

TUESDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2002

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
QUEENSLAND

20 December 2001

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

Dear Mr Speaker

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bills, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, were assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on 19 December 2001:

"A Bill for an Act to provide for the regulation of pest control and fumigation activities, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the National Trust of Queensland Act 1963, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Water Infrastructure Development (Burnett Basin) Act 2001"

"A Bill for an Act to amend legislation about integrated planning, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Land Sales Act 1984"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Local Government Act 1993, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Queensland) Act 1994"

"A Bill for an Act relating to administrative actions by Commonwealth authorities or officers of the Commonwealth under state co-operative scheme laws, and for other purposes".

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd) Peter Arnison
Governor

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr P. R. Smith, MP, and Mr C. George, ISO

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.32 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late Percy Raymund Smith, a former member of the parliament of Queensland;

that Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman that above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the parliament of Queensland in the loss that they have sustained.

Mr Speaker, Percy Raymund Smith—Ray Smith—was born in Warwick, Queensland, on 12 January 1920. Ray was educated at St Agatha's convent from 1925 to 1926, Christian Brothers College at Albion in 1927, and Gregory Terrace from 1927 to 1934. In fact, a number of members of this House have been educated at Gregory Terrace, including the Minister for Employment.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I take that interjection from the Minister for Innovation. Yes, indeed, they are all class.

Ray Smith obtained his senior in 1946 under a post-war reconstruction scheme and in 1951 he graduated from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Laws. Ray was a barrister-at-law and a member of the Law Reform Commission of Queensland.

Along with his service to the Queensland Legislative Assembly, Ray had a long and distinguished military career in the Royal Australian Air Force—the RAAF—attaining the rank of Group Captain. The highlights of Ray's military career include being an RAAF pilot in the Pacific

and Darwin—and I should acknowledge that today is the anniversary of the tragic Japanese attack on Darwin—from 1940 to 1945; an RAAF flying instructor; Deputy Judge Advocate General; and a full-time RAAF staff officer, Australian forces in Vietnam in 1967.

On 3 August 1957, Ray won the seat of Windsor in the state election and resigned from his seat 12 years later on 10 March 1969. In a personal sense, I should indicate that my electorate of Brisbane Central covers a large part of the old electorate of Windsor and the Government Whip's seat covers the other part of what was the old seat of Windsor. So the Government Whip and I now represent Ray's old seat in this Queensland parliament.

During Ray's term in office, he was concerned about access to justice, as was highlighted in his maiden speech to the Legislative Assembly on 17 September 1957 when he said—

... what I am concerned with is that justice is available to all the people and that justice can be expeditious and reasonable.

This concern was to influence Ray's participation in parliamentary committees. He was the chairman and government representative to the Advisory Committee for Legal Aid under the Legal Assistance Act 1965 and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Justice Committee for six years. He was also a member of the Committee on Youth Problems and the parliamentary mission to Asia in 1966.

Ray was an active member of many community groups and organisations, including the Board of Advice Lifeline Consumer Credit Counselling Service, which is a very important service; the Kedron-Wavell RSL Club, which is one of our great clubs in this state; and, of course, as members would expect, the Air Force Association. He was also the chairman of over 40 housing societies.

Ray is survived by his wife, Judith, four children and five grandchildren. On behalf of all the members of this House, I extend my sympathy and that of this House to Ray's family.

On a personal note, obviously Ray served prior to my time here. However, like many members in this House, I did get to know him. He was a decent person, a gentleman, and someone for whom I had considerable respect.

I understand that the Leader of the Liberal Party will second this motion in a moment. But before that, I would also like to draw the attention of the House to the death on 2 January this year of Cyril George, who was a former Clerk of this parliament. Mr George of Coorparoo was Clerk from 16 September 1970 to 5 January 1978, having started work in the parliament as a table officer in 1930 and working for the parliament for 48 years. His knowledge of procedure was immense and his contribution to the proper recording of the business of the House was much valued.

I am told that Cyril was a warm and friendly man, always ready to give advice to anyone who sought it. I pass on the condolences of members to his wife, Joyce, who cared for him after a stroke 15 years ago, and other members of his family. Mr Speaker, I would be grateful if you would convey the sympathies of this House to Cyril's family.

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (9.37 a.m.): As Leader of the Liberal Party, it is my pleasure to join in the condolence motion for Percy Ray Smith. As the Premier said, Ray was born in Warwick, had a distinguished education, and was a man of legal learning. He had a long and distinguished career in the RAAF, attaining the position of Group Captain. He fought in World War II and in Vietnam and, in those terms, provided distinguished service to this country. In 1957 Ray came into parliament where he again interested himself in legal matters, matters of justice, and matters concerning young people. Ray served his community well. As the Premier said, he was vitally interested in many community organisations within his electorate and, indeed, across the state. He is survived by his wife, four children and five grandchildren.

On behalf of the Liberal Party, I extend condolences to Ray's family and friends. He was a good member, a long-serving member of the Liberal Party and one who made a significant contribution to this parliament and to the state in general.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.38 a.m.): On behalf of the National Party opposition, I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Liberal Party in providing our sincere condolences to the family of Ray Smith. On looking through the details that the Premier and the Leader of the Liberal Party have already told the parliament, it will be seen that Ray Smith has been an outstanding servant of our nation, our state and so many different community organisations. He was of that era when people went through a good education provided by the Catholic Church—through the convent system and then through the Christian

Brothers—attained some pre-war education, but not at tertiary level, attained pre-war employment, but then went on to serve our nation as a pilot, and to be so distinguished as to reach the rank of Group Captain and later on to serve as a full-time RAAF staff officer with the Australian forces in Vietnam.

He had a long service of 12 years to Queensland and this parliament from 1957 through to 1969. As the Premier has enumerated, he served on many committees, with a particular interest in youth issues and in the system of committees. He served as chairman of the Parliamentary Justice Committee for six years. His service and contribution to the community included the provision of advice to Lifeline. He had an interest in consumer credit. He was honorary secretary of the Bar Association, a member of the Davis Cup Committees for 1958 and 1962, chairman of over 40 housing societies—in itself, a huge contribution, president of the Australian American Association, a member of the United Services Institute, a member of the North Brisbane Branch of the Air Force Association, and he was also a Rotarian.

Indeed, Ray Smith had a very rich and fulfilling life and made a huge contribution to this parliament and to the state of Queensland. The National Party joins with other members of this parliament in expressing our sincere condolences to his wife, Judy, and their family.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (9.40 a.m.): I respectfully join with earlier speakers, particularly the Premier, in paying tribute to the late Percy Raymond Smith. I knew him as a barrister when I practised at the bar in the 1980s. He was indeed, as the Premier observed, a gentlemen. He was well regarded and collegial towards his fellow practitioners. As a barrister and a former member of parliament, he brought a knowledge of the world, a wisdom and understanding to his practice.

I will not repeat here the observations made by the Premier other than to respectfully join with him in making them, and I pay tribute to the memory of Percy Raymond Smith.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN (Stafford—ALP) (9.41 a.m.): On behalf of the community of the north side of Brisbane, I pay my respects to the family of Ray Smith. Ray was well known in the area both as a member of state parliament and as a councillor. He had a very austere look, but he was always immaculately dressed right up to the end. He took pride in his three-piece suits and could be recognised readily from that. He fought leukemia for his last 20 months and passed away on Sunday, 10 February this year at St Vincents Hospital at Robina.

He and his wife reluctantly moved from their home of 26 years at the corner of Ellison and Kirby Roads, Aspley to the Gold Coast to be close to their children. His memorial service was held at St Kevins Catholic Church, Newman Road, Geebung, where he and his wife had attended and worshipped for many years.

Ray is one of the few people to have an act of parliament passed bearing his name. To allow him, as a member of the Legislative Assembly, to take up an appointment as the Deputy Advocate-General to the RAAF, the Ray Smith Enabling Act was passed by the parliament. As a practising barrister serving in parliament, Ray was considered by his contemporaries to have a rare combination of legal ability and political nous. This is reflected in T.M. O'Dwyer's book about lawyers in politics. For the benefit of the House, I will table some information. His family asked that a eulogy not be presented at the memorial ceremony, but they asked that the work from author Alan Shannon be presented. He produced a profile of Ray in his book called *Twentieth Century Profiles—Volume IV* (1996) and it contains some interesting information.

I guess for those of us in this particular role, some things do not change. Interestingly, after two terms in local authority and after being in opposition, things were a bit difficult for Ray. As the story states:

Through characteristic infighting in the Liberals, he lost his endorsement for the 1982 election.

There might be many of us who might have something similar said about us during our condolence motions. It appears that some things do not change.

One thing that is absolutely certain is that Ray was very actively involved in the local community. His involvement as a charter member of the Albion Rotary Club and his work to establish the Cardiovascular Research Unit at the Prince Charles Hospital are still well remembered. As part of his RAAF service, he was appointed to the 100th Beaufort Squadron at Milne Bay. Appropriately, part of the area he served will now contain a memorial to the Milne Bay service personnel through the Chermiside Historical Precinct. It is appropriate that Ray will be remembered particularly in an area in which he served. On behalf of the people of the north side of Brisbane, I pay tribute to Ray and pass on our condolences to his family.

Mr SPEAKER: I would like to extend my personal condolences to the family of Raymund Smith. My contact with Raymund was limited to his service as a long-term honorary secretary of the Former Members Association. As a result, however, I could appreciate the service Raymund must have rendered his Windsor constituents and his legal clients. He was a very tenacious advocate for former members and their spouses and widows, and he will long be remembered by those people for his service.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Her Royal Highness The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.46 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move:

That this House desires to place on record its deep sadness on the death of Her Royal Highness the Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon. On behalf of the people of Queensland, we express our deepest sympathy to Her Majesty the Queen, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and other members of the royal family, especially Princess Margaret's children, Lord Linley and Lady Sarah Chatto.

Her Royal Highness the Princess Margaret was the younger daughter of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and sister to the Queen. She was born on 21 August 1930.

During her rich and varied life, the princess played an active role in the royal family's public work, supporting the Queen. She was patron or president of over 80 organisations. Her particular interests were in the fields of welfare work and the arts. She served numerous charities and public organisations that promoted the welfare of children. She served the Invalid Children's Aid Association and was president of the National Society and the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Through her interest in welfare, Princess Margaret served and maintained a strong connection with nurses and the nursing profession, formerly being Commander-in-Chief of the Ambulance and Nursing Cadets of the St John Ambulance Brigade, Grand President of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Colonel-in-Chief of Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps.

The Princess had an immense and very genuine interest in the arts, which included ballet, a talent for the piano and a talented singing voice. In 1957 Princess Margaret was made an Honorary Doctor of Music of London University. A strong supporter of the arts, Princess Margaret was the first president of the Royal Ballet and was also president of the Sadler's Wells Foundation.

Princess Margaret was also a devoted mother. Two children from her marriage to Antony Armstrong-Jones survive her: Lord Linley, born on 3 November 1961, and Lady Sarah Chatto, born on 1 May 1964.

On 9 February 2002 on behalf of the people of Queensland, I formally corresponded and extended our deepest sympathies to Her Majesty the Queen, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and members of the royal family. I now wish on behalf of the parliament to extend my sympathies, the sympathies of all Queenslanders and that of this House to Her Majesty the Queen, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and members of the royal family.

I should advise the House that Buckingham Palace has communicated with the Queensland government that the death of the princess will not affect the Queen's visit. The royal visit will be taking place and at this point the Queen will be attending CHOGM. I understand the motion will be seconded by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.49 a.m.): On behalf of the opposition, it gives me pleasure at this sad time to second the motion of condolence moved by the Premier. Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret was an integral part of the royal family. The Premier enumerated the various organisations she supported strongly during her life. She has been heavily committed to many charitable and service organisations and will always be remembered as a member of the royal family who took her duty seriously and gave it her wholehearted commitment.

As a mother she had a difficult life. Many of us would remember that, although she fell in love with Peter Townsend, because of her royal duties and his previous divorce she did not marry him. Later in life she had also to endure a divorce. She will be remembered as a wonderful mother to her children and as someone who, despite those sadnesses in her personal life, gave

her utmost commitment to services to her nation and the other parts of the British Commonwealth she visited.

Sadly, in the latter stages of life she was plagued by illness. In spite of that, she remained a vivacious and committed person. Our condolences go to the entire royal family, particularly to Her Majesty the Queen and in particular the Queen Mother, who is over 100 years old and would be finding this a difficult time.

We also appreciate the fact that in this time of sadness the Queen will continue her visit to CHOGM, and I join with members of the opposition and the Premier in offering our sincere condolences to Her Majesty the Queen, the royal family and in particular the family of Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

PETITIONS

Logan Coaches; Tamborine-Beenleigh Bus Service

Mr Johnson from 503 petitioners, requesting the House to reconsider the cancellation of the subsidy to Logan Coaches Pty Ltd and allow the only bus service from Tamborine Mountains to Beenleigh to continue as it has done for approximately the past 17 years.

Beaudesert Hospital

Mr Lingard from 5,609 petitioners, requesting the House to restore all services and staffing levels at the Beaudesert Hospital.

Ambulance Centre, Springwood

Mr Quinn from 3,218 petitioners, requesting the House to retain the present ambulance centre at Springwood in the east Logan suburb.

PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

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

14 December 2001—

Commission for Children and Young People—Financial Statements for the Annual Report 2000-2001

Dumaresq—Barwon Border Rivers Commission—Annual Report 2000-2001

Late tabling statement by the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines (Mr Robertson) regarding the Dumaresq—Barwon Border Rivers Commission Annual Report 2000-2001

17 December 2001—

Royal Women's Hospital Foundation—Annual Report 2000-2001

Late tabling statement by the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) regarding the Royal Women's Hospital Foundation Annual Report 2000-2001

Townsville District Health Foundation—Annual Report 2000-2001

Late tabling statement by the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) regarding the Townsville District Health Foundation Annual Report 2000-2001

18 December 2001—

Consolidated Financial Report of the Queensland Government—year ended 30 June 2001

19 December 2001—

The President of the Industrial Court of Queensland in respect of the Industrial Court of Queensland, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and the Industrial Registry—Annual Report 2000-2001

20 December 2001—

Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee Report No. 32—Freedom of Information in Queensland (together with supplement to Report No. 32, summary of committee findings)

Certain submissions and letters regarding the review of Freedom of Information by the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee

Report to the Queensland Parliament by the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading on Tourism Trade Delegation to Japan, Hong Kong and China 18 November to 24 November 2001

21 December 2001—

District Court—Annual Report 2000-2001

3 January 2002—

Government Response from the Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie) to Report No. 18 of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee entitled Report to Parliament on the Committee's Monitoring of the Operation of the Explanatory Notes System

7 January 2002—

Explanation from the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) regarding the granting of an extension of time for the tabling of the Bundaberg Health Services Foundation Annual Report 2000-2001

24 January 2002—

Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee Report No. 49—Report on a Citizen's Right of Reply No. 12

6 February 2002—

Bundaberg Health Services Foundation—Annual Report 2000-2001

Late tabling statement by the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) regarding the Bundaberg Health Services Foundation Annual Report 2000-2001

12 February 2002—

Guardianship and Administration Tribunal—Annual Report 2000-2001

Office of the Adult Guardian—Annual Report 2000-2001

Permanent Trustees Company Limited—Annual Report 2000-2001

Twenty-Second Report by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal dated 14 December 2001, pursuant to the Judges (Salaries and Allowances) Act 1967

Judges Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination (No. 1) 2002

13 February 2002—

Report to the Queensland Parliament by the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading on the Minister's visit to New Zealand 18-19 December 2001

15 February 2002—

Erratum to the Queensland Art Gallery Annual Report 2000-2001 tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 13 November 2001

18 February 2002—

Amendments to Explanatory Notes to the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001 tabled on 12 December 2001

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by The Clerk—

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment of Deed Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 255

Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds Act 1988—

Mt. Gravatt Showgrounds By-law 2001, No. 256

Health Practitioners Legislation Amendment Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 257

Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 258

Occupational Therapists Registration Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 259

Optometrists Registration Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 260

Pharmacists Registration Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 261

Physiotherapists Registration Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 262

Speech Pathologists Registration Act 2001—

Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 263

Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001—

Dental Practitioners Registration Regulation 2001, No. 264

Occupational Therapists Registration Act 2001—

Occupational Therapists Registration Regulation 2001, No. 265

Optometrists Registration Act 2001—

Optometrists Registration Regulation 2001, No. 266

Pharmacists Registration Act 2001—

Pharmacists Registration Regulation 2001, No. 267

- Physiotherapists Registration Act 2001—
Physiotherapists Registration Regulation 2001, No. 268
- Speech Pathologists Registration Act 2001—
Speech Pathologists Registration Regulation 2001, No. 269
- Casino Control Act 1982, Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999, Gaming Machine Act 1991, Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Act 1998, Keno Act 1996, Lotteries Act 1997, Wagering Act 1998—
Gambling Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 270
- Major Sports Facilities Act 2001—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 271
- Education (Teacher Registration) Act 1988—
Education (Teacher Registration) Amendment By-law (No. 1) 2001, No. 272
- Education (General Provisions) Act 1989—
Education (General Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 273
- Nursing Act 1992—
Nursing Amendment By-law (No. 1) 2001, No. 274
- Health Act 1937—
Health (Drugs and Poisons) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2001, No. 275
- Mental Health Act 1974—
Mental Health Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 276
- State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971—
State Development and Public Works Organisation (Gladstone State Development Area) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 277
- Transport (Busway and Light Rail) Amendment Act 2000—
Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 278
- Transport Legislation Amendment Act 2001—
Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 279
- State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999—
State Penalties Enforcement Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2001, No. 280
- Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991—
Uniform Civil Procedure Amendment Rule (No. 2) 2001, No. 281
- Brisbane Forest Park Act 1977—
Brisbane Forest Park Amendment By-law (No. 1) 2001, No. 282
- Canals Act 1958, Forestry Act 1959, Marine Parks Act 1982, Nature Conservation Act 1992, Queensland Heritage Act 1992, Recreation Areas Management Act 1988, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—
Environmental Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 283
- Environmental Protection Act 1994—
Environmental Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 284
- Marine Parks Act 1982—
Marine Parks Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 285
- Queensland Building Services Authority Act 1991—
Queensland Building Services Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2001, No. 286
- Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Act 2001—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 287
- Plant Protection Act 1989, Stock Act 1915, Timber Utilisation and Marketing Act 1987—
Primary Industries Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2001, No. 288
- Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936
Veterinary Surgeons Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 289
- Collections Act 1966—
Collections Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 290
- Fair Trading Act 1989—
Fair Trading Regulation 2001, No. 291
- Racing and Betting Act 1980—
Racing and Betting Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 292
- Second-hand Dealers and Collectors Act 1984, Travel Agents Act 1988—
Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2001, No. 293
- Land Sales Act 1984—
Land Sales Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 294

- Water Act 2000—
Water Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2001, No. 295
- Industrial Relations Act 1999—
Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Amendment Rule (No. 2) 2001, No. 296
- Industrial Relations Act 1999—
Industrial Relations Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2001, No. 297
- Fisheries Act 1994—
Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Amendment Management Plan (No. 3) 2001, No. 298 and Explanatory Notes and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 298
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—
Workplace Health and Safety (Advisory Standards) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 2001, No. 299
- Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990—
Superannuation (State Public Sector) Amendment Notice (No. 3) 2001, No. 300
- Recreation Areas Management Act 1988—
Recreation Areas Management Amendment By-law (No. 1) 2001, No. 301
- Fair Trading Act 1989—
Fair Trading (Mini Fruit Jelly) Order 2001, No. 302
- Fair Trading Act 1989—
Fair Trading (Coloured Mothballs) Order 2001, No. 303
- Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977—
Financial Management Amendment Standard (No. 1) 2001, No. 1
- Electricity Legislation Amendment and Repeal Act 2001—
Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 2
- Guardianship and Administration Act 2000—
Guardianship and Administration Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 3
- Natural Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2001—
Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 4
- Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 2001—
Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 5
- Local Government Act 1993—
Local Government Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 6
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—
Workplace Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 7
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—
Workplace Health and Safety (Advisory Standards) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2002, No. 8
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—
Workplace Health and Safety (Industry Codes of Practice) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 2002, No. 9
- Duties Act 2001—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 10
- Duties Act 2001
Duties Regulation 2002, No. 11
- Taxation Administration Act 2001—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 12
- Taxation Administration Act 2001—
Taxation Administration Regulation 2002, No. 13
- Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000—
Police Powers and Responsibilities (CHOGM) Regulation 2002, No. 14
- Guardianship and Administration and Other Acts Amendment Act 2001—
Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 15
- Rural Adjustment Authority Act 1994—
Rural Adjustment Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 16
- Local Government Act 1993—
Local Government (Limited Reviewable Local Government Matters) Regulation 2002, No. 17
- First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, Fuel Subsidy Act 1997, Revenue Laws (Reciprocal Powers) Act 1988—
First Home Owner Grant and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 18
- Training and Employment Act 2000—
Training and Employment Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 19

Food Act 1981, Health Act 1937, Health Services Act 1991, Radiation Safety Act 1999—

Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 20

Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—

Transport Infrastructure (Ports) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 21

Plant Protection Act 1989—

Plant Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 22

Sugar Industry Act 1999—

Sugar Industry Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 23

Land Act 1994, Rural Lands Protection Act 1985—

Land Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2002, No. 24

Stock Act 1915—

Stock (Prevention of Newcastle Disease) Repeal Notice 2002, No. 25

MINISTERIAL RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The following responses to petitions, received during the recess, were tabled by The Clerk—

Response from the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) to a petition presented by Mr Mickel from 1,295 petitioners, regarding the Westhaven Nursing Home—

2 Jan 2002

Mr R Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter dated 29 November 2001, enclosing a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly, in relation to the Westhaven Nursing Home.

As I stated in Parliament last month, Westhaven Nursing Home will not be privatised and it will remain as a State Government facility, operated by Queensland Health.

I discussed a number of options with members of the Roma Aged Care Committee at the Community Cabinet Meeting in Roma in March 2000. The committee was considering how best to provide aged care services to older local residents and one option included the collocation of Westhaven Nursing Home on the campus of the Pinaroo Cottages Hostel. At the time I advised of my willingness to consider such a proposal, but only after the completion of comprehensive community consultation. To date, I have not received a formal proposal to relocate Westhaven Nursing Home.

The redevelopment of Westhaven Nursing Home remains a priority for Queensland Health's Aged Care Capital Works Program, which includes \$120 million over five years to redevelop Queensland Health's 21 State Government Nursing Homes. This is to ensure that they all retain Commonwealth accreditation and comply with Commonwealth standards, so that Queensland Health can continue to provide high quality aged care services through all its facilities, including Westhaven.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

Wendy Edmond MP
Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy

Response from the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) to a petition presented by Mr Horan from 414 petitioners, regarding the provision of bone marrow transplant services at the Royal Brisbane Hospital—

11 Jan 2002

Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for your letter dated 12 November 2001 enclosing a petition received by the House regarding the provision of bone marrow transplant services at the Royal Brisbane Hospital.

I am advised by the Executive Director of Medical Services, Royal Brisbane Hospital, that the availability of bone marrow transplants at the Royal Brisbane Hospital is managed by medical staff who prioritise patients on a clinical needs basis. The availability of specially trained nursing staff is however, essential to the appropriate management of bone marrow transplant patients. Unfortunately, there is a national shortage of highly trained oncology nurses and this shortage does, at times, limit the number of services that the Royal Brisbane Hospital is able to offer. Currently the Royal Brisbane Hospital is operating 48 out of its 61 oncology beds due to nursing shortages. Outpatient and Day Therapy Services are not affected. Some oncology patients are receiving appropriate care in other wards.

With regard to the ongoing recruitment of appropriate nursing staff, I can advise that funding has been provided for a special "Transition Program" created jointly between Queensland Health and Queensland University of Technology. This program provides intensive training of graduate nurses and for experienced nurses interested in transferring into oncological services. The Royal Brisbane Hospital Oncology Service will train 15 nurses in the first part of next year, three of which started in December 2001, and the other 12 to start between 7 January 2002 and 4 March 2002. Also, international recruiting initiatives are being intensified and will provide sponsorship for expert nurses who wish to come to Brisbane to work. The first sponsorship is currently being processed with the Department of Immigration.

Despite the nursing staff shortages, the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit at the Royal Brisbane Hospital is continuing to function and continuing to deliver high level clinical care to its patients. The actual number of transplants being performed is similar to previous years.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

Wendy Edmond MP

Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy

Response from the Minister for Environment (Mr Wells) to a petition presented by Mr Rowell from 2,441 petitioners, regarding damage to fruit crops by flying foxes—

1 Feb 2002

Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Legislative Assembly of Queensland
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter of 9 November 2001, forwarding a copy of a petition tabled in the Parliament on 8 November 2001 regarding flying foxes damage to fruit crops and how this matter is being addressed.

On 17 October 2001, the Federal Court handed down a decision placing an injunction on the use of electric grids for the killing of Spectacled Flying Foxes on a property adjacent to the Wet Tropics World Heritage area. This decision means growers whose properties may be captured within World Heritage provisions of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) will need to seek approval by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Heritage under the (EPBC Act) to kill flying foxes by use of electric grid.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) has independently determined that permits for the use of electric grids will not be issued based on overwhelming evidence that the use of electric grids is cruel. The QPWS has also advised growers should the Spectacled Flying Fox be listed as vulnerable by the Commonwealth Government then before permits for lethal control methods can be issued the approval of the Commonwealth would be needed.

The State position, however, would not rule out the use of other lethal means of control. To assist the fruit growing industry, the Sustainable Industries division of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is looking at ways to formulate other effective means of preventing the fruit from being damaged. One of those options, is the use of nets. Nets are very expensive, but once the investment is made the return comes very quickly. There is evidence from reputable sources that the fruit harvest could be increased by 30 per cent by the use of nets. Other means being looked at are odour and electric converters.

Farmers are uncertain that those nets are not going to be blown down in a storm. It has not happened yet. This is very much state-of-the-art testing technology—simple technology but nevertheless state-of-the-art. My department and other departments are working this through with the association of the fruit farmers and other stakeholders. Obviously this is a problem and we have sympathy for the people who have to deal with this when each season arrives.

However, this government believes it can do more. The Premier announced in Parliament recently that the government is examining ultrasonic devices that have the capacity to deter wildlife by creating sound waves that irritate particular animals while remaining inaudible to others. It causes no damage to the animals, but it has the desired effect.

In conjunction with local Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association members, as many as 20 units will be installed on a number of properties to trial their effectiveness.

To facilitate this trial, the Queensland government has provided \$20,000 to enable two trained operators of this equipment plus the 20 units to move to north Queensland as soon as possible. It should be stressed that this is unproven technology on flying foxes at this stage, but the company believes that it can, at the very least, reduce crop losses to flying foxes.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

Dean Wells

Minister for Environment

Response from the Minister for Environment (Mr Wells) to a petition presented by Mr Lester from 42 petitioners, regarding complaints emanating from a number of residents of Nerimbera in relation to noise and dust emissions emanating from a specific local industry—

7 February 2002

Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Legislative Assembly of Queensland
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

I refer to your letter of 11 December 2001 forwarding a copy of a petition tabled in the Parliament on 11 December 2001 regarding the performance of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in acknowledging and addressing complaints from a number of residents of Nerimbera in relation to noise and dust emissions emanating from a specific local industry. I understand that the residents' concerns relate to the operation of the CSR Nerimbera Quarry near Rockhampton.

