempt to try to shore up the Minister.

All of the inaction is a damning indictment on the Minister. This Minister has sat on the KPMG report and not provided the leadership that is required to turn around this department.

Time expired.

**Hon. J. P. ELDER** (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.08 p.m.): I rise to second the motion. This Minister has the reverse Midas touch. Everything he touches turns to dust. He is the Frank Spencer of the Borbidge Ministry—some Governments do have them.

Let us look at some of the whoopsies that this Minister has done: \$5m with the Sunbelt Indy sponsorship debacle. The Minister signed a deal with a known bankrupt. This State is still owed \$700,000 and we have a fat chance of ever getting that. The great South African rhino safari—the Minister was looking after a mate and funding a private sector tourist park with Government grants. What a shonk! The South Pacific Cruise Lines disaster: this Minister's promise was, "I will get everyone a job." It is gone; it is finished. As the shadow Minister has said, no probity checks were made. Those people had no money. Again, the Minister was dealing with bankrupts but he said, "Don't worry, I will get you a job." The Minister has got 50 jobs. What are the other 250 people going to do prior to Christmas? The Cairns to Gold Coast car rally collapsed. Everything the Minister gets his fingers into comes unstuck. The department itself is falling around the Minister's ears. The KPMG report stated that the department is moribund and lacking in direction. Staff morale is lower than the ebb tide in the Noosa River. The Minister cannot find a DG to work with him.

**Mr Gibbs:** He is the yabby.

**Mr ELDER:** He is the yabby in the Noosa River. The Minister promised the job of director-general to everyone. He told Kevin Byrne, "I have to give it to you, my National Party mate." The trouble is that he had also promised it to three other prominent business people, saying, "You'll be right mate, no worries, beauty, thanks, ta, it's under control." He had to ring them back and say, "I can't deliver because I have to look after a mate." The QTTC has become a financial basket case under the mismanagement of the Minister, and that is just another example of it.

Page 31 of the annual report states that the staff of the QTTC has only increased slightly, yet salaries have gone through the roof, with a 17% increase in the same period. Salaries have increased by \$2.8m and the annual report shows that the operating loss has blown out from \$262,000 to nearly \$1.4m. That was not our fault. Those debacles took place under the Minister's stewardship.

In a classic move, in March 1996 the Minister released an achievements register. On that register, achievement No. 13 is moving Loftus Harris from the Premier's office to the small business department. When the Minister sacked him, Mr Harris took off to New South Wales where he is earning three times more than he would have earned here. He is doing a darned good job and New South Wales has picked up a competent worker.

Eleven months later—not one, not two, not three—and there is still no departmental director-general.

The acting director-general has written a memo dated 31 October, which the Minister says he has not seen although it is fairly relevant. That memo has come across his desk, all right. It is no wonder that in that memo the acting director-general said, "Don't blame me. It is not my fault." If it is not his fault, guess whose it is? It is the Minister's fault! The Minister's mismanagement has put him in this situation. He is so incompetent that he cannot make a simple decision to replace staff without mucking it up. One only has to look at the great rhino safari to see that.

If the Minister thinks that Macfarland and his mates will con Queenslanders by trotting out so-called leading Australian scientists to support the scheme, I reliably inform the House that in the eighties one of those scientists accompanied Geoff Muntz to Brazil to oppose the World Heritage listing of the north Queensland tropical rainforest. If those sorts of credentials are needed to prop up the project, I am sorry to disappoint the Minister; they do just the opposite. As the people of Queensland know, this scheme is absolutely shonky.

Some people in politics float above a certain level of competence. However, this Minister is so hopeless that he will end up with the bends trying to swim to the surface. That is the Minister's problem and it has always been his problem. He is in the wrong weight—

**Mr Gibbs:** Division.

**Mr ELDER:** He is in the wrong weight division and every decision that he has made proves that. If anyone wants to see a rhino, they have only to come into this House. Rhinos are thick-skinned and short-sighted and if anyone fits that description it is the Minister. Like the rhino, he is an endangered species in this place and it will not be too long before we have his scalp as well.

Time expired.

**Ms WARWICK** (Barron River) (6.13 p.m.): Speaking to this motion tonight allows me to lay to rest the ridiculous whingeing of the members opposite regarding the performance of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. There is no doubt that the member for Bundamba is having a pretty rough time as shadow Minister for Tourism. In his entire career as Tourism Minister, and indeed during the tenure of the failed Labor Government, the tourism industry in Queensland was in trouble, not because it was

not capable of being the best in the world but because it was stymied and stifled at every opportunity by a lazy, confrontational Government that paid it nothing but lip-service. The performance of the member for Bundamba during his period as Tourism Minister was a disgrace not only to himself but also to the Labor Party.

The member for Bundamba throws mud wildly and desperately in an attempt to cover up his own incompetence. For example, yesterday he tried to create some controversy over the tenure of the Chairman of the QTTC, Mr Frank Burnett. Mr Burnett was appointed by Mr Gibbs in April 1994. Mr Burnett has proved to be a most successful chairman and I know that the Minister is extremely grateful for his contribution. Mr Burnett has been one of the longest standing chairmen of the QTTC, a record which he would have been unlikely to achieve had the member for Bundamba stayed in the seat much longer. Indeed, under Bob Gibbs, the chairman's seat was literally spinning!

The shameful record of the member for Bundamba stands at five chairman in about five years, yet he has the gall and the audacity to claim that the QTTC is in disarray now. The staff had to survive the purges of the Peter Laurence days, the embarrassment of the "Yo! Way to Go!" controversy and a raft of different chairmen and four different chief executive officers. Today, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation is working better than ever before.

Indeed, never before has the Queensland tourism industry held such confidence in its Minister. Never before has the working relationship between the Government and the industry been so harmonious and effective. Under Labor, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation's budget was virtually frozen for six years. When the members opposite took power in 1989, they inherited a QTTC that had one of the largest budgets in the country. By 1995, that budget had been overtaken by even South Australia. Tourism was treated with complete disdain by Labor.

The member for Bundamba thought that he could get away with doing virtually nothing, but he was wrong. The policy of the member for Bundamba and his colleagues was to promise everything, do nothing and hope that the people would be hoodwinked. Again, he and his mates were wrong.

The member for Bundamba's only legacy to the Queensland tourism industry was discord and bitterness. The legacy of Minister

Davidson will be a Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation which at long last has the confidence of the industry, a QTTC which is staffed by the best tourism minds in Australia, and a Queensland tourism industry which has direction, long-term strategies and the confidence to know that the coalition Government takes it seriously.