In relation to dust, several investigations have been conducted into health matters relating to levels of crystalline silica dust from the Quarry operation by both Queensland Health and independent experts in this field. The outcome of those investigations, the last of which was completed in November 2000, was that the concentrations of respirable dust and silica in emissions from the Quarry operations pose no significant risk to community health.

Short term dust monitoring by the EPA at the rail siding did not find excessive dust associated with that site. However, CSR and Q-Rail have established two permanent dust fall-out monitoring gauges at the rail siding. The EPA has conducted an analysis of this monitoring, which suggests levels below the nuisance guidelines. However, the EPA will continue to review this monitoring data as it becomes available.

In relation to noise, prior to commencing a recent increased works program, Q-Rail commissioned a noise assessment and modelling study for the siding to ensure that any impacts on nearby residents were mitigated. As a result, works were undertaken, and procedures put into place by CSR and Q-Rail, to mitigate existing and potential problems. For example, the earth mound noise barrier put into place is predicted to reduce peak noise levels for nearby residents to below the allowable level under the Railways Code of Practice and also provide 24 hour equivalent noise levels below the planning level of 65dB(A).

An investigation into noise from reversing beepers from front-end loaders was carried out by the EPA at the quarry site in June 2000. As a consequence, CSR has reduced the volume setting on these devices, while still providing for workplace health and safety requirements.

In order to further investigate residents' concerns, the EPA conducted an Environmental Compliance Audit of the quarry and the rail siding operations from 5-7 December 2001 to investigate compliance with the Environmental Licence for the Quarry site and with relevant environmental legislation. As a result, the EPA is following up a number of issues with the company arising from the audit. These issues include any excessive levels of dust and noise emissions. It is anticipated that solutions to these issues which can satisfy the concerns of residents, while still allowing the quarry and rail siding to operate effectively, can be found.

I trust this information is helpful to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

DEAN WELLS
Minister for Environment

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ministerial Expenses

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: As part of the government's and my continuing commitment to accountability, I am tabling the *Public Report of Ministerial Expenses* for the period 1 July to 31 December 2001. The public report of expenditure for each ministerial office is designed to give maximum transparency to the community regarding the expenses of ministers, parliamentary secretaries and their offices. Prior to my government this had not been done, and it honours an election commitment.

This report continues to show how my government has maintained accountability and kept costs to a minimum. This level of accountability was not seen prior to my government's adoption of this procedure. Considering the significant work being undertaken by my ministers, including our unprecedented program of community cabinets and community forums, I believe that this report clearly shows that expenditure is being maintained at a reasonable level. Given that this also includes, as I said, the tasks of the government in developing our export culture and the Smart State strategy, the costs here are fair and reasonable. In fact, spending over the six months is substantially under budget.

Through careful, responsible planning, the 25 offices involved have spent \$1,421,000 less than budgeted—10 per cent under budget. I table the report.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Public Liability Insurance

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.54 a.m.), by leave: The Queensland government has been quick to respond to the problems caused by the sharp jump in the cost of public liability insurance. We set up a task force to look at the problem and advise the government on the best way to proceed. The task force has now made an interim report, which was endorsed yesterday by cabinet. As I said, it was considered by state cabinet yesterday when we agreed to implement all 19 recommendations of the task force. We are confident these initiatives will help alleviate the burden on community groups confronted by spiralling insurance costs.

The recommendations focus on three key areas—insurance arrangements, risk management and law reform. The state government will soon place advertisements in newspapers throughout Queensland calling for expressions of interest from any groups wanting to participate in group insurance arrangements. But the task force clearly sees limits to what the state government can do on its own. It recommends cooperation between the Commonwealth government and other state governments to tackle this problem at a national level.

Queensland supports that approach and will work with other Australian governments to achieve a better result for our community organisations. Both the Treasurer and Deputy Premier and I will be pursuing these issues at a national level, initially through a meeting of Treasurers but also at COAG, where I will be seeking to put it on the agenda. I now seek leave to table a copy of the *Report of the Liability Insurance Task Force*. Mr Speaker, with your permission, copies will be distributed to all members.

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Overseas Visit

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.56 a.m.), by leave: I want to report on my visit to New Zealand on 18 and 19 December 2001. My ministerial colleague the Minister for Tourism and Racing, Merri Rose, accompanied me on the trip to promote Queensland as a tourism destination.

During the visit the minister and I announced a \$300,000 Tourism Queensland marketing campaign as part of our drive to attract even more New Zealand tourists to Queensland. We also hosted a very successful tourism forum in Auckland that has generated some innovative ideas for joint marketing of the Queensland and New Zealand tourism industries to international visitors.

One of the real problems confronting trans-Tasman tourism is a shortage of seats in comparison with the number of New Zealanders who would like to visit Queensland. This question of access was a high priority in my discussions with New Zealand government ministers, including Prime Minister Helen Clark and senior executives of Air New Zealand.

I am delighted that, just a month or so after our discussions with Air New Zealand, we were able to announce a major increase in flights to Queensland. That is a direct outcome of that visit, which shows the benefit of pursuing trade through international visits.

Air New Zealand will introduce six extra flights to Brisbane each week as well as an extra service to Cairns. The new service to Cairns has come about as a direct result of our talks in Auckland. As Premier I also pledged Queensland's support for a New Zealand trade mission to Australia later this year to be led by Prime Minister Clark.

During my trip I took the opportunity to canvass general trade issues with a particular interest in New Zealand's progress in developing its biotechnology industries. It was an important trip that has further cemented the strong business, trade and cultural links between Queensland and New Zealand. I now table the remainder of my report and associated details for the information of the House.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 1) 2002**

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.58 a.m.), by leave: I wish to inform the House that, in accordance with the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, the Constitution Act 1867 and the Officials in Parliament Act 1896, His Excellency the Governor, acting by and with the advice of the Executive Council, approved Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 1) 2002 on 14 February 2002. I lay upon the table of the House a copy of the order as published in the *Queensland Government Gazette* on 15 February 2002.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Royal Visit**

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.58 a.m.), by leave: It is now just 10 days until the Queen touches down for the rescheduled royal visit. Her Majesty the Queen will visit Brisbane, Coolum, Cairns and Kuranda during her visit to Queensland. The Duke of Edinburgh is also making a special trip to Roma. I am delighted that, even though the royal visit has had to be cut from four days to three due to prior commitments amid the rescheduling of CHOGM, each of the communities on the original itinerary for October will receive a visit. In addition to the royal visit to Queensland, the Queen will also be here in her role as head of the Commonwealth to open the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Coolum on Saturday, 2 March.

While Her Majesty is at Coolum, the Duke of Edinburgh will visit Roma. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are due to visit Cairns on Friday, 1 March and Brisbane on Sunday, 3 March. I am delighted that, despite the duration of the royal visit having to be curtailed due to the rescheduling of CHOGM and Her Majesty's existing commitments, none of the communities that were expecting a visit have been disappointed. It means that the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will be able to experience very different parts of Queensland and it will give people from those regions an opportunity to welcome them personally.

The royal party is scheduled to arrive in Brisbane on the evening of Thursday week, that is, 28 February, and depart late in the afternoon of Sunday, 3 March. The final program has been finalised. The highlights include a people's reception at Roma Street Parkland on Sunday, 3 March, a ride on the Sky Rail from Kuranda and the launch of a new Royal Flying Doctor Service plane in Cairns. We are holding a people's reception instead of an indoor state reception because it gives everyone a chance to come along instead of limiting the invitations to a privileged few. We expect carriages from the Great South Pacific Express will be available to carry the royal party from Freshwater station to Kuranda. I am delighted that Buckingham Palace has accepted our suggested program. I am also delighted that notwithstanding the tragic loss of a family member, Her Majesty the Queen is still continuing her visit.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Development Projects, Gladstone**

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (10.01 a.m.), by leave: The multibillion-dollar boom for Gladstone looms large. While in Gladstone on 24 January I was stunned at how much progress and development is going on as a direct result of initiatives by this government. While there I inspected the initial earthworks on the \$1.45 billion Comalco plant and then met officials from Astral Calcining to join them to inspect their \$300 million project—another Smart State project taking our raw materials and converting them to a value-added product that we presently import.

Our key effort while there, however, was to announce that Queensland is gearing up to ensure that the demands of industry are met. The Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts, Matt Foley, and I announced that a massive state government backed training and recruitment drive is scheduled for central Queensland this year. It is to meet the skill demands created by several multi-billion dollar industrial and construction and engineering projects of national and global significance.

Central Queensland—and indeed Queensland—has never before had this level of economic development. After the initial skills needs analysis, which is presently under way, a start will be made, in consultation with the Gladstone Economic and Industry Development Board, to develop

a program ensuring that there is a skilled work force ready to meet industry demands. That analysis is to be complete within two months. The projects include the \$3 billion Aldoga aluminium smelter outside Gladstone, the \$1.4 billion expansion of the Comalco alumina refinery and the \$1.4 billion Australian Magnesium development at Stanwell outside Rockhampton—again in central Queensland.

The individual scale of any one of these projects is huge, but their concurrent development creates an enormous demand for skilled labour that is not currently available in the central Queensland region. The Central Queensland Institute of TAFE and local private training providers will undertake training of local employees, including members of indigenous communities. Other TAFE institutes from across the state will also address needs. So this means jobs, jobs, jobs for Queenslanders.

This is an exciting time and the wins are not just for central Queensland. There are state-wide employment opportunities, and through TAFE we will work hard to ensure that all Queenslanders wanting one of those jobs are best placed to get one. Mr Foley's Department of Employment and Training has also set up the Economic Development Initiatives Unit to liaise with industry, training providers and other government departments to ensure the scheme's smooth implementation. The analysis is presently being conducted. It is anticipated that initial training will begin immediately following completion of the skills needs analysis. Training will also take place both on site and at a range of locations including TAFE facilities.

Amid the excitement of the recent billion-dollar announcements it would be wrong to miss Astral Calcining's \$300 million plant planned for Gladstone, to which I have referred. As I said, I was in Gladstone on 24 January and inspected the earthworks for this value-adding Smart State project. The project is set to start this year. The plant will involve 230 construction jobs and, when complete, employ 60 full-time staff. The plant will initially produce 310,000 tonnes a year of high-purity carbon for the manufacture of anodes used in smelting aluminium. The project is a staged development with construction for the \$180 million stage 1 scheduled to start in the second half of this year. Stage 2, costing \$120 million, will duplicate stage 1 and double production to 620,000 tonnes. This will be built when market demand increases. Anode carbon is presently not made in Australia and is produced by calcining green petroleum coke to a detailed specification in a long rotary kiln. The project is expected to supply Boyne Island smelter and the proposed Aldoga aluminium smelter.

This is another Smart State example of us making our own product and not importing. Production from this plant will replace about half the current imports and complements the expanding aluminium industry in Gladstone. Astral advises that they are preparing their environmental impact statement ready for lodging with the state government. As I said, central Queensland has never seen this level of development. We are ensuring that the jobs go to Queenslanders.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Students with Disabilities

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (10.05 a.m.), by leave: The Beattie government has an excellent track record in recognising the needs of people with disabilities and supporting all citizens to actively participate in our communities. This includes in our schools. Today I am pleased to announce a seven-point plan to further improve educational services and ensure that students with disabilities receive the highest quality education.

Firstly, a ministerial task force has been established. Secondly, the task force will assist the department to develop an action plan for the implementation of appropriate programs and services. Thirdly, a staff college for inclusive education is being established to provide professional development for teachers in this area. Fourthly, in May this year Education Queensland will host a forum of 85 key personnel on inclusive education to foster discussion and help form the development of the action plan. Fifthly, a five-year facilities plan is being developed to ensure that Queensland schools have the highest quality facilities for students with disabilities. Sixthly, to ensure that students with disabilities receive recognition of their learning experiences when they complete school, the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies is undertaking a trial of a certificate in post-compulsory education.

And finally, to more effectively support these initiatives, the Director-General of Education Queensland has realigned the students with disabilities section of the department to promote inclusive education as a major strategy to improve education for students with disabilities in our

schools. I commend these initiatives to the House as a commitment of this government to providing a fair deal in the education of students with disabilities in our schools.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mental Health Act

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: I wish to advise the House that the new Mental Health Act will be enacted from 28 February 2002 and to draw members' attention to key changes which will come into force as part of the new act.

Firstly is the establishment of the Mental Health Court and the Mental Health Review Tribunal. This will improve the accountability of decision making in relation to criminal charges and ongoing care where the offender has a mental illness. In addition, for the first time the new act provides for a person with sufficient personal interest, for example, a patient's family member or a victim of a crime, to be notified of hearing dates and decisions made about a forensic patient. These include decisions to discharge the patient, to authorise limited community treatment, to order the transfer of the patient to another mental health service, or for approval to move out of Queensland. Under the new legislation victims of crime will now have an opportunity to put their views forward and to have these considered.

The new act also provides powers to ensure community safety by requiring that the patient cannot be released unless they do not represent an unacceptable risk to their own safety or the safety of any member of the public. Only the Mental Health Court or the Mental Health Review Tribunal can approve limited community treatment—a scheme of monitored involuntary treatment in the community—or order the discharge of a forensic patient. Under the new act the Mental Health Review Tribunal is empowered to make a non-contact order for a forensic patient, originally charged with a serious personal offence, on discharging the patient from involuntary treatment.