Over the past 12 months the QTTC has launched what is widely recognised as the most innovative and advanced marketing strategy in the country. That is a broad strategy which has seen the development of marketing campaigns for the five developed destinations of Tropical North Queensland, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, the Whitsundays and Brisbane. However, most importantly, that strategy not only promotes those well-known elements of Queensland but will also see the potential of the less developed regions and the niche sectors finally realised. For example, the drive market, the ecotourism market, cultural tourism and disabled tourism are all areas that are being addressed by the QTTC.

In my own region, the performance of the Minister and the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation is evident. Thanks to the support and leadership of the Minister, our region was able to address vital issues which had been ignored by the previous Government. What was known as Far North Queensland has now been re-launched in domestic and international markets as Tropical North Queensland in a strategy designed to correct positioning problems which had the potential to limit our growth potential. In addition, our domestic marketing campaign which was launched by the Premier, Deputy Premier and Minister in Cairns earlier this year was universally accepted as the best ever produced for our region. I know that regions across the State feel the same way about their own campaigns.

In addition to that, the Minister and the QTTC have ensured that Queensland is the dominant beneficiary of the Australian Tourist Commission's current \$13.5m campaign in the Japanese market. We must also remember the importance of the recent Eco-Challenge event which was held in the north of the State and which will result in \$80m worth of international publicity for the region. We will also be hosting the World Wide Aussie Specialist Convention in Cairns in May next year and the Association of British Travel Agents conference in 1999, both of which would not have been won without the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation.

I know that the experience of the tropical north over the past 20 months is mirrored—

Time expired.

**Hon. K. W. HAYWARD** (Kallangur) (6.18 p.m.): Tonight's motion is a very important one, that the House views with alarm the incompetent handling of the Tourism, Small Business and Industry portfolio. The challenge for all members of this Parliament is to think of two issues on which this Minister has provided some leadership and direction. I cannot think of anything, because there are no such issues to think of.

This Minister has presided over a litany of failure, the first of which, of course, involved the Indy Grand Prix and the Sunbelt debacle. Everybody on the Gold Coast knew of that company's problems and that its principals were shonks. The member for Broadwater knew that the principals were shonks. The Minister was warned in this Parliament, he was warned by the Premier and he was warned by the member for Broadwater, but he took no notice.

South Pacific Cruise Lines applied for State Government funding. However, much of the financial advice in that application was false or, at the very least, grossly misleading. Where is the ministerial responsibility for that? Apparently there has been no legal action against the directors of South Pacific Cruise Lines. What sort of signal is the Minister sending to other firms and shonks—that this Government is an easy touch for shonky business practices? If that is the signal he sends out, he will get plenty of shonky deals. The evidence we have seen so far is that everything the Minister has been involved in has been a shonky deal. In respect of all of those cases, the Minister should not say that he was not warned; that someone did not say, "Look, just be careful." However, he took no notice.

We now turn to the subject of rhinos. This morning in the Parliament the Minister indicated clearly that he intended to pursue this rhino park madness. If Queensland is to avoid even further embarrassment, it is absolutely necessary that no further State Government money is spent on this project; that no State Government representatives accompany George Macfarland, a man who apparently is the Minister's friend, on his next trip; that no gift of rhinos is arranged from Government to Government to step around the international endangered species treaties; and, most importantly, because he is turning his State incompetence into an international issue, that the South African Government is

clearly informed that this project first and foremost is a money making tourism venture involving private businessmen and has little to do with endangered species breeding by a so-called benevolent wildlife foundation.

Any failure to do this will again leave Queensland open to widespread ridicule as some sort of hick State on the make, but this time on the make using conservation and the environment as a get-rich gimmick. I know that the Minister—and we have seen this from the previous examples with Indy, Sunbelt and South Pacific Cruise Lines—is not big on undertaking probity checks on companies and individuals he does business with. Honourable members would remember what else has happened. I strongly suggest that when the Minister's office and department—and we do not know whether the Minister is taking any notice of his department—run the Australian Securities Commission checks on him and his associated companies, they go back to Mr Macfarland's days with Sunstate Resources and his co-director at that time, Senor Skase of Majorca fame.

A thorough scanning of media articles at the time makes for fascinating reading about how business in the eighties was run fast and loose. The Minister should not say that he was not warned. In addition, some sort of turf war has developed on business issues between the National Party through Mr Slack, as Minister for Economic Development and Trade, and Mr Davidson. It is now a continuous topic of conversation for the staff. If members ask anybody who works in the department what is happening, they will be told that the Nationals are blueing with the Liberals. We can all see what is happening. The Nationals are crushing the Liberals again.

**Mr GRICE** (Broadwater) (6.23 p.m.): The only good thing about this motion moved by member for Bundamba is that it gives me the opportunity to inform the House of Queensland's impressive events record under this Government and the stewardship of my colleague the Minister for Tourism, Bruce Davidson.

In the 12 or so months since Minister Davidson appointed the new board of the Queensland Events Corporation, Queensland has re-emerged as a major force in the events market. But the QEC's performance is even more impressive when its current achievements are compared with those during the failed Labor years, and most particularly during the time of the member for Bundamba.

In 1995 the QEC supported a total of nine events, with a combined economic

impact of just \$13.5m. Of those, five were new event wins. In 1996 the QEC supported seven events, with a total economic impact of \$25.3m. Of those, only three were new event wins for the State. In October last year, when the new QEC board was appointed, it had only five events in its portfolio and only one of those had any commitment past 1997.

Let us look at the QEC's record over the past 12 months. The QEC's events portfolio has expanded to over 27 events, worth around \$400m to Queensland in economic impact, and a further \$150m in promotional value. Among those 27 events are 10 major national or international events. They include the 2000 World Figure Skating Championships, the 2001 World Veterans Athletics Championships, the 1999 Champions Trophy Hockey, the Players Championship, the 1997 Telstra Super League Grand Final and the Aida spectacular.

Just as importantly, the QEC has supported or will be supporting seven major regional events, including the 1998 World Hobie Cat Championship in the Whitsundays, the Hyundai National Country Music Muster in Gympie, the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers, the Mount Isa Rodeo and the Whitsunday Masters Games. Whereas one year ago, thanks to Labor, the QEC had only one event commitment past 1997, the QEC now has event commitments right up to 2006: 11 in 1998; eight in 1999; eight in 2000; six in 2001; two in 2002; one in 2003; two in 2004; one in 2005; and one in 2006. And there are plenty more to come.