I believe that the new act provides significant improvements to ensure the right mix of caring for people with an illness while also maintaining the necessary protection and support for the community, victims and their families. The act has been the result of significant consultation, and I thank everyone who has provided input into this. With the new act and the range of vastly improved supported accommodation and specialist facilities now being provided by this government, along with 300 extra mental health staff, Queensland is moving mental health care from the dark ages of the Burdekin commission into an enlightened and caring 21st century. The new, modern and secure facilities at Wolston Park are nearing completion at a cost of \$37.9 million and will be opening soon.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Asian Aerospace 2002

Hon. T. A. BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for State Development) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: Queensland's aviation industry is entering a very exciting period and moving ahead in leaps and bounds. It is an industry worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the state, and already Queensland is building an impressive track record. The Queensland government is working in close partnership with Aviation Australia to further increase activity in this sector.

On Monday an officer from my Department of State Development will be in Singapore attending the Asian Aerospace 2002 conference, to be held between 26 February and 3 March. In 2000 this event attracted 928 exhibitors, including over 70 of the world's top 100 aerospace companies. Furthermore, the event welcomed more than 22,000 visitors from 90 countries.

Attendance at Asian Aerospace 2002 will enable the Queensland government to market the state as an aviation hub and continue to build on its growing list of aviation related investments. The Queensland government and Aviation Australia have purchased exhibition space and will serve to raise the awareness of Queensland as an aviation hub, with marketing materials such as brochures and CD-ROMs available to delegates. Some of them will include big names such as Jeppesen, Lufthansa Technik and Bombardier. That is just a very small example of some international aviation companies that will be at Asian Aerospace 2002.

The event is a springboard for Queensland into this lucrative market, with a wide international delegate base to which Queensland will be proactively marketed as an investment location for international aviation companies invited to visit us so that we may demonstrate our capabilities.

As the gateway to the Asia Pacific market, Asian Aerospace is the perfect networking platform for the industry, offering the best reach in the regional marketplace as well as extensive exposure to the international trade and general media. Already we have some great success stories which will form a solid base for these meetings.

On 1 December I was very pleased to be part of the announcement of two major wins for the state. These were the launch of Qantas's new low-cost international leisure service, Australian Airlines, to be based in Cairns and which will bring 680 jobs to the state, and the establishment of Singapore Airlines' advanced flight training operations on the Sunshine Coast, which will provide in the order of 40 jobs initially.

The aviation industry is one which this government is passionate about. We will continue to work with Aviation Australia, our own training centre of excellence, to move forward and deliver the goods. The Premier announced the marvellous initiative of the government delivering a \$10 million election promise for the integrated aerospace training centre. This, coupled with our commitment and initiative, will see Queensland take off as the aviation hub of the Asia Pacific.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

CHOGM

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (10.12 a.m.), by leave: As the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is taking place on the Sunshine Coast in less than two weeks time, I feel it is appropriate for me to update the parliament about preparations for this important world event and the role the Queensland Police Service will play in its security.

As members would know, CHOGM is a unique opportunity to showcase Queensland to the international community. As well as bringing many visitors to our shores for the event itself, it will provide invaluable exposure for our state as a tourist destination. It also provides an invaluable opportunity for the Queensland Police Service to illustrate its ability to provide security for an event of this magnitude. The Queensland Police Service demonstrated its efficiency and professionalism in dealing with international events at last year's Goodwill Games, held here in Brisbane. The Queensland Police Service began preparations for CHOGM in early 2000. Nearly two years ago, in September 2000, a specialised CHOGM unit was set up. This unit now has more than 100 staff working to ensure the success of CHOGM.

CHOGM will be the largest and most challenging security operation ever undertaken by the Queensland Police Service. The service will have the primary responsibility for the provision of close personal protection for up to 50 heads of government, their partners and supporting entourages. In addition to these duties, the Queensland Police Service has a major security commitment for the royal visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The postponement of CHOGM in October last year due to unforeseeable international events has only served to give our Police Service more time to hone its preparations for this event. However, CHOGM security is not the sole responsibility of our police. The Queensland police will work with the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and the Australian Defence Force to ensure that CHOGM has the most stringent and effective security possible.

Everyone is aware that the tragic events of 11 September raised the stakes for this event and any international event being held in the future. Queenslanders should feel secure in the knowledge that all contingencies have been considered in terms of security. As police have put it, they are expecting the worst but hoping for the best.

Other than the benefit to tourism in Queensland and the economic boost for the Sunshine Coast, there are other benefits to CHOGM, including some for police. During the lead-up to CHOGM Queensland police officers have received more than 100,000 hours of specialist training. This means that CHOGM will leave a lasting legacy in the form of a more highly skilled, highly trained Queensland Police Service. All plans are now finalised, and I have every confidence that the Queensland police will rise to the occasion and provide a safe and enjoyable environment, with minimum interruptions, to those who live in and around the Coolumb area.

I also take this opportunity to reassure the Queensland public that CHOGM will not impact on the regular policing of regional or, indeed, metropolitan Queensland. As with the initial CHOGM plan, the strategy of not allowing any leave for CHOGM's duration, postponing any non-essential court proceedings and postponing all training for police is in place. This will free up the extra police

needed for CHOGM, plus ensure that Queensland's regions are not affected by the number of officers required to work to ensure effective security at CHOGM. With the extensive preparation and the dedication of all involved, particularly the Queensland Police Service, I have every confidence that this event will be a success and will showcase Queensland's capacity as a venue for major international events.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Make Time Campaign

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (10.16 a.m.), by leave: Queensland's \$3.3 million Make Time campaign to generate tourism business has been stunningly successful. The campaign, launched by the Beattie government in September and coordinated by Tourism Queensland, provided an immediate boost to a tourism industry suffering post 11 September and the Ansett collapse. Anecdotal evidence indicates that at least 80 per cent to 85 per cent of operators involved reported a very positive increase in bookings. One hundred per cent of operators surveyed from tropical north Queensland indicated that they would participate again. Gold Coast operators at a recent meeting attributed the buoyant Christmas season to their ability to access the Make Time campaign.

Queensland's campaign was out in the marketplace at least three weeks before any other state campaign. This forward thinking by the government and Tourism Queensland ensured that Queensland was top of mind for Australians looking to plan holidays or change existing trips. Popular destinations such as the Gold and Sunshine coasts reported immediate increases in drive tourism as the campaign helped minimise the impact of the events of September on Queensland. The benefits were felt right across the state.

I was impressed with the way our tourism industry pulled together to overcome the difficulties of limited air access and a reluctance by people to travel. Operators showed a willingness to work in partnership with Tourism Queensland to ensure that the message was out there and was relevant. We received tremendous support both from our media partners, in supplying exceptional rates, and from our industry partners, who were ready to jump on board as soon as we came out with the campaign. It was a smart campaign that linked in to the general community mood of value reassessment with its 'make time' message. It also served to let the public know that Queensland was open for business.

The Beattie government and Tourism Queensland worked hand in hand with the airlines to redirect flights and introduce new flights. This ensured that access issues were solved as quickly as possible. Strategic marketing was put in place once those new flights were in the air to ensure that the public were aware of them.

The preference, particularly domestically, for Queensland as a holiday destination has risen considerably since the campaign—further proof of its success. Tourism Queensland continues to work with operators, airlines, travel agents and other industry partners. Our Endless Summer Deals campaign, a domestic marketing second phase, is being finalised, and another 55 cooperative campaigns are scheduled before April. This is a Smart State response by a government with an unstinting commitment to tourism.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Information Technology, Gold Coast

Hon. P. T. LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Information Economy) (10.19 a.m.), by leave: The Gold Coast has long been recognised around the world as a desired tourism destination, but the Gold Coast is rapidly becoming an IT powerhouse for many leading ICT companies such as IBM, Compaq, Austar Communications, Eracom and AAPT. Just last month the Premier officially opened Austar's new national customer operations centre at Robina. There is now a cluster of multimedia companies on the coast, not to mention the technology InQbator at Varsity Lakes alongside Bond University. The Gold Coast is on the map for its innovation, not just its location.

Since Warner Brothers Movieworld on the coast opened, we have seen many local success stories in the film and multimedia industry. Multimedia company Photon VFX was nominated for an Emmy Award for its visual effects in the miniseries *Moby Dick* and won an international animation competition last year. Photon VFX has worked for Paramount, 20th Century Fox,

MGM, Disney, Columbia, Sony, Warner Bros and Village Roadshow and has gathered a swag of film credits, including the new *Scooby Doo* movie. In the next *Star Wars* instalment, we will see aliens created by a Gold Coast company, JMB FX Studios, which also worked on *The Matrix II* and *The Matrix III* as well as series such as *Beastmaster* and *The Lost World*. And who could forget last year's *Big Brother* TV series? Cutting Edge Post did the post-production work for this series and has expanded its Gold Coast facility for *Big Brother II*, which is due to start soon. Then there is also Golden Orb, an Asia-Pacific IT&T award winner which is on the verge of signing contracts with the Malaysian government to supply e-commerce products and training to Malaysian businesses.

The coast is also part of Queensland's biotechnology boom. There is the Centre for Biomolecular Science and Drug Discovery led by Professor Mark Von Itzstein, who developed the anti-flu drug Relenza. Griffith University also has the Centre for Molecular Neurobiology, the Rotary Centre for Cardiovascular Research, the Genomics Research Centre and the School of Health Sciences. This government is creating a climate of innovation to improve quality of life and increase productivity and employment opportunities for all Queenslanders. My department's Innovation Start-Up Scheme is producing success stories, such as a new motor racing safety barrier that has the potential to revolutionise safety on Formula One racetracks around the world. As I speak, this Gold Coast inventor is awaiting endorsement from the international Formula One racing authority, the FIA, of his motor racing buffer. The Smart State can exist only if innovation applies across the entire community.

This government is striving to raise community ICT skills through my department's Community Skills Development Program and the ICT Skills, Training and Role Models Program. The Gold Coast has embraced these programs, with the Palm Beach State School and the Gold Coast City Council using grants to run ICT training, information and careers evenings. The Gold Coast is a great example of what the Smart State represents and how it is embracing innovation to achieve further investment and jobs.

OPPOSITION APPOINTMENTS

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.22 a.m.): I wish to inform the House of the addition of Mr Ray Hopper, the member for Darling Downs, to the National Party and of his appointment in the shadow cabinet as shadow minister for public works and housing. Welcome aboard, Ray. I table a list of the amended shadow ministry.

EXPENSES OF OFFICE, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.22 a.m.): I also table for the information of the House the financial statement covering the operations of the Office of the Leader of the Opposition for the six months to 31 December 2001.

SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Report

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.23 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Alert Digest No. 1* of 2002 and move that it be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

ELECTORAL (RESIGNATION OF MEMBERS) AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (10.23 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—
That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Electoral Act 1992.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mrs Pratt, read a first time.

Second Reading

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (10.24 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I rise to recommend to the House the Electoral (Resignation of Members) Amendment Bill. I propose to introduce legislation which will cause Queensland parliamentary members who vacate their electoral seat without due cause to suffer legislation to fund the by-election so caused by their unnecessary departure. This cost should be recouped from the resigning member's superannuation payment or from any other moneys accruing from the member's representation in the Queensland parliament. What is due cause? If a member of the Legislative Assembly resigns due to ill health, they must present a separate medical certificate signed by a government doctor of medicine, a separate medical certificate signed by an independent doctor of medicine and a separate medical certificate signed by the resigning member's personal physician. They should be furnished stating the medical condition which, in the examiner's opinion, would greatly impede the successful representation by the resigning member.

This bill is a long overdue requirement which will ensure that members will no longer be thought of as rorting the system when leaving parliament due to spurious or face-saving impulse. It is immediately apparent that members who resign whilst still in office cause an embarrassing waste of taxpayers' money, and resignations carry no favour. Members from all sides of parliament are equally guilty of resigning whilst in office. Rightly or wrongly, many people see politicians as being in parliament to feather their own nests. The public sees politicians collectively as self-serving, self-indulgent, childish and untrustworthy. It is the majority of members of parliament who have been tainted by the actions of a few.

There is an unwritten commitment between the political aspirant and the public. Aspirants should not commit themselves to a term in politics if they are not prepared to serve that term. Politicians, who were once known as statesmen, commanded respect from the general public, but actions like those of Rob Borbidge, who stood for election and, before even being announced the winner, spat the dummy and resigned, gives the average man in the street nothing to respect. Where are the statesmen of today? It is this sort of action that loses the respect for politicians from a very disillusioned electorate. It is time to win back that trust from the electorate. It is the actions of people such as Mr Borbidge that motivated me to put forward this bill, a bill aimed at regaining the voters' trust and a bill which I believe will head us in that direction. It is with that concern in mind that I introduce to the House the Electoral (Resignation of Members) Amendment Bill 2002.

I must remind the House that during the past 10 years, Queensland parliament has suffered the loss of representation by 15 members due to their resigning whilst in office. Each has placed an unnecessary burden on the Queensland taxpayers, who have had to foot the bill for the consequent by-elections. The message that is being sent to the electorate is one of irresponsible parliamentary behaviour. The action of resigning whilst in office—for no good reason—must, in future, be accompanied by some act of responsibility. That responsibility is the thrust of the Electoral (Resignation of Members) Amendment Bill 2002.

Let us quickly look at the loss to parliament of the good men of the past who have resigned causing a public expense, that is, an unnecessary by-election. Mr Keith Wright was forced to resign due to the parliamentary requirement that members of parliament must do so when they offend against the law. The cost of the 1985 by-election was around \$55,000. Then Premier Bjelke-Petersen led a stampede of resignations that cost the taxpayers over half a million dollars in by-election costs. The 1990s saw a plethora of resignations that cost the taxpayer over \$1 million in by-elections. Bear in mind that any member who may have been facing charges in this era would be recorded as having resigned his seat.