Just yesterday the Premier announced Queensland's winning bid for a Davis Cup quarter-final title to be held at the ANZ Stadium next year. This follows on from Minister Davidson's announcement last month that an international-standard golf tournament would return to Brisbane for the first time since 1973 and, best of all, that Queensland's No. 1 son, Greg Norman, would be the major drawcard for the 1997 Players Championship at Royal Queensland.

Since Minister Davidson appointed a new board to the QEC, it has won every event it has bid for. But when looking at the member for Bundamba's record when it comes to events, we see it is probably a good thing that his failed Labor Government could not attract more events than it managed to. Who could forget the Great Barrier Reef Dive Festival of 1995? This event was first conceived by the member for Bundamba's board in 1991. In July 1993, the QEC committed \$100,000 to the festival. In 1994, a report highlighted a

number of cash-flow problems regarding the festival and it was recommended that it be deferred for a year. But the member for Bundamba pushed on and a further \$30,000 was committed to the festival in December 1994. In February 1995, when the festival, having already expended \$130,000, faced even more cash-flow problems, the member for Bundamba handed over a further \$70,000 of taxpayers' money.

Mr Speaker, you would have thought the member would have cut his losses after the first \$100,000. \$200,000 and four years later, the festival was staged in August/September 1995 with a grand total of 72 passes sold for the event. It must have cost \$2,777 per pass! And although the charter of the QEC states that events supported must extensively profile Queensland through national and international media exposure, the media coverage of the event was limited to Queensland, with much of that in the Cairns region.

However, both of those examples of mismanagement pale in comparison to the Asia Pacific Racing Forum—the brainchild of the then Minister for Tourism and Racing, the member for Bundamba. The Asia Pacific Racing Forum was designed as an international event to add depth to the Queensland Winter Racing Carnival. It was to consist of a conference and trade show, but it had to be cancelled in May 1996 when only 67 delegates—that would have been Gibbsey's mates—and six trade exhibitors had registered. At the time the forum was cancelled, total net expenditure was \$459,862.

Time expired.

**Mrs BIRD** (Whitsunday) (6.28 p.m.): It is with deep concern for the tourist industry in my electorate in particular that I support this motion tonight, which allows me five minutes to outline the incompetence of this Minister. His management of the whole portfolio has been incompetent from the word go. It is not enough that I have five minutes; I require more. However, I will do my best.

The motion outlines only five issues that the Minister has disgraced himself over, those being the most important and prominent issues. The Minister has disgraced himself, but he has had a good time doing so, has he not? He has flown around, wined, dined, "rhinoed" and had a really good time, but there have not been many achievements. The problem is that the Minister's reputation for wining, dining and "rhinoing" is now widely acknowledged, and people are screaming for something to be done.

The Minister does not seem to understand that running his portfolio is like running a very large business. To run a business such as that, one has to be the leader at the top and one has to depend on people within the hierarchy of the various departments to assist one through. They have to be dependable people. If one does not have dependable people, one simply is not going to make it. The problem is that if those at the top are incompetent, the incompetence then starts to slip down to the regions. That in fact is what we have got in my electorate.

The incompetence of the Minister has now slipped to a stage where my Whitsunday Visitors and Convention Bureau has done some rather outlandish things in recent days. The tourist infrastructure committee was set up as a result of the Goss Government's Whitsunday tourism strategy, but it no longer has the confidence of the local community. The Tourism Minister has put his own shonks on that committee. The Minister did not appoint the ordinary small operator to whom he seems to have an aversion, but appointed the high rollers, the bullyboys of the town and the big-timers who could not care less about the small operators.

Dave Hutchen, in particular, was appointed for a short time to the QTTC but found that he was out of his depth and he resigned. He was then appointed to this infrastructure committee and continues to bully his way around the Whitsundays. Where does the Minister's friend Dave Hutchen get his staff? Obviously he gets them from Noosa, not from the local region. Does he advertise locally for staff? No, he does not. In recent days he has advertised through the Sunshine Coast Daily for a junior. The advertisement asks for "Experienced Junior Person who is computer literate". The advertisement was not run in Proserpine or the Whitsunday region; it was run in Noosa. Mr Hutchen is prepared to pay relocation costs, supply uniforms and pay a good starting salary. I could have got him 100 girls or 100 boys in the Whitsunday area who could have done the job quite adequately.

The other problem that we have had with the Whitsunday Visitors and Convention Bureau has been recognised by a smaller group which has been set up. I refer to the Whitsunday Regional Development Organisation, which in recent days had to take the Whitsunday Visitors Bureau to task simply because it would not admit that it was quoting wrong figures. The Minister would understand about quoting wrong figures. The bureau claimed to have had a 37% growth figure, and

Mr Powell said it is reliable; but it is not, it is misleading. The gross discrepancy was noted by the other organisation and it phoned to clarify the situation and indeed asked that it be clarified further. Consequently, it contacted the QTTC, which then wrote to the local Whitsunday Visitors Bureau and asked it to clarify the situation in its next newsletter. It seems to me that if one goes about boasting of 37% growth and one refuses to——

Time expired.

**Mr WOOLMER** (Springwood) (6.33 p.m.): The test of whether a Minister is a success or a failure can be measured very simply. One could just ask this question: is Queensland better off because of the work that the Minister has done? When one asks this question about the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry, the answer is a resounding yes. In the 20 months that he has been in charge of the portfolio, he has revamped the investment attraction system for this State and for the first time has made capital available to Queensland-based firms. He has revamped industry development in this State; he has initiated the development of this State's most comprehensive industry policy; and he has seen the establishment of major investment in this State. He has brought major international firms to Queensland—something that the Opposition did not do when in Government.

The establishment of the Information Industries Council has given the IT industry the most effective voice in Government that it has ever had in this State. The establishment of Construction Queensland in partnership with the Minister's Cabinet colleagues has put this State's construction industry on the path to renewed growth and prosperity. His support for projects such as Project Bushranger will see major defence manufacturing activity come to Queensland. His deal with the CSIRO to extend the Queensland Centre for Advanced Technology with \$24m worth of new construction will see the creation of some 250 new jobs. It will advance the already massive contribution which QCAT makes to the competitiveness of this State's mining and manufacturing sectors. His commitment to innovation in manufacturing through increased funding of the Queensland Manufacturing Institute means that the manufacturing sector will receive a further boost in competitiveness. The expenditure of new funds in this year's Budget of over \$53m over the next three years on capital works will see a huge stimulus to this State's economy.