The principle of this bill should be one that most people in this House would concur with, although some may find that it will not be an easy one to accept. I hope all members will keep an open mind on why it is necessary to lay a more solid foundation on the integrity of members who have been given the privilege of entering this House. We are elected to ensure the constituency's collective viewpoints reach the ears of the parliament. Instead, we are seen as rorters of the system and avoiding our responsibilities. Even worse, we are seen as entering politics to use it as a stepping stone to a more lucrative career on the board of some big business. Sadly, too often the actions of MPs after politics have portrayed this as being the motivation for many of them—past and present. Due to the constraints of time, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my second reading speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Members who resign without just cause portray the behaviour of one who does not honour their commitment to the electorate. It comes across as, if not illegal, immoral and as an abuse of the peoples trust.

The cost of By-elections brought about by the resignation of Members before the end of their terms has been an enormous waste of public money. It is time some responsibility is shouldered by a Member before resigning. In fact, they should consider their responsibility long before they nominate to stand for election to Parliament.

The one proven way to do that is hit them where it hurts—make them responsible for the expenses incurred for a By-election if they resign outside the parameters of this Bill before their term is up.

In the first instance of recouping from the resigning Member an amount equal to the amount of the Electoral Commission's expenditure on the subsequent By-election, it is desirable to recoup this amount at the source of the resigning Member's accrued moneys.

This recouping is facilitated by this legislation reflecting that resigning members' Superannuation moneys would be dealt with to expedite the recovery of the subsequent By-election.

In other words the relevant governing authority concerned with the payment of the resigning Members' Superannuation moneys is empowered by this legislation to withhold an amount equal to the amount of the Commission's expenditure on the subsequent By-election.

No longer will Members be able to irresponsibly resign with no thought of the expense they have placed on the taxpayer. Parliamentarians have become used to being directly unaccountable for their actions. This Bill will curtail their desire to use the selfish 'escape route' of resignation without consequence, and bring them into line with the ideal required by the electorate.

This will require honesty of intent and commitment by all that enter Parliament. It is a privilege, not a perk, to sit in this Chamber. I know Members would like to believe that they are here because they have a majority of the trust of their electorate. "The truth is most people if asked, would say they vote for the best of a bad lot because most politicians are all the same" Past actions by a few, have brought into question the integrity of all but we can't complain. What did we do to stop it?

It's time that was changed. It is time that all Members of Parliament start to earn the respect of the people who elected them and this Bill will hopefully head us in the right direction of honesty and accountability which we hear so much of, but appears to be all talk and no action. Perhaps then and only then will it lead to more respect for the integrity of the Parliament?

The Bill amends the Electoral Act 1992 and cites "the acceptable reasons" and "accompanying requirements to support the validity of the reasons" for a resignation.

As members are aware I constantly poll my electorate and I asked the question 'Should politicians who resign without just cause (i.e. health) during their term of office pay for the By-election?' The poll result showed a response of 90% of people in favour of politicians paying, 9% said NO and 1% did not answer the question. I received approximately 9.8% return of a mail out of 14,500 questionnaires.

Furthermore, when a Member resigns, Mr Speaker, the Bill proposes that he/she will submit to the Speaker a written notice with the reason and support for the reason.

Mr Speaker, the Premier and Opposition Leader would have the decision as to whether or not the member resignation fits into the 'acceptable reason' and a confidentiality clause applies with a 100 penalty points to apply.

Mr Speaker, according to the Electoral Commission, a by-election can cost up to \$250,000. Therefore it is not unreasonable to look at this amount as a guide to a monetary penalty for the inconvenience and cost of a By-election.

Whether as an Independent or a Party member, every two and a half or three years we ask for the renewal of the trust of the electorate or if untried we are asking them to take a gamble on a newcomer. To betray their trust and force them back to the polls to endure a further period of political bombardment results in anger, disappointment, frustration and resentment from the electorate. We have to earn that trust, Mr Speaker, not destroy it.

Party politicians should have learnt by now what can happen if we don't—the electorate looks for an alternative. Independent Lex Bell who won the seat of Surfers Paradise is a great example of how the electorate responds to politicians after the Borbidge experience and he didn't even stand in the initial election.

Mr Speaker, as I have often stated before, it is a privilege to be here in the House, and I call on everyone in this chamber to support this Bill. Those who don't support the principle of it will be seen as 'showing their true colours'. It will mean they have chosen to oppose political integrity in the interests of personal opportunism and a disregard for the electorate they represent.

Mr Beattie has endeavoured to clean up electoral fraudulent practices so let's continue to clean up politics by asking politicians to commit themselves to their electorates by cleaning up their acts.

I commend this Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Bligh, adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Public Liability Insurance

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.28 a.m.): The National Party first brought to the attention of this House the looming crisis in public liability insurance and it is the National Party that has put forward a six-point plan that can address the root cause of the insurance crisis, a plan which provides real and practical solutions to fix this problem once and for

all. The problem facing our communities is huge. The Charters Towers Music Festival will see its premium jump from \$1,700 to \$20,000. The Logan show has just been cancelled because of the escalating cost of insurance premiums. Show societies throughout this state are facing a 70 per cent increase in their public liability insurance premium after a huge increase last year. Festivals and carnivals throughout the state believe they will not be able to continue because of the increased premiums. This is also the case for sports clubs, community organisations and the blue light disco operated by the Police Citizens Youth Club. We are now seeing this become a serious problem for community health organisations, many of which are funded by the state government, because they do not believe they will be able to continue to provide the health services to the community they provided in the past.

We have seen the Premier move around without a plan. Finally he has picked up some of the National Party's plan, but he has not gone far enough. Honourable members should have a look at the summary today. Three of our six points are there, but he has not gone far enough on the community insurance fund. He cannot simply pool things and hope that the premiums might come down a bit. Some of these premiums have gone up by 400 per cent and 500 per cent. He has to show a real commitment. He has to underwrite this community insurance fund. He has to make sure that it has the backing of the government, that it will bring about a real reduction, so that these organisations can continue to provide the services that they currently provide. The Premier also has not gone far enough in attacking the—

Time expired.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Unemployment

Mr HORAN (10.30 a.m.): I refer the Honourable the Premier to last month's increase in Queensland's unemployment rate to 8.2 per cent—well in excess of his five per cent unemployment promise and the 17th month in a row in which Queensland has run stone motherless last in mainland Australia in terms of jobless figures. I refer him also to the excuse that he has used many times that Queensland's participation rate is to blame. I ask: is the Premier aware that those January figures published by the ABS reveal that the total size of Queensland's work force actually shrank while unemployment continued to rise? Does he have any new excuses to explain his failure to deliver on his jobs promise, and what is it that he is doing so wrong that consistently gives Queensland the worst unemployment figures in mainland Australia?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. In the 43 months or so since my government first came to office 117,900 new jobs have been created, almost half—56,900—of which are full-time jobs. Since August 2001 Queensland has shown stronger annual employment growth than the Australian average. In fact, it is now growing faster than anywhere else in Australia at 1.9 per cent and is growing faster than the national average of 1.2 per cent. At eight per cent, the current unemployment rate is well below the unemployment rate of 9.5 per cent in February and March 1997, during the term of the coalition government when the Leader of the Opposition was last a minister. What was it when he was in government last? 9.5 per cent!

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I would think that the Leader of the Opposition is not in a position in which he can throw too many stones about this. We have brought down the level of unemployment. As I said, it is eight per cent on trend figures.

Mr Horan: 8.2 per cent.

Mr BEATTIE: No, it did not go up. It was 8 per cent on trend figures. It was the same as the month before. So the member should not rewrite the figures. The trend figures were the same. Eight per cent was the trend figure. When the member was in government it was 9.5 per cent in February and March 1997. At 9.5 per cent it was off the Richter scale. The rate was 1.5 per cent higher under the National Party. Even if we go back to Joh's day we find that the level of unemployment in this state has been higher than other states for a number of reasons. It is the nature of our work force. Our participation rate is higher, that is, the number of people looking for work. The member had the same problem when he was in office, except his unemployment rate was 1.5 per cent higher.

What we are seeing in Queensland now is a broadening of the economy. That is what we are doing. That is what the Smart State is all about. It is about broadening the economy, it is about IT and biotech. Look at the projects. Queensland is on the doorstep of the biggest period of economic development in its history. There is Comalco. We talked about that this morning. We have AMC light metals. Australian Airlines is coming to north Queensland. We have the Snap Fresh project from Qantas. We have the aviation industry, Aldoga, LG Chemicals and the Astral Calcining announcement this morning.

Mr Horan: Alzheimer's.

Mr BEATTIE: The only one who has Alzheimer's around here is the Leader of the Opposition, because he cannot remember that the unemployment rate was 1.5 per cent higher when he was in office. Whatever might be right or wrong with us, the unemployment rate was 1.5 per cent higher when he was last a minister. He should explain that.

Jezer Construction Group, Member for Capalaba

Mr HORAN: I refer the Honourable the Premier to the Building Services Authority's most recent suspension of the Jezer Construction Group's building licence—its third suspension and the latest in a long string of actions taken by the BSA regarding the regular complaints by subcontractors and suppliers over Jezer's failure to pay its bills. Given the enormous conflict of interest held by a principal of that company, the member for Capalaba, and one of his hand picked clean team, will he assure the parliament that the member will be disallowed from voting on the Subcontractors' Charges Amendment Bill 2001?

Mr BEATTIE: I have made it very clear that, when it comes to matters before them, bodies such as the Building Services Authority will act without any political interference. It does not particularly matter whether it involves a member of this House or a member of any political party. Mr Choi resigned as the director of the Jezer Construction Group on 28 February 2001. However, in signing the deed of guarantee and indemnity, Mr Choi remains liable to creditors of the company as if he was still a director. So he has resigned and he has done the right thing. When the National Party was in office I did not see any of its members ever do this.

Mr Seeney interjected.

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

Mr BEATTIE: The position is very simple. Nobody, whether they are a member of government, a member of the opposition or a member of the community, gets preferential treatment under my government. That applies to everybody. They are treated fairly and equally before any tribunal. Mr Choi has been given no preference, nor will he be. However, he has done the right thing and he has resigned. He has done the appropriate thing, and I commend him for doing so.

Let me talk about some other issues. The Leader of the Opposition wanted to talk about policy. Let's talk about some policy. I was very interested to see—

Mr Johnson: Answer the question.

Mr BEATTIE: I have already answered the question. Here he is, trying to wreck the parliament again. We are back on the first day and he wants to wreck the parliament. Typical!

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Wreck the parliament. He has no respect for the great institution.

I was intrigued to read this story which appeared on the front page of the *Toowoomba Chronicle* very recently. It is headed 'Taylor wipes Nats'. Here is a former National Party candidate, the Jondaryan mayor, Peter Taylor. Do you know what he says?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Callide! That is my final warning.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, I hope I am not losing my time. What a bad start for the year.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We are going to have a little bit of calm in the House. The Premier has answered the question. If he wishes to continue, he is quite able to do so.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Johnson: You were sitting down, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: We will have some order in the House.

Mr JOHNSON: For a start, I am not a wrecker, but the Premier is digressing from the real issue. Why does he not answer the question truthfully and let the parliament know what the answer is?

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr BEATTIE: I think a very relevant question is: what did the former National Party candidate think of the current leadership? He said—

The current leadership—

that is the lot opposite—

would take us back 100 years if they were in government.

Doesn't that reflect it?

I rise to a point of order. In terms of the answers to questions which I seek to give here, I would hope that, when senseless points of order that are not within the standing orders are made, the time does not elapse. I seek your assurance, Mr Speaker, that time is not wasted by the opposition on these matters.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Mansfield I will answer the Premier. I normally press the pause button. Unfortunately, on my first day back I am guilty of not doing so this time.

Telstra A-Championships

Mr REEVES: I direct a question to the Premier. It is almost 20 years since Brisbane successfully hosted the 1982 Commonwealth Games. I ask: can the Premier advise the House if the public will have any opportunity this year to relive some of those great moments at ANZ Stadium, obviously after they have travelled along the world-class South East Busway to get there?

Mr BEATTIE: All I can say is: you bet. As part of this can-do government's delivery, today I will be participating in another major announcement as a result of the Queensland Events Corporation. As members know, ANZ Stadium in Brisbane is the premier athletics venue in Australia. The Telstra A-Championships are going to be staged at ANZ Stadium from 11 to 14 April. They are the official Australian championships and selection trials for the Commonwealth Games, the International Paralympic Committee World Championships and the World Junior Championships in 2002. Where else but in Queensland, right here in Brisbane?

We will host Australia's leading athletes vying for national titles, Australian team selection and big prize money. I will be announcing the formal details of this event with a number of athletes at 1 o'clock today. We will see the stars of Australian athletics in action, including Olympic 400-metre champion Cathy Freeman; Olympic silver medallists Tatiana Gregorieva and Jai Taurima; Paralympic superstar Louise Savaugé; and the Goodwill Games gold medallists Nathan Deakes and Melissa Rollison. Do members remember Melissa Rollison, who won the 3000-metre steeplechase?

Queensland is the big events capital of Australia. 2002 will be the second consecutive year that the ANZ Stadium has hosted the Australian athletics championships. It will also host the event in 2003 as part of a deal that the Queensland government has struck through the Queensland Events Corporation.

Brisbane has hosted many major athletic events, including the 1982 Commonwealth Games, many Australian championships and, of course, the very successful 2001 Goodwill Games. It is appropriate that, as we approach the 20th anniversary of the Brisbane Commonwealth Games, our best athletes are again on show at ANZ Stadium and vying for selection for the Manchester games. I table a copy of the material that we will be releasing today. This is a very important day for Queensland.

While I am talking about athletic events or competitions, I want to refer to a matter that I think is of significant interest to the people of Queensland. Let me come back to the matter of Peter Taylor, who has had some athletic competition within the National Party. He has made the following very astute observation—

The current leadership would take us back 100 years if they were in government.

That must be the reverse tumble, or the reverse high jump, or the reverse broad jump—

Mr Lucas: The Fosbury flop.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right—a flop of one kind. But even on policy matters, where are the National Party? I refer to the matter of trading hours, which has been a matter of debate. On 24 January, Vaughan Johnson said that he did not have a problem as long as the government consulted. So we went out and consulted. The next day, Mike Horan—

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. The Premier is misleading the parliament. I ask him to withdraw. What I said was 'full and exhaustive consultation'. The Premier has not had that, and I ask him to withdraw that.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr BEATTIE: Gee, they are really touchy over there! The next day, Mike Horan, the Leader of the Opposition, was forced to come back from holidays to apologise and clarify the matter, while the Liberal Leader, Bob Quinn, offered some sideline advice for the Nationals, saying, 'Pull your socks up and work out what your policy is.' I am with Bob.

Extended Shop Trading Hours

Mr JOHNSON: You can get another turn now, old mate. I refer the Premier to his cabinet's decision to extend shopping hours from Noosa to Coolangatta and west to Amberley and its negative impact on employment levels in small business, particularly on full-time employment.

A government member: Come in sucker.

Mr JOHNSON: I know who the sucker is going to be, especially those people in the suburbs of Brisbane. In light of the Premier's reported statements in the media that he does not accept the argument that this decision will cost jobs, will he take up the challenge made to him yesterday by small business proprietors Bill Bowden, a real estate and shopping complex manager, and Terry Orreal, a butcher of Brendale, to tell them which of their workers they have to sack as a result of his cabinet's decision?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for the question, but I have to say again—and this is very difficult for me—that I agree with Bob Quinn, the Leader of the Liberal Party. He is quoted in the *Courier-Mail*—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Come on, behave, be good. Yesterday, Bob Quinn stated—

... any political party proposing to unwind Sunday trading would alienate hundreds of thousands of voters.

He went on to state—

That is the sort of backward looking agenda that has no place in a modern political landscape.

Good on you, Bob! I have to say that I could not have said it better myself, and we do not even have the same speech writers. We are with Bob, because let me tell members that we are about delivering better trading hours for the consumers of this state and we want a fair system—

Mr Mackenroth: More job opportunities.

Mr BEATTIE: And jobs. Let me make it clear: this issue is about jobs, jobs, jobs for Queenslanders. Let there be no doubt in anybody's mind: the honourable opposition member is suggesting—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Will the member give us a chance! Does he want the question answered or does he want to be rude? If the member wants me to answer the question, he should give me a chance. He should stop trying to wreck the parliament.

Mr Johnson: I asked a question in good faith.

Mr BEATTIE: And I am giving the member an answer in good faith. The bottom line is that this will create jobs. The member supports a—

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Mudgeeraba, could I welcome to the public gallery teachers, parents and students of the Ashgrove State School in the electorate of Ashgrove. I now call the honourable member for Mudgeeraba.

Gold Coast Convention Centre

Mrs REILLY: I direct a question to the Premier—and I certainly hope that he gets an opportunity to answer it. The Gold Coast tourism industry is about to enter yet another exciting phase with construction beginning on the Gold Coast Convention Centre. I ask: what benefits will this convention centre bring to the Gold Coast?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member, who is part of our dynamic team on the Gold Coast that is representing that area very strongly. I thank the Gold Coast team. This can-do government is delivering for the Gold Coast in an unprecedented way. When the Nationals and Liberals were in office, they ignored the Gold Coast and took it for granted. We are now delivering. More good news—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Here they go again—wrecking the parliament at every opportunity. More good news for the Gold Coast is the commencement of construction on the \$118 million convention and exhibition centre. The centre adds to the—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Has the member finished being rude? He has had 20 goes at it. Does he want to wreck this place? Parliament has to be respected. If the member does not respect it, no-one else will.

The centre adds to the long list of major venues on the coast. It will boost the local tourism industry and create more jobs: 3,000 during the construction phase, which will be completed in 2004, with 1,500 permanent, direct and flow-on jobs in the region. On 8 February I had the privilege of turning the first sod on the site, at which the honourable member for Mudgeeraba was present along with the other Gold Coast members of this government. Bob Quinn was also there.

This project is a great example of the government working with the private sector to develop important public infrastructure for the Gold Coast. The venue will cater for up to 2,000 convention delegates, or an audience of up to 6,000 people at concerts and sporting events. Such a centre is needed on the Gold Coast. I promised that we would build it and I am delighted that my government is delivering on that promise.

The Gold Coast is Queensland's second biggest city. It is a world-class tourism destination and it needs a major convention and exhibition centre. The truth is that it is an absolute disgrace that, in 2002, the Gold Coast still does not have a convention centre. There was 100 years and more of neglect. We are ending that neglect and we are delivering for the Gold Coast. This will produce jobs and investment opportunities.

The Queensland government will own the centre, with the developer, Jupiters, operating the centre under a long-term management agreement. The company is also undertaking a massive remodelling project at its neighbouring casino and hotel. The operators plan to attract the large-scale conventions and exhibitions that the Gold Coast missed out on previously. Because of the size of the convention centre, there will not be competition to any significant degree with existing convention facilities or smaller venues through the existing hotels. So it is a win-win for the existing hotels and it is a win for the Gold Coast because, finally, my government is delivering them a convention centre which is long overdue. It will help the tourism industry. Merri Rose and her tourism department can go out and promote it as well.

Additionally, I flagged at the opening that we will have a coordination of conventions in this state. We now have convention centres in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Cairns, Townsville and elsewhere around the state. If one centre cannot cope with a convention, we want to ensure that it will be held somewhere else in Queensland.

Change in Electoral Representation

Mr FLYNN: I mean no disrespect to the House, but I brought with me these floaties in case I find myself out of my depth. That comment will not be lost on members of this House.

I direct my question to the Premier, who I am glad to see is sitting in his usual seat. My question has three parts. Given the stated position of the Premier's party on integrity within this parliament and its desire for a cleaner, more reasonable debate, can he tell this House what can be done to address indications of political trickery by some members and parties, whether government or non-government, towards the people of Queensland who elected them on a particular platform only to have them then jump ship? To what degree should any member or

party be responsible for the cost of a by-election? That should be standard practice but possibly is not practical. Can we see a bipartisan approach to true integrity within this parliament?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for that very serious question. On 4QR ABC radio, Peter Taylor had this to say in relation to the National Party—

I don't have confidence in the current leadership direction being taken by the elected parliamentary leader, that would-be Premier of this state. He is actually encouraging people to actually reward people for deceiving the electorate, and I think that is very wrong. I think there is some really questionable ethical behaviour involved in the particular decision at a number of points.

In fact, Peter Taylor obviously shares the view of the honourable member for Lockyer on this matter.

Members will recall that this has been somewhat of a tradition in the parliament. In 1983 the then Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, managed to attract two then Liberals, Don Lane and Brian Austin, to join the National Party to form a government. At that time, I was the Labor Party secretary, and a lot of people expressed the similar view, that if a member changed position from that which they had offered themselves to the electorate, they should have the moral fibre to resign and put the issue to the people.

Mr Seeney interjected.

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

Mr Hobbs interjected.

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

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Callide will cease interjecting. That is my final warning.

Mr BEATTIE: In 1983, a number of people shared the honourable member's view; that is, if someone is elected to this parliament they should remain in faith to the people who elected them. The basic argument is that if a person stands on a particular platform, either as a member of a political party or as an Independent, then they should in fact stand by that.

Unfortunately, these are matters of personal conscience and personal integrity. The individual must live with their own conscience as to whether this is the right or wrong thing to do. It is important that the political process provides an opportunity or allows the latitude for people to make that choice. If a member decides that they can live with their conscience—having offered themselves to the people one way and then changing and sitting in this place in another capacity—then they will be held accountable at the next election. And held accountable they will be! I believe that the voters took their revenge on Brian Austin and Don Lane through various processes and, as a result, both of them went out of the parliamentary process.

If this government imposed strict limitations, it could limit political free debate and it could limit changes in the political process. I would be reluctant to do that. However, the Attorney-General has spelt out a whole series of electoral reforms which will soon be introduced into this parliament. They will make major changes and significantly clean up the political process in this state. For anyone who changes political party or who betrays their electorate, there is a day of reckoning and that is with the people.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Albert, I ask members to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Mr Behrooz Afkhami, an acclaimed film-maker and member of the Iranian Parliament. Welcome.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Flagstone State Community College

Ms KEECH: I direct my question to the Minister for Education. Last year, Flagstone State Community College was the subject of a number of comments made by the member for Beaudesert in this House. Those comments cast doubt on the school's location, its projected enrolment and its ability to be operational for the start of the 2002 school year. I invite the minister to advise the House in respect of these and other matters raised in relation to the school.

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am delighted to inform members of the House that last week I visited Flagstone State Community College, where I met

the 124 year 8s who have enrolled there this year and the staff who have the great privilege of working there as foundation members of the school.

The member for Beaudesert has been consistent on this issue since he first raised it—consistently wrong! How disappointed he must be today. In February 1997, the member for Beaudesert announced in his local paper that a high school would be built in his electorate at Jimboomba. This was certainly news to the Education Minister at the time, the member for Robina, who had no such plans to build any school there. It took a Labor government to deliver a high school into the Flagstone area. The member for Beaudesert was wrong.

The member for Beaudesert claimed in the estimates debate last year that the high school was to be built on the site of the present primary school. It is in fact on its own site across the road from the primary school. Again, the member for Beaudesert was wrong.

In the House last December, the member for Beaudesert said that Education Queensland did not even own the land. Again, the member for Beaudesert was wrong. In November, the member for Beaudesert asserted that parents and students were refusing to enrol at the school. The Flagstone college opened this year with a healthy enrolment of 124 young Queenslanders. Again, the member for Beaudesert got it wrong.

That is four wrongs on the one issue in five months. But wait, there is more! Last year the member for Beaudesert also suggested some very vague and grand conspiracy theories between unions, superannuation groups and Education Queensland in relation to this college. I asked the member to supply details. To date, he has supplied nothing. Again, I can only assume that he was wrong.

I am pleased to inform the House that the school is fully operational.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. I said in the House that it was owned by a superannuation company. The minister was not in the chamber to hear it—usually she is never in the chamber!

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms BLIGH: There is nothing to prove the member for Beaudesert's scurrilous allegations against the teachers and staff who built the school.

I am pleased to advise the House that this school is fully operational with state of the art equipment and will be a great asset to the people of Flagstone. I was very impressed with the college's initiative to create a class parliament. The parliament will allow students to explore government and opposition roles and the order of business. Elections will be held this week for a range of positions, ranging from the sergeant at arms, to the speaker, to opposition positions. I met many students who had actually put their hand up for such elections. The student response has been very enthusiastic, with nearly one-third of the students nominating for parliamentary elections this week. If there is one piece of advice I could offer them, it is not to use the member for Beaudesert as a role model.

Victims of Crimes by Mentally Ill Persons

Miss SIMPSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. Nearly two years ago, the minister and the Premier voted against victims of crimes of the mentally ill being given the right to be notified if their attacker escaped. In defence of her intransigence, she said, 'It could lead to unnecessary concern and distress.' There are victims of crimes and their families listening today who have been notified by the media days after offenders have absconded, rather than being told promptly by health authorities. This, minister, is far more distressing. I ask: does the minister still believe that the victims of crimes of the mentally ill should not have the same rights to be notified as other victims?

Mrs EDMOND: I understand that the opposition member has been wandering around the state making claims that under the new act we do not allow victims notification of movements by mentally ill forensic patients. I urge the honourable member to have another look at the new act, because it does allow for people to register an interest. If those people have a genuine and real interest, such as victims or members of a person's family, I am sure that will be considered.

The act that we are currently acting under, and are obliged to act under—the current act in force—goes back to 1974. It made absolutely no provisions for any consideration of the effect on victims of people with a mental illness. It is a very difficult area. I can understand that, when this became an issue of some concern in 1997, the easiest thing—

Miss SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order. The minister has clearly misled the parliament. That provision is not in the new Mental Health Act. The minister is telling a mistruth to the parliament and should correct the record.

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

Mrs EDMOND: Mr Speaker, I beg to differ. It is in the act. It is not mandatory. The reason it is not mandated that everyone be notified is that many people informed us as part of the consultation that they wanted to get on with their lives and did not want to be informed 10 years down the track that somebody had been released from a mental hospital. They wanted to get on with their lives and put it behind them. So it is not mandatory. Obviously, the member does not understand.

To go back to 1997 when these issues came to a head under the previous minister—that was the time when these things could have been amended by the opposition at its will. But, no, it was too hard. The minister could not make a decision so he put it in the bottom drawer for me to deal with when I became minister, and deal with it I did. There were no provisions whatsoever in the drafts of the Mental Health Bill that I inherited to give victims of people with a mental illness any rights whatsoever. All of the provisions dealing with the impact on victims and their rights were introduced by me as a result of community consultation. The member for Maroochydore can try to disrupt parliament as much as she likes. When given the opportunity to do something, they did nothing. It was too hard. They put it in the bottom drawer and hoped that somebody with a bit of nous, ability and understanding would deal with it. They have.

Regional Child Health Care

Mr PEARCE: I refer the Minister for Health to the fact that in the last budget the Beattie Labor government promised to make children's health a priority, and I ask: what is being done for children in the central highlands area?

Mrs EDMOND: The Beattie government did commit to providing the best possible health care for children not just in Brisbane but also in rural areas. I know the member will be delighted to hear the new initiatives that we are announcing, because they relate to his area and those close to it.

I am pleased to inform the House that children of the central highlands and surrounding areas will soon be able to access paediatric health care closer to home. A new paediatric medical service will be delivered from the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane and will be based at the Emerald Hospital. Four clinics will operate throughout the year providing general paediatric consultation to both public and private patients.

The service will complement the existing paediatric surgical clinic also provided quarterly by the children's hospital. As minister, I often speak of the government's commitment to providing services as close as possible to where people live, and families of the central highlands and surrounding areas will now be able to receive specialist medical care for their children without the stress of having to travel too far from home.