It is a long and impressive list. It is a CV of a Minister who is dedicated to his job and is

performing it with distinction. It is hardly the form of an incompetent, which is what the Opposition would try to assert. One really has to ask: what is the Opposition's definition of incompetence? Is someone incompetent if they set up an investment attraction system which actually discriminates against Queensland companies? The Opposition does not think so, because that is what it did when it was in Government. Is someone incompetent if they ask questions in Parliament specifically designed to torpedo the Silicon Studio Training Centre? That is what the member for Bundamba did last month. Is it incompetent to give the Queensland IT & T Awards a working over in Parliament the way that the member for Kallangur did last week?

If any of those who seek to criticise the Minister had even one tenth of the business acumen and experience that he does, they would know what achievers do. Achievers weigh up the situation carefully. They take acceptable risks and, ultimately, they succeed through determination and hard work.

Whilst we are talking about the member for Bundamba here, we could conclude that he has thrown so much mud around in recent months that he is beginning to believe his own accusations. The member for Bundamba protests just a little too loudly for my liking. He stands in here and throws up the problems of the Indy sponsorship deals with Sunbelt as if that was the first time that we have had any difficulties. He protests at the way in which the Minister has handled the matter and calls for the Government to intervene in the matter, which is in the hands of the Gold Coast Motor Events Corporation.

Hansard of 7 June 1995 records Mr Gibbs as vigorously defending some allegations made against an Indy contractor which was at the time being investigated by the Southport CIB. He said that, yes, he was aware that there was some money outstanding and that, although, he was not sure just how much it was—wait for it—that was a matter for a legal dispute between the Gold Coast Motor Events Corporation and the people concerned. Mr Gibbs pleaded that the issue was not a matter for the Minister but was an issue between the corporation and the contractor at the time.

In February 1995 he called for the then Opposition to back off in relation to questioning about the accounts of Indy because he was concerned that it may deter some potential sponsorship deals in the future. What a pity he does not heed his own advice! The member for Bundamba has one set of rules for himself and another set for the

Government when it suits him on his terms. How can he in good conscience sit in here and say that it was Indy's responsibility in 1995 and then, a few years later, try to change the rules? It smacks of hypocrisy, but that is nothing new for this shadow Minister.

What the Opposition does not realise or does not care about is that progress does not happen without taking risks. Progress happens when one has some guts and takes on a bit of a challenge. Every one of the business people around Queensland who have worked with the Minister to reshape the services of this State knows that this Minister has the guts to make those changes and meet those challenges. In the end, the Labor Party chases him because he makes the Labor Party look bad. That is the real reason we are having this debate tonight—the Labor Party never developed a decent industry policy, which this Government now has. There were no jobs for the boys in it back then. There were no political points in it. In Opposition, the Labor Party has spent the last few months disgracefully trying to destroy the good work of the Government.

Time expired.

**Mr ROBERTS** (Nudgee) (6.38 p.m.): I support the motion moved by the shadow Minister for Tourism. The uncertainty and disarray created by the current Minister is matched only by the experiences of the former Minister for Public Works and Housing, who now sits on the back bench. Whether it be rhino safaris in southern Africa, sunken cruise ships in the South Pacific or strips of rubber flying off Indy cars and promoters at the Gold Coast, this Minister is bringing the State's tourism industry into disrepute.

A major concern about all the uncertainty is that it does not do anything to inspire the confidence needed to promote investment and jobs growth in the industry. In fact, if anything it hinders it. The industry has enough problems at the moment without worrying about the antics of our globetrotting Minister. Inbound tourist operators are currently expressing concern about the impact on tourism numbers arising from the Asian currency crisis. Some reports indicate that arrivals from Asia are down 15% from the same period last year. At best, arrivals from countries such as Japan are slowing significantly. Overall, the growth rate in international tourists of 10% to 15% over the past five years has now slowed to about 5% for this year. Industry representatives are predicting that both domestic and international tourism levels will remain flat for the next 12 months. Qantas is even considering dropping

flights to Coolangatta if the projected downturn worsens. The point of all this is that we do not need additional and unnecessary obstacles placed in the way of the industry. The industry needs certainty, it needs leadership and it needs investment in the information systems and technology that will maintain it as a leading-edge provider of tourism services. Sadly, as the record outlined tonight shows, this Minister has shown very little leadership in terms of these issues.

One of the main issues that concerns me in this debate is the impact it has on job creation in the industry, particularly for the 295 trainees who were cast on the scrap heap as a result of the collapse of the ill-fated South Pacific Cruise Line. The Minister was asked a question this morning about his promise to the Parliament that, if South Pacific Cruise Lines collapsed, he would ensure that the William Angliss 2000 company would guarantee jobs within the hospitality industry and within the State for all those people who had been trained. So much for the guarantee! Official CES records show that, as at 21 November, only 50 of the 295 trainees have been found full-time jobs and only 61 have been found part-time jobs. Three months out and nearly two-thirds of the people involved in that sorry tale are still without any work at all. Here we have a Government that trumpets loudly its so-called achievements in job creation, yet when it comes to the crunch, when it comes to actually delivering in specific circumstances as opposed to grandstanding about what might be achieved, the Minister has failed dismally.

The task of getting these people employment is made all the more difficult by the declining levels of employment in the industry generally. The number of wage and salary earners in the categories of accommodation, cafes, restaurants, cultural and recreational services—all key elements of the tourism industry—have fallen by nearly 10% over the past 12 months. The Minister's chances of fulfilling his promise to those 295 people are looking sore and sorry indeed. The hollow promise made by the Minister brings to mind the contract the Premier made with the people of Queensland. "If I break my promises, throw me out." That is what he said: "Throw me out." On that basis, there are now another 295 reasons why this Government should be tossed out of office at the next election and why this Minister should take a trip to the back bench.

The sorry tale of the South Pacific Cruise Line has some more disastrous aspects. What about the \$2.2m allocated by the Federal

Government towards the training of the cruise line staff? On any fair analysis, a significant proportion of that money—taxpayers' money—has now been wasted. There is even a question mark over the accreditation of the courses undertaken by the trainees. In June of this year, William Angliss applied for accreditation with the Vocational Education and Training Commission, but this was withdrawn in July with suggestions that the course would be submitted for accreditation in Jeff Kennett's Victoria. Senator Vanstone, the former Minister for Employment, Education and Training, lost her job primarily as a result of this disastrous exercise. However, the questions about the viability of this program started well before, here in Queensland with our own Minister for Tourism, a Minister who failed to make the appropriate checks, failed to act on the growing evidence of a pending collapse and failed to protect the interests of the 295 people who have suffered most by his mistakes. The Minister clearly must go and make way for someone who has the capacity to deal with the issues facing the industry.

**Mr HARPER** (Mount Ommaney) (6.43 p.m.): What a pathetic attempt at muckraking we are being subjected to in this Chamber tonight. Once again the valuable time of this House is being taken up not with issues of substance but with further attempts at misrepresentation and sleazy tactics by an Opposition which has demonstrated very clearly that it has absolutely no vision as far as business in Queensland is concerned. It is for this reason that the motion has to be amended. I move the following amendment—

"All words after 'That this House'—  
omit, insert—

- (1) notes the important contribution made by Queensland's tourism, small business and industry sectors in creating new jobs and economic growth; and
- (2) further notes the encouraging results of the Yellow Pages Small Business Survey of Queensland small businesses and calls on all Governments to ensure their policies assist the tourism, small business and industry sectors.'

The members opposite failed small business in Queensland during their time in Government. That record is very clear. Let us make no mistake: Minister Bruce Davidson has succeeded in transforming the business community in Queensland since we took over from the pathetic attempts of those opposite.

In the last days of the Goss Government, small business was on its knees. Small business confidence had dropped to a staggering 30%, which was 19% below the national average. Here we have a day when the latest Yellow Pages Small Business Survey is released showing that sales growth in Queensland's small-business sector has surged to its highest level in three years. This survey shows that, in line with the improved sales results, profitability for Queensland small business also surged during the August to October period.

Approval of State Government policies among Queensland small-business operators also improved, and now the Opposition, for some reason—and I guess we could come up with that reason—has provided us with an ideal opportunity to trumpet that good news. Members opposite think they are going to gain some advantage out of this, yet it will backfire on them. This is a red-letter day for Queensland business, and why the Opposition would attempt to launch a doomed attack on a day when the figures quite plainly speak for themselves defies simple logic. I suppose one could conjecture that members opposite do not like good news for Queensland because that is not good news for them, and they are interested only in themselves and not in Queenslanders.

There is no better example of the failings of the previous inept Labor administration compared with the achievements of the present Minister than the recently announced SmartLicence. In 1995 Labor produced a long-forgotten manifesto titled Strength to Strength. On page 10 it read—

"A re-elected Goss Government will provide business with a one-stop shop for business licensing procedures."

**Mr Elder** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I hear that the bullyboy is at it again. We have all become used to his bullyboy tactics. He never offers anything positive. His record speaks for itself: a failed Minister in many portfolios, and now he has to try to bully his way back up the ladder.

The truth of that charade, however, was highlighted in a letter dated 4 October 1995—after the State election—from the acting Under Treasurer to the acting Director-General of the then DBIRD which stated—

"As it was only originally intended to be a feasibility study of the One Stop Shop concept there has been no funding provision made for the implementation of

the One Stop Shop initiative in 1995-96 or outer years."

That is what Labor was going to do—or, should I say, what Labor was not going to do. Labor's lies and deceit were plain for all to see. Compare this with the actions of Minister Davidson, who recently launched the most fundamental and successful reform of business licensing procedures in our nation's history. Minister Davidson's SmartLicence will save Queensland small business \$37m annually in compliance costs. Whereas Labor was content to drag business down with the burden of duplicate and even triplicate licences, Minister Davidson has slashed the number of small business licences by half—down from 520 to 268. Better still, under Minister Davidson's system 143 State Government licences will be available at one Government location. The QCCI in its recent press release stated—

"The Queensland Government is the first in Australia to achieve these reforms. It is a valuable addition to the other microeconomic reforms introduced by the Borbidge Government."

The achievements of my colleague do not stop there, and I regret that I am limited to five minutes in which to talk about them. There is a very negative phenomenon known as the tall poppy syndrome. It refers to the un-Australian habit of trying to degrade those who achieve. The Opposition is in the grip of the tall poppy syndrome.

Time expired.

**Hon. B. W. DAVIDSON** (Noosa—Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry) (6.48 p.m.): I second the amendment to the motion moved by the member for Mount Ommaney. I cannot believe that the Opposition spokesperson on Tourism, the member for Bundamba, would continually represent himself as the shadow Minister for Tourism. He did not attend the Queensland Tourism Awards this year in Cairns. He did not send a representative. There was no-one there representing the Government.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DAVIDSON:** Sorry, there was no-one there representing the Opposition.

**Mr GIBBS:** I rise to a point of order. My advice was that the Minister advised the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation not to issue invitations to any member of the Opposition.

**Mr DAVIDSON:** The member has not attended one key tourism function since he

has been the shadow Tourism Minister. The other morning, the Premier was a guest of the Tourism Council of Australia. There were 200 key tourism people at that function, but the shadow Minister was nowhere to be seen. He is unbelievable. He runs around the State promoting himself as the alternative Tourism Minister, but people in the tourism industry have not seen him. They never see him at functions. He does not meet with them. Where is he? He is at the racecourse. His only interest in his shadow portfolio is Racing.

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. That remark is untrue. Along with another Opposition members, he met with them two days ago.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat. I will take no more frivolous points of order tonight.

**Mr DAVIDSON:** Very touchy, aren't they!

Let us go through Queensland events and some of the issues that have been highlighted tonight in this House. What about the Racing Asia Forum? That was the member's baby, but he lost \$650,000. What about the new grandstand at Lang Park, which was estimated to cost \$15m but ended up costing \$35m? When we took over Government, that grandstand was going to fall over, and the Minister for Sport had to get it waterproofed to maintain it. That grandstand cost \$20m more than the original estimate.

Let us talk about Indy. What about the \$70m in losses over the five years that the member was the Tourism Minister? In his last year in office, he took \$1m out of the QTTC without accounting for it. He came into this Parliament and said that there would be no overrun. He pinched \$1m from the QTTC. What about the \$8m loan that he allowed Peter Laurance to take out for the QTTC? He gave approval to negotiate that loan with Treasury. We are still paying off that loan. This year, in 1996-97, we have to pay \$1.6m off the Bob Gibbs/Peter Laurance loan from the Queensland Treasury. The member for Capalaba talked about the \$1.6m. We are still paying off the former Government's debts.