The service will be staffed by an experienced general paediatrician from the Royal Children's Hospital, who will provide consultation to children within Emerald Hospital and also to children on an outpatients basis. The initiative has been developed in cooperation with the Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practice to improve the integration of Queensland Health and local GP services.

This enhanced level of service provided by Queensland Health will provide widespread benefits for the whole central highlands community. Because we are the Smart State the service will be further supported by the telemedicine program at the Royal Children's Hospital. Through the use of this technology, families can have access to a specialist or subspecialist paediatrician located at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane without having to go any further than Emerald Hospital. Queensland is a world leader in telemedicine technology, delivering health services and second opinions to more than 180 sites across the state.

But there is more good news. Dr Lisa Kane will next month start as Queensland's first flying paediatrician based in Roma. Initially, she will provide services to the Charleville, Roma, central west, central highlands and Moranbah health service districts. This is a first for Queensland, Australia and, I believe, the world. It shows also what a close working relationship I and Queensland Health have with local GPs and the divisions of GPs.

I draw people's attention to the fact that Michael Wooldridge, the former minister, has taken a sinecure with the Royal Australian College of GPs—after giving them \$5 million to bankroll the position—to lobby the minister. GPs in Queensland have easy access to me. They do not need to pay anyone to lobby. I have a liaison group that works closely with them and the rural doctors. I also have regular meetings with them.

2,4,5-T

Mrs PRATT: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries to serious allegations of the use of the herbicide 2,4,5-T in the Yarraman forestry region, and I ask: will he confirm whether the herbicide 2,4,5-T was or is being used in the Yarraman area currently and under what trade name was it or is it being used; when was it first recognised that former forestry workers suffered symptoms that could be associated with poisoning from the herbicide; is there any indication whether children at the Upper Yarraman State School were exposed to the herbicide; and were the dioxin levels within the recommended limits?

Mr PALASZCZUK: I will start by referring the honourable member to the following facts. There are allegations that under the Gorton and McMahon federal governments a heat-damaged batch of 2,4,5-T was imported from Singapore between 1969 and 1971. 2,4,5-T was a commonly used herbicide around the world at that time. It is alleged that under conservative governments in Western Australia and Queensland an imported batch of heat-damaged herbicide was used in both states. The allegations that heat-damaged herbicide was imported and used in Australia were first raised 21 years ago and presented to the then Fraser government. I understand that the allegations were raised in the early 1980s by Professor Ben Selinger of the Australian National University.

These allegations regarding a batch of heat-damaged herbicide were aired last month, and concerns have been raised about the potential use of this particular batch allegedly imported into Australia and used in state forests. The Queensland government takes these concerns very seriously. The Department of Primary Industries has been undertaking a thorough search of its documents to find any material from that time that may shed light on the concerns raised. I am advised that no documentation that confirmed the particular batch was used in state forests has been found. However, the work of checking records still continues.

However, it should be understood that the chemicals allegedly imported were apparently mislabelled. Therefore, it was important that the Department of Primary Industries wrote to the Australian Customs Service, Professor Selinger and Mrs Jean Williams, who also indicated that she may hold information. The DPI has asked people that, if they have any information, particularly specific details relating to batches imported into Australia, to pass on that information to the Department of Primary Industries. I understand that, whilst initial information has been received, it offers nothing that can shed further light on our inquiries. However, the department will also be seeking further information from the Australian Customs Service.

The issue is whether the heat-damaged batch of the chemical was imported into Australia and, if so, as it is alleged, it would have had to have gone through federal government controls and checks. If the honourable member has any information, just as the Department of Primary Industries has suggested to any other organisation and people concerned, she should pass on that information so that the Department of Primary Industries can undertake further evaluations, tests, investigations and also negotiations with the Customs Service in Australia. As minister, yesterday I wrote a letter on this issue to the responsible federal government minister.

Apprenticeships

Ms BARRY: I refer the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing to his announcement late last year of a further intake of apprentices by Q-Build for 2002, and I ask: can the minister advise of progress on the selection of the apprentices?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for the question at this very important time, when 90 young Queenslanders stand at the threshold of a career in the building industry thanks to this government's maintenance and operations branch of the Department of Public Works' Q-Build. The 90 apprentices consist of 80 full-time and 10 school based apprentices. As members would be aware, the 10 school based apprentices have the luxury of going to school, going to TAFE and working in Q-Build all in a school week. When they finish school, they go straight into an apprenticeship and accordingly find their way into a trade that way. I believe that is

the way that trades will head in the future. Certainly schools in Queensland, particularly our state schools, are embracing that particular concept. The 80 full-time apprentices will be spread throughout the state.

Just a fortnight ago I was in the Torres Strait and met one of our refrigeration apprentices in Bamaga and a number of other carpentry apprentices whom we have in the Torres Strait. They are doing an excellent job there. It brought home to me just how important it is that we, as a government, have embraced the notion of apprenticeships through Q-Build so that people in those parts of Queensland have an opportunity to get a trade. The 80 full-time apprentices will start work in the next month, and interviews and discussions with the 10 school based apprentices are taking place with school counsellors at this point in time. There were 2,200 applications for apprenticeships. This level of demand shows that trades are far from dead as career options for young people in Queensland or, indeed, anywhere in Australia. Unfortunately, we were able to offer only 90 apprenticeships to those 2,200 applicants, but it shows that there is still a strong interest.

While I am on the subject of apprentices, I should say that a block at the new Maryborough prison will be opened next week by my colleague and friend the member for Mount Isa. The prison used 50 apprentices—some from Q-Build—as part and parcel of that new construction. It was an excellent opportunity for Q-Build apprentices. I congratulate the minister's department and Walter Constructions for embracing that concept. It proves that private enterprise and state government enterprise can work together in the building industry to provide real outcomes. If the Queensland government was not training apprentices I do not know who would be in this state. We are certainly the biggest employer and trainer of apprentices, and we have an excellent record in people finishing their apprenticeships and going into a trade. It is something like a 95 per cent completion rate. The range and diversity of work offered throughout the state is shared by no other trainer in Queensland.

School Airconditioning

Mr LINGARD: I refer the Minister for Education to an ABC interview in Townsville last week with the Labor member for Thuringowa in which she attacked this government's broken promise to fund 80 per cent of airconditioning costs for north Queensland schools, and I ask: does the minister agree with Anita Phillips, who said—

One of my schools put an application in in March 2000 and they're one of 73 schools that might be airconditioned next year. It's just not good enough.

Will the minister now stop hiding from this growing problem and agree to release the full list of schools that have raised the necessary money under the Cooler Schools Program yet are still waiting for the minister to provide the funds as promised?

Ms BLIGH: I am very aware that at this time of year many schools are experiencing a great deal of heat in their classrooms. I can appreciate the concerns of parents and, indeed, local members about the experience that children are having in our schools. Members would be aware that our government had a very clear election commitment to begin a much more rigorous program of airconditioning our schools. When we came to government we inherited a system that had been developed by the previous government and which put the airconditioning of schools beyond the financial reach of almost every P&C in this state. So their scheme was undersubscribed. It was so expensive that hardly anybody could do it. We promised that we would put in more money, reduce the P&C contribution to a one in four ratio so that it was affordable, and expand the zone. We have met every single one of those election commitments and provided extensive airconditioning into literally hundreds of classrooms. I believe that is an achievement of which our government can be very proud.

Having said that, I can certainly appreciate that there are many schools that would like to see it go further. I have had some discussions with both the facilities area of my department and a number of our local members who have raised concerns with me—or my office has spoken to them—and said that we will do everything we can to make sure that the implementation of the phase 3 schools will be done as quickly as possible, and many of them will have their airconditioning in place by this time next year. All schools that are currently eligible for round 3 funding will be completed by the end of the 2003 financial year, that is, June 2003.

It is not surprising to me that those P&Cs that have raised the funds would develop an expectation that they could be immediately part of the program. It is up to responsible members to understand that the oversubscription and enthusiasm for what has been a much more

accessible program under Labor would generate some of those expectations. I look forward to meeting the expectations of P&Cs as quickly as I can, but I can say right now that this government has much to be proud of in the airconditioning of schools. We made this program accessible. We have delivered it to hundreds of classrooms. We will deliver it to many more classrooms—unlike the fake system that we inherited.

Careers in Science

Mr McNAMARA: I ask the Minister for Innovation and Information Economy: what is this government doing to promote science as a career to school students?

Mr LUCAS: We are living in exciting times when it comes to science. In the Smart State, the possibilities for a career in science are endless. When I talk to students, I am always reminding them to look at what is happening in laboratories around Queensland to see the wonderful things they can be a part of. Better to be the person who designs the drugs than the person who prescribes them.

Four hundred and twenty Queensland year 10 students from across the south-east and as far north as Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Whitsunday and Charters Towers gave up three days of their school holidays to take part in the Siemens Science Experience to promote science as a career. In fact, the member for Hervey Bay was pleased to see 12 students from his electorate, from Fraser Coast Anglican College and Urangan State High School, take part in the program. In the three days students met scientific researchers, heard speeches on research topics and took part in hands-on lab work. My department sponsored an innovation workshop, which taught students how to create and commercialise an idea. In this workshop, students had to form a company and design a structure from straws and paddle-pop sticks that would hold a can of soft drink 30 centimetres above the ground for more than one minute. They then had to protect the intellectual property and market that product. I am tabling a list of the students from across Queensland who won prizes in this workshop.

The enthusiasm for this project proves that science is not just for geeks. The Beattie government has many programs designed to promote science as a career in schools. Queensland is regarded as a biotech hub, and it is a rare day when you cannot pick up a newspaper and read that for yourself. We all need to remind our children of the work Queensland scientists do and that they should consider a career in science. Look at the University of Queensland, where the company Xenome is using venom from poisonous cone shells from the Great Barrier Reef to develop new pain relief drugs; or Griffith University, where Professor Mark Von Itzstein heads the Centre for Biomolecular Science and Drug Discovery, where they discovered the antinflu drug Relenza; or QUT, where the Cooperative Research Centre into Satellite Technology is helping build FedSat, Australia's first research satellite in 30 years. In the private sector there are companies like Progen, which is conducting human clinical trials for an anticancer drug on melanoma patients in the US and last month began trials on bone marrow cancer patients in Melbourne.

I am pleased to report that the three-day science experience will continue in regional Queensland this year. Already the Smart State is making scientific breakthroughs and innovations, but it is our young Queenslanders who are our hope, who are the next generation of scientists and innovators that will help shape this Smart State's future.

Unemployment

Mr QUINN: I refer the Minister for Employment to the Premier's admission on Friday night that he would not now be able to achieve his five per cent jobless target by June next year—five years after he first gave Queenslanders that commitment. I also refer the minister to the Premier's election pledge just one year ago when he recommitted to the jobs target, and I ask: as the Minister for Employment, when did he first advise the Premier that the five per cent jobs target would not be achievable? And can he now advise the House, given that he has ruled out a rate of five per cent, what level of unemployment he does anticipate achieving by June 2003?

Mr FOLEY: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is a question that is one or two years out of date, because the Premier and indeed the Deputy Premier and Treasurer—

Mr Mackenroth: If the Leader of the Opposition had asked it, it would have been 100 years out of date.

Mr FOLEY: Quite so. Let us look at the facts. What can governments do in relation to the scourge of unemployment that is a blight on our nation? They can do two things. They can seek to create a climate which generates jobs and they can seek to care for those who are disadvantaged in the job market. What has this government done? We have produced the strongest jobs growth in Australia. Since August 2001 Queensland has shown stronger annual employment growth than the Australian average. In fact, at 1.9 per cent, employment is now growing faster in Queensland than anywhere else in Australia and more than the national average of 1.2 per cent. Unemployment is not at the disgraceful level of 9.5 per cent, which it was under the coalition. In February and March 1997 we saw the unemployment rate hit 9.5 per cent. Let us not dwell in the past.

Governments have a duty to do what they can to generate jobs. They also have a duty to care for the disadvantaged. The difference between a Labor government and the coalition or National Party government is that we believe in intervening in the job market to help the disadvantaged—to do something positive for the long-term unemployed, for young people and for the mature-age unemployed.

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr FOLEY: As the Minister for Transport points out, shamefully the previous coalition government did not even have a minister for employment. It did not because it adhered to the laissez faire philosophy of leaving it to the marketplace and hoping for the best. This government was elected on a different platform, and we mean to honour that platform. We were elected on a platform of introducing a program to break the unemployment cycle. That is why we have moved to assist the long-term unemployed, to assist young people and to assist mature-age people through the Community Jobs Plan and through the Community Employment Assistance Program.

We make no pretence about the fact that the challenge is a great one. The Premier, the Treasurer and I have never sought to gild the lily in this regard. We face up to the fact that this is the single greatest challenge facing our society, and we are applying the resources of government to combat it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I welcome to the public gallery a second group of students from the Ashgrove State School in the electorate of Ashgrove.

South East Transit Project

Ms STONE: I refer the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to the outstanding success of the South East Transit Project. I ask him to inform the House what steps the government is taking to enhance public transport services, especially for the residents and businesses of my electorate of Springwood.

Mr BREDHAUER: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am pleased to inform the House that construction of the new Springwood bus interchange will commence by the end of this month. Thiess Contractors has been appointed to construct the Springwood bus station, which will be open to services in mid-2003. The station will be located between the Pacific Motorway and Fitzgerald Boulevard. The station includes three bus platforms, a kiss-and-ride set-down area, a 40-space park-and-ride facility, arrival plaza, lift and stair access, weather protection, state-of-the-art intelligent transport and security systems and a pedestrian overpass linking the interchange with the nearby shopping and business precinct.