The shadow Minister for Tourism comes in here and has his colleague the member for Whitsunday stand up and knock a campaign in the Whitsundays—the brands campaign launched by this Government. Business in the Whitsundays has increased by 25%. How dare the local member knock that campaign!

**Mrs BIRD:** I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. According to

QTTC figures, there was no increase in tourism in the Whitsundays.

**Mr DAVIDSON:** Local industry in the Whitsundays has totally embraced the Out of the Blue campaign, and the member knows it.

A month or so ago on the Gold Coast, the Premier and I launched the \$13m Kamike Marketing Campaign in Japan, which involved six months of hard work with the Australian Tourism Commission, building the partnerships that the member destroyed through his arrogance and ignorance. He would not meet with them and form the partnerships that were required. We have been working with the ATC for six months developing that partnership with industry on the Gold Coast and in Cairns and with local government authorities.

We have totally restructured the QTTC. The member wants to politicise Frank Burnett. He appointed five QTTC chairmen over five years. He knows that it is the Minister's prerogative to appoint whomever he wishes to chair the QTTC board. Frank Burnett is one of the great businessmen in Queensland. He has my total support and my respect. The shadow Minister should ring him up and ask him. We have had a fantastic professional relationship in the interests of the tourism industry in this State. All the member did was try to politicise the contribution that Frank Burnett has made to the QTTC. The member knows that the QTTC is a much different organisation from when he was the Tourism Minister. He had a director of marketing paying a consultant to tell her how to do her job. He paid her \$100,000, and she was paying \$25,000 a year to a consultant to tell her what to do.

Time expired.

**Question**—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put; and the House divided—

**AYES, 42**—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells. Tellers: Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

**NOES, 43**—Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Cunningham, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, Malone, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer. Tellers: Springborg, Carroll

Pair: McCauley, Smith

Resolved in the **negative**.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! For any further divisions the bells will ring for two minutes.

**Question**—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put; and the House divided—

**AYES, 43**—Baumann, Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Cunningham, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, Malone, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Veivers, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer. Tellers: Springborg, Carroll

**NOES, 42**—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Lavarch, Lucas, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells. Tellers: Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

Pair: McCauley, Smith

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (7.03 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

## Parliamentary Privilege

**Mr PALASZCZUK** (Inala) (7.03 p.m.): The issue I wish to bring to the attention of the House concerns quite a complex case involving the rights and privileges of members of our Parliament whilst they are in the Parliament and whether that privilege extends to members when they have left our Parliament. The issue also concerns the privilege of Parliament itself. Even post the Fitzgerald inquiry and after the pain Queenslanders had gone through, there are still members of the community who fear the justice system. Some members of Parliament count themselves in that number. Some even believe that they forfeit their rights when it comes to the issue of their rights within the justice system. There is a perception among the general community that members of Parliament need to undergo a more stringent test than the general community simply because of their position.

Honourable members, we all know that we as serving MPs are governed and protected by parliamentary privilege, but does that mean that that parliamentary privilege

extends to former members whilst they were serving members? I intend to ask the Parliament to test such a case. It concerns a former member who served in the 47th Parliament from 1992 until 1995. The member will be remembered more for his actions outside the Parliament, rather than for his actions inside the Parliament. Over the years, he was well known as a whistleblower and a police reform crusader. His contribution to the Fitzgerald reform process is very well documented. Sadly, he sacrificed his own promotion within the Police Service in the pursuit of ridding corruption from that very Police Service in which he served. I want to put on the parliamentary record the fact that that person to whom I refer has been a friend of mine for a long time, before he became a member of Parliament, while he was a member of Parliament and now while he is out of this Parliament. After a lengthy court case, during which he was found to be innocent, he ended his parliamentary term politically damaged and financially in debt. I now seek leave of the House to table documents in relation to that person's case.

Leave granted.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The former member to whom I refer is Peter Pyke, the former member for Mount Ommaney. Some members might think, or they might suggest, that the matter concerning Peter Pyke is not necessarily an issue of contempt for this, the 48th Parliament. However, the issue needs to be canvassed. Were his actions those of a member of Parliament exercising his rights, duties and privileges entitled to him as a member of the 47th Parliament of Queensland?

Mr Speaker, I would, therefore, request that you consider the matter and on the basis of "the matter does not go away just because it has not been brought to the notice of the Parliament" refer the matter to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, because only then will all members of this Parliament be informed as to whether parliamentary privilege extends to former members in relation to matters that occurred during the period of a previous Parliament. Mr Speaker, I seek your indulgence to consider the matter as carefully as you can and come up with a positive resolution that the matter be referred to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I will look at that.

### Seagrass

**Mr GRICE** (Broadwater) (7.07 p.m.): I would like to inform the House of a very innovative program that has been undertaken on the Broadwater by the Department of Primary Industries Fisheries Division and particularly by its Research Division. Shortly after the coalition won Government, I approached the Minister for Primary Industries and succeeded in convincing him to provide some funding for some research on seagrass in the Broadwater. It is widely said on the Gold Coast that there is a dieback here and there and that seagrass is receding. Firstly, the Minister agreed to a survey. The survey of seagrass and seabeds in the Broadwater showed that regrowth is occurring very well. There is considerably more seagrass in the Broadwater than there was in 1988. Being a naturally occurring phenomenon in the Broadwater and all other places, seagrass does have dieback periods. It is affected by tepidity after big rains when silt reduces the ultraviolet light used in the photosynthesis process. It does die back; but it does come back.

In addition to the survey, the department agreed to test the feasibility of transplanting seagrass. Three major species of seagrass were detected in the Broadwater: *Zostera capricorni*, *Halophila ovalis* and *Halophila spinulosa*.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** As a scientist you make a great car driver.

**Mr GRICE:** The member should listen. These are all things that he does not know. He will learn a lot in here if he just listens.

An area was chosen on the north-western corner of Wavebreak Island adjacent to the seaway and the Gold Coast Highway. Approximately three months ago, some test trenches were dredged. They were left to consolidate. Currents change the sharp edges of the dredging. Those trenches have now consolidated and settled down. On 25 November and 26 November that area was planted with combinations of transplanted seagrass from an area on South Stradbroke Island.

It is all very well for people—Sunfish particularly—who do not know a lot about seagrass and have not read papers and research on it to cry out for seagrass to be everywhere. Some juvenile fish need sandbanks to feed on to obtain the various types of feed that get into sand. Other juvenile fish, particularly bream, need seagrass areas and banks for feed and protection from their

predators. Keith Williams would be interested to know that these comments also apply around Hinchinbrook.

Seagrass dies off naturally and comes back. Although there are no dugong on the Gold Coast and there have not been for a long time, one of the major seagrasses for dugong occurs naturally in the Broadwater. The department, having finished planting seagrass in the Broadwater in rows and in groups, and with a different species of seagrass at an average level of 0.7 of a metre, which is ideal for growing it, will continue to monitor it.

I repeat that this project is an experiment. However, it is an experiment that has been conducted by the Minister and by the department. It is not expensive; it is very, very worth while and I commend the Minister for it. There will be ongoing full support for and details of the progress of the seagrass. I commend the Minister for his interest.

#### **North-west Queensland**

**Hon. T. McGRADY** (Mount Isa) (7.12 p.m.): For many, many years the north west of this State has been regarded as the capital of the mining community in this country. With Mount Isa Mines and the City of Mount Isa celebrating their 75th anniversary next year, many celebrations are being planned.

In recent times, the tourist industry has certainly got off the ground and has started to run. In Cloncurry, we have the John Flynn Place, which is a memorial to a great Australian and, in particular, to the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Mount Isa has numerous attractions, in particular, the Mount Isa mine and the Riversleigh Interpretation Centre, which is a recent innovation of the Mount Isa City Council. Now the community is working on constructing a mining museum, which will be world class. We anticipate that many thousands of people will come from all around the world to visit that museum once it has been completed. Already, we have had major promises from the large corporate sector as well as individuals to assist in many ways.

At present the tourist industry which covers the north west is based in Blackall. It covers a massive part of Queensland. I attended the Outback Tourism Awards last Saturday night and I was most impressed with the calibre of the people who run the tourist industry in the north west of our State. Tonight, I want to make a public appeal to the

Minister to look at reorganising the boundaries of the tourism districts of Queensland. Rather than the north west having to accept administration from Blackall, which I think is about 800 kilometres away, I think that the time has come for the north west to look after itself. I appeal to the Minister to give that appeal full consideration. Some years back, Mount Isa did look after itself, but it had some domestic problems and the Minister at that time made the right decision to place Mount Isa in the area covered by Blackall. However, I think that the time has now come when Mount Isa can certainly stand on its own feet, as well as Cloncurry and other places in the north west. I certainly hope that the Minister will give some consideration to my request.

Also in relation to the north west, I have made the point in this Parliament on a number of occasions about the massive development that is taking place in this area and, in particular, the major problem that we are having now with the transport of the product from the Ernest Henry mine just outside Cloncurry to Mount Isa to be processed. There are going to be approximately 24 movements per day of large vehicles on the road from Cloncurry to Mount Isa. Initially, that product was going to go by rail, but the decision was changed. Last Saturday, I had some discussions with the Transport Minister during his visit to the north west. Let me say that I was most impressed with the way in which he received the submissions that were made to him. However, I want to use this Parliament tonight to again formally request the Minister for Transport to put pressure on his colleagues in Canberra to provide the funding for a heavy vehicle bypass around the City of Mount Isa and also to expend the larger amount of money which would be required to further upgrade the road from Cloncurry to Mount Isa.

On a regular basis, we read in the papers about the moneys that are being spent on roads along the coastal strip. We know that Mrs Sheldon thieved almost \$200m from the Budget to do away with the toll in her own backyard. Yet we have the most productive area in this State, the Cloncurry/Mount Isa region, in dire need of additional funds.

I also acknowledge the fact that while the Transport Minister was in the north west, he promised an additional half a million dollars for the next three years, which again I was grateful for. However, I believe that this Parliament and the Minister have to realise that the wealth of this nation and the wealth of this State is coming from the mining industry. We do not want roads simply so we can go for

a little trip on the weekend; we require those roads to move the wealth of this State.

### **Greenslopes Electorate Schools**

**Mr RADKE** (Greenslopes) (7.17 p.m.): I rise to inform the House of the many improvements that the coalition has delivered to schools in the Greenslopes electorate. Those improvements have been funded by record Budget allocations and are the direct result of the commitment that this Government has shown to getting resources through the school gate and into the classroom.

The electorate of Greenslopes is geographically one of the smallest in the State. With more than 20,000 people living within 14 square kilometres, there are 13 State and four non-Government schools operating within or very close to my electorate boundaries. That fact alone presents teachers, students and parents with many unique opportunities and challenges.

As the State member for Greenslopes since 1995, I have gained a keen appreciation of those opportunities and challenges in education. Furthermore, my personal background in adult and vocational education has provided me with a good understanding of the impact that those factors have on the most important of all considerations—student outcomes.

I am pleased to report that all of the schools in my electorate have an outstanding record of performance in terms of student outcomes. That performance is in no small part due to the enduring hard work of school staff, parents, students and other community members.

Recently, the Minister for Education and the Premier had the opportunity, on separate occasions, to visit schools in my electorate. Those visits were received very well and provided staff, students and parents with an opportunity to share their thoughts with two people who are overwhelmingly committed to improving Queensland schools. The fact that both the Minister and the Premier expressed a willingness to visit again is a tribute to the achievements of the schools in the Greenslopes electorate. However, more importantly for the people of Greenslopes is the fact that the Minister and Premier have demonstrated their commitment to get on with the job of improving education.

For the five and a half years that Greenslopes was represented by a Labor member, schools were neglected. The former member was renowned for sitting comfortably

in his professionally decorated office dreaming of a ministerial job. For the six years that Labor was in office in Queensland, capital and minor works expenditure on schools in the Greenslopes electorate was well below satisfactory levels. The coalition Government has worked to turn the tide on this neglect. In its first two Budgets, the coalition allocated \$657m to Education Queensland for capital works. Similarly, during its 12 months, coalition expenditure on accelerated minor works in education all but equalled the total amount spent by Labor over its entire six year period in office.

This expenditure has been of great benefit to Greenslopes schools, and I am proud to confirm that due to my representation many of the pressing concerns in my schools have been rectified. After only 20 months of a National/Liberal coalition Government, over \$2.1m has been committed to improving facilities at State schools in Greenslopes. This compares with a measly \$361,000 allocated over the last three Labor Budgets. While members opposite wax lyrical about fanciful tales of a capital works freeze, the facts speak for themselves. The facts are that this Government has budgeted to spend five times more on capital works for schools in Greenslopes than the Labor Party managed to spend over three successive Budgets.

**Mr Lester:** That means that you have gone in and done the job and represented your people.

**Mr RADKE:** That is correct.

I would like to see members of the Labor Party hypocritically justify—they would have to do so with embarrassment—each and every one of the six years that they spent doing nothing whilst in Government. The education of our youth is an investment in the future wealth of our nation. I am honoured to be part of a Government that is getting on with the job of improving educational opportunities for students in the Greenslopes electorate.

### **Juvenile Crime, Ipswich**

**Mr LIVINGSTONE** (Ipswich West) (7.21 p.m.): I bring to the attention of the House the good work being done by the Ipswich City Council, which took the initiative in setting up the Safe City program and a state-of-the-art camera surveillance system in the Ipswich CBD. Since that time, crime in the Ipswich CBD has been cut by more 75%. However, despite all the good work done by the council and despite its achievements, crime is still a problem in Ipswich City. I am not

talking about a couple of drunken hoodlums having a bit of a tussle outside a nightclub; I am talking about a large group of juvenile offenders, some of them as young as 11 and 12 years of age, who consistently commit crimes in the Ipswich City and who ultimately get away it. The people of Ipswich have had enough.

We could come up with various reasons for this continuous spate of juvenile crime in Ipswich, and two immediately spring to mind. One is police numbers. I am sure that everyone here, and no-one more than the Police Minister himself, is well aware of my ongoing concerns about police numbers in Ipswich. It is a fact that Ipswich does not have the number of police that it needs. The second reason relates to the legal system. According to the Safe City people, several of the juvenile offenders in Ipswich are on orders for various offences. They go to court, get community service orders and good behaviour bonds and then go straight back to the streets and commit the same crimes.

Many people are of the opinion that getting more police involved and locking up the kids will solve the problem, but it will not. Having 15 to 20 more police patrolling the streets and making punishments more severe will not solve the problem of why those kids are on the streets in the first place. The current situation seems to be that the police and the legal system want to treat the crime and not the causes of that criminal activity.

TeenCare Ipswich believes that the problem really lies in the homes of these offenders, which are often abusive households where the adults are drug abusers, alcoholics or simply do not care. On one occasion, a TeenCare officer took a youth home only to be confronted by angry parents who said, "Take him away. We're having a party." Those kids feel safer on the street than they do at home, and that is a tragedy. That is the root cause of the problem and it needs to be treated. Putting those kids through the court system will not do any good—the constant stream of reoffenders in the Ipswich CBD has proven that—nor will the presence of state-of-the-art surveillance camera systems do any good. Video footage shows kids committing crimes right in front of the cameras.

What are the solutions? My discussions with TeenCare Ipswich found that those kids need a diversionary program and drop-in centres. The kids need somewhere to go where there is hot foot and a bed, and where they can feel safe. Nothing like that exists in Ipswich at the present time. However, such things cost money.

I ask the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care: why is his Government spending thousands and thousands of dollars on television campaigns aimed at juvenile crime when the problem kids are not home to watch them? The Government's lovely ads saying "You'll be treated like a criminal" are blaring out of TV sets, but the kids who should be targeted are on the streets stealing, bashing and shooting up. Why is this money not being spent to help get the kids off the street? Drop-in centres should be established. There are certainly none in Ipswich and we have a real need for them. More money needs to be made available, but I am sure that when I ask for it I will be told that there is no money available. Yet the Government can find thousands of dollars for worthless ads that are not even seen by the people they are aimed at. A large percentage of those kids can be helped. Unfortunately, a percentage of them are hardened criminals and they should be locked up.

In Ipswich seven or eight families create 75% of the crime. The program that has been put in place by the Ipswich City Council has been very successful. There have been 503 arrests as a direct result of the 24-hour camera system and 25 arrests by the safety patrolmen. The total number of charges is in excess of 875. Those arrests and charges are a direct result of the Safe City program and its strategies. Official police sources state that the actual results show a 43% reduction in reported crime within the defined area. The Ipswich City Council data shows a 75% reduction in crime and street incidents since the program began in July 1994. According to the figures, those decreases are continuing. It is also important to note the good relationship between the Queensland Police Service in Ipswich and the Ipswich City Council.

This Government needs to do more, even though it talks about being tough on crime. When kids appear before the courts and are given orders but then go straight back on the streets, it is about time that something was done. Everybody is sick and tired of this Government talking about being tough on crime, but it takes no action. It is about time that the Government did something about the problem.

Time expired.

### **Baseball Stadium Project**

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Keppel) (7.26 p.m.):  
Last night I spoke about the Central Queensland University's excellent baseball

diamond. I take this opportunity to congratulate the community and the university for the way that they got together to make that project work. It will mean a lot for tourism and sports development, and it will also mean a lot to the general feel-good atmosphere in the community. I pay particular tribute to the Minister, Mick Veivers, who, despite being under a lot of pressure—he has to allocate enormous amounts of money throughout the State—provided \$267,000 for a very worthwhile project. I assure the House that we will not let him down. In fact, the group in charge of baseball at the university is doing an absolutely outstanding job. The people involved are very focused and the project will go particularly well.

Only recently, the Minister visited central Queensland. He travelled to the Capricorn Coast and visited our new basketball stadium, which is going to be a massive structure. Thanks to Mr Veivers, we have received a \$50,000 grant for the facility. The project will be of great benefit to the community, as the stadium will be a major venue that will attract a number of different sporting groups. However, because the project is so huge, we will probably need a further \$150,000 to complete it. One might think that this is an enormous amount of money, but it is an enormous project.

The community has already contributed most magnificently towards this brilliant project and I take this opportunity to thank the Minister in anticipation. We have submitted one application, but it was not successful. We believe that we can smarten up the application a little bit. When we submit it again, having been assisted by all of the expertise in the world, the Minister, who has been so good to the central Queensland region, will not be able to say no.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** You haven't mentioned all the people involved yet. Come on.

**Mr LESTER:** I will come to that. That might be tomorrow night's episode. Because so many people are involved in the project, it would not be right to name one in particular. I assure the honourable member that they are all great people.

I also thank the Minister for supporting the ambulance drivers of my electorate, who have faced some real difficulties. We need more officers and more ambulances. I will certainly be pursuing that subject.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.30 p.m.