As part of the construction, a new Pacific Motorway off-ramp will be constructed to make access to the Springwood business district easier for all traffic. The decision to alter the Pacific Motorway access and exit routes was made after considerable consultation with businesses in the area. This will benefit residents and business owners in the area, as it allows motorists and potential shoppers safe and easy access to the many businesses that line the service road next to the motorway.

The Springwood bus station will provide a vital connector for cross-town services in the Logan area as well as an ideal link with the popular and highly successful South East Busway. I expect to see a significant improvement in busway services with the construction of the Springwood bus interchange. Existing services will continue as normal but will use the station as a central interchange point. From there they can continue on cross-town runs or connect with the Pacific Motorway and South East Busway into the city. This new public transport facility will provide much needed benefits to the people of Logan.

Twelve months ago on Sunday the member for Springwood was elected to this parliament. She joined a very strong band of representatives from the Logan area, who have worked very hard with me on improvements to public transport services for the people of the Logan area. We have worked hard through the Community Renewal Program, for example, in the Woodridge area. There have been improvements to public transport services there. The member has been regularly lobbying me about the transport and roads requirements of people in Springwood in particular but in the Logan area in general. We have a very strong working relationship with the members in that area which is delivering these significant public transport benefits, such as the Springwood bus interchange, to the people of Springwood and the people of Logan City.

Drought Relief, Darling Downs

Mr HOBBS: My question is directed to the Premier. I acknowledge the appropriate and timely natural disaster declaration of the north Queensland region affected by flooding. I also refer to the farmers on parts of the western and northern downs who have lost the last three or four crops and are now facing ruin by this ongoing and similar natural disaster. These are good farmers who win landcare awards for their initiatives and efficiencies but have been unable to grow crops. Would the Premier be prepared to meet with this devastated community and provide the help and support needed to put in place a recovery plan?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. I understand his genuineness in dealing with people he represents. As the member knows, there are relief programs involving both the Commonwealth government and the state government. As he would be aware, many of these programs for disasters are joint programs of the Commonwealth and the state. He knows that the way the schemes work is that once a certain level of damage is reached then Commonwealth funds are applied, particularly if there is something significant.

In terms of drought relief for the Darling Downs—this is an area that I know the Leader of the Opposition and the member have expressed some interest in—on 22 August 2001 the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Warren Truss, announced that exceptional circumstances drought assistance would be provided to the following eastern Darling Downs shires: Cambooya, Chinchilla, Clifton, Jondaryan, Millmerran, Pittsworth, the Rosalie shire west of the great dividing range, Toowoomba, Wambo, Warwick and the eastern portions of the Tara and Murilla shires. This announcement was in response to an application for assistance recognising drought conditions that the Darling Downs had experienced for the period February 2000 to July 2001. This declaration enables eligible producers to apply for interest subsidies on loans, exceptional circumstances relief payment for welfare, health care cards and youth allowance. The provision of this assistance is of benefit not only to the producers but also to the local communities in which the money is spent.

The Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities wrote to federal minister Truss seeking an extension to the declared area to include additional portions of Murilla and Taroom shires. The federal minister declined the request for an extension to the declared area on 24 December last year. We would like to see it extended. I hope the member would join with me in asking Warren Truss if he would in fact extend that declared area because, frankly, we believe they are areas in need.

In terms of meeting with people, I am always happy to do that. Obviously I cannot meet everyone who wants to see me. The Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities, the Minister for Natural Resources or I, or a combination of ministers or our staff, will be happy to meet with them.

Mr Mackenroth: We just went there two weeks ago to meet them.

Mr BEATTIE: As the Deputy Premier reminded me, we were in Stanthorpe for a community cabinet meeting only last Sunday week. We did meet with a range of people there. I suggest to the member that he makes a direct approach to the Minister for Primary Industries. I give the member the undertaking that a minister—Henry, Stephen or me, or at least my staff—will be there to meet them. Hopefully we can resolve these issues.

The member knows that there are a number of federal schemes. Warren Truss is a Queenslander. We need to ensure that he puts his money where his mouth is and that we extend those areas. We will work with them. In terms of north Queensland we have always had a program. The Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland comes from north Queensland. Unfortunately he is in hospital at the moment. He will be back on duty next week, having

recovered, and we will work with them. We will meet with anyone the member wants to facilitate a meeting with in this area.

Holloways Beach Police Beat

Ms BOYLE: My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, who was in Cairns recently for the official opening of the Holloways Beach police beat. Will the minister inform the parliament what benefits this new facility will offer to the local community?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for Cairns for the question. When in Cairns last week I took the opportunity of being shown an area on the Esplanade where we are going to have another police beat in the very near future. We finalised arrangements with the mayor of Cairns and we will be providing five police officers and a car for that particular police beat. Coming back to the other reason I was in Cairns, I was there to officially open the Holloways Beach police beat. There are now 22 police beats around Queensland and six shopfronts, part of the promises which my colleague the now Minister for State Development made some time ago. However, the question asked was this: what are the benefits of police beats? I will tell the House what the benefits of police beats are. A constable or sergeant, his wife, his kids and even the dog actually live in the community. This is what community policing is all about, because the police officer gets to know who the local people are.

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

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Beattie Government Performance

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 a.m.): As we move into the second year of this term of the Beattie government we have heard the Premier gloating about his so-called achievements. However, it is time to reflect on all that has happened in the past 12 months and the disastrous position that the Premier has put this state into, particularly when it comes to unemployment and the finances of this state. Over the past 12 months there has been an appalling record of incompetence, mismanagement and non-delivery of services to the people of Queensland. We are starting to see a record of broken promises and a government which has no plan. It is a government that is about stunts, slogans and propaganda but does not have any medium to long-term plans, particularly a plan to fix the employment problems of this state.

If there is one thing that a government can be measured on it is the employment prospects and opportunities it provides to the people of the state, particularly to young people and people who live in regional Queensland. The appalling and disgraceful record of the Beattie Labor government is such that for the past 17 months this government has had Queensland come stone motherless last in unemployment figures for Australia. There can be no greater testament to the lack of vision and the lack of purpose for the future than that appalling record. What is wrong with the planning in Queensland by this government? What is it doing so wrong that Queensland comes consistently last? Why are the other states consistently beating Queensland? Do they have a better plan? Do they have a better vision? Are they able to provide more jobs for young people? What has gone wrong in this state? With all of our tourism opportunities, our agriculture and mining exports and our natural resources, what has gone wrong in this state that we fail month after month after month to lift this state from last place in the unemployment stakes in Australia?

Budget management is another important issue and a benchmark of any government. In June this year the government's own economic forecasters predicted a \$24 million operating surplus in its budget. However, in the half yearly economic review a \$148 million deficit is proposed. Last financial year there was an \$820 million budget deficit. So there was an \$820 million deficit when the government forecast a surplus. Again this year a surplus was forecast, but that has now been revised to a \$148 million deficit. This \$148 million deficit comes despite the fact that there has been a \$269 million windfall in stamp duties from the recent housing boom. Even with a windfall like that, this government, which is spending like a drunken sailor on projects with a lesser priority than other projects, is going to be in the red. Growth forecasts have been downgraded by half a per cent. So we are looking at downgraded growth, another budget deficit for the second year in a row and the worst unemployment figures in Australia. That all adds up to a trend that should concern everyone in this state.

Let us look further at this government spending like a drunken sailor. Everyone in this state will always remember the footbridge. It is very handy and convenient for many joggers who use it, but it has cost some \$29 million. The footbridge was originally going to cost \$13 million. This parliament was then told that the full and final cost was some \$23 million. Then on the Friday night before Christmas, the Premier dropped it to one selected media outlet that it cost \$29 million. So it went from \$13 million to \$29 million. In the true tradition of this government—the secret state traditions of this government and the way it tries to hide things—the price increased to \$29 million and it let it out last thing on the Friday night before Christmas. The people of this state will not forget how much money was wasted on the footbridge. The kids around Queensland who need airconditioning in their schools, the kids who need seatbelts in their buses and the people in hospitals with insufficient health budgets will see the waste of money that went into the footbridge as a sign which has epitomised massive spending in some parts of this state to the detriment of other parts, particularly the regional areas of Queensland.

This government has a sad and sorry record when it comes to freedom of information. It has done everything possible to close up shop, to keep the secret state going and to stop the media, the opposition or members of the public from getting the information they rightly should have access to under the modern government systems that now apply. It was a disgrace to see time-based charging applied. It was a disgrace to see this government put in place every little hurdle and barrier it could to stop people accessing freedom of information services, because this government wants to go on its way with unbridled power and a massive majority with an arrogance to do what it likes. It uses people as dirty doormats and walks over the top of everybody. It stops local councillors from standing for election, stops people from accessing FOI and spends money where it wants. It wants to be free from criticism, free from examination and free from accountability.

I now want to discuss a couple of other matters which show how this government has continually provided broken promises in this state. In relation to petrol prices, the Premier promised a royal commission into petrol prices. He said that if prices are found to be unfair after 18 months—and that deadline was last December—he would look to have a royal commission. But, no, there has been no royal commission and no answers for Queensland motorists. Rather, there are mad fluctuations of prices before public holidays or long weekends. There are huge variations in prices between towns 20 or 40 kilometres away, while service station operators have to purchase their fuel at a price above what other operators are able to sell their fuel for. Something is going seriously wrong in the fuel industry. Small business operators are not being given a fair go to make a reasonable profit. Motorists have to put up with wild fluctuations of petrol prices. Because the problem is too hard, the Premier has broken a promise. Before the last election all we heard about was petrol, petrol, petrol. Once the Premier won the election with his big arrogant majority, petrol went out the back door. He does not care. It is too hard. It was just a stunt.

In relation to shopping hours, when will we finally get a government that will stand up for Queensland families with small businesses? These are people who put their hand in their pocket, mortgage themselves and work hard seven days a week to provide a seven-day-a-week convenience to the public. They are now going to be overtaken because the big majors are allowed to trade on Sundays and will take 20 per cent of business from these small operators. In the three weekends before Christmas each year when the big majors are allowed to operate on Sundays those smaller stores, particularly food stores, lose some 20 per cent of their business. When permanent Sunday trading commences, that means that smaller businesses will employ fewer staff because they will try to handle it by using family labour and, as a result, they will work longer and longer hours.

Small business is the backbone of our communities. Members should look at their own towns and suburbs and consider the families that run small businesses. In many instances those small businesses support the local service clubs, show societies and sports clubs. They are part of the town. If they make a surplus for the year, their surplus stays in the town or the suburb. Those opposite should take that into consideration and should look at why they are ratting on small business, why they are ratting on Queensland families and why they are ratting on one of the greatest systems we have—that is, that one day people can aspire to own a business which provides a reasonable surplus which enables them to employ people, to support their family and to build up their business.

All that this will mean is that the great white sharks will come in and take another big chunk out of small business. The big majors want the grocery trade, the fruit trade, the butcher trade,

the service stations, the white goods, the clothes—they want the lot. The government is going to aid and abet them and it is going to stab in the back and desert small business operators. Our small businesses in this state have resulted in Queensland being a vibrant and strong state. Now the government is going to desert them as it extends seven day trading to the big majors.

The Cooler Schools Program is probably the greatest broken promise of all. Schools such as those at Mission Beach, Proserpine and the high school in Townsville all raised money on the basis of the promise made by the Premier and the government that if they raised 20 per cent their school rooms would be airconditioned. But now the government has reneged on that promise. No wonder these people are up in arms.

In relation to seat belts on school buses, all we saw was the red herring of the trial that the government has brought in. It provides for a speed limit of 30 kilometres per hour around schools 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That is one of the most impractical rules ever brought in. If the 40 kilometres per hour speed limit around schools was abided by and policed it would ensure the safety of our children in a set period of time when the children are actually at school, rather than the 30 kilometres per hour speed limit trial, which will still apply on Christmas Day and Sundays. That limit will be in force 24 hours a day, including at times when no-one is at the school or even near the school.

Time expired.

Toowoomba North Electorate

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (11.41 a.m.): At my first opportunity to speak in the House since my bypass operation on 12 November last year I would like to speak briefly about that and also a few other matters that occurred within my electorate, some of which were tragic—a plane crash, and the occurrences at the Toowoomba prep school, if time permits—and the good news of the fibre composites project coming to Toowoomba.

I underwent my operation at St Andrews War Memorial Hospital. My sincere thanks go to the skilled surgeons Dr Peter Tesar and Dr Peter Lavercombe and the staff generally at St Andrews Hospital. I would also like to express my thanks to my GP and a former member for Toowoomba North, John Flynn, for the assistance that he gave me and continues to give me.

I have been overwhelmed by the messages of support, prayers, well wishes, cards and flowers sent by so many people. I thank all honourable members, including the Parliamentary Library staff, for their expressions of support. I would particularly like to express my appreciation to the Premier for all that he did for me during my absence and recuperation and for his kind mention of me in his ministerial statement and end of year message. In that regard I would like to express my thanks to the Leader of the Opposition for his like comments and also my thanks to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Johnson, for a very warm letter of support, which I appreciated greatly.

I am happy to relate that I was able to recover at home quite quickly with the help of my sister, a former nurse, Margaret Silva. I was also able within a short period of time—within two weeks—to commence some very limited duties within my electorate, including the opening of the state rose garden, mainly to support the work done by Councillor Regina Albion of Toowoomba.

I would also like to acknowledge the great assistance given by the honourable member for Logan, John Mickel, who to a large degree looked after my electorate office during my absence. It was sterling assistance, as was the assistance given by the Premier's staff, particularly Steve Keating and Richard Cleal. Steve is an ongoing source of great assistance to my staff and to me. The Primary Industries Minister, Henry Palaszczuk, and his staff also deserve particular mention. My electorate office was well looked after by my electorate officer, Gwen Liesch, and her assistants, Devina Smith and Mary-Kate Khoo, to whom I am eternally grateful.

Currently I am undergoing a rehabilitation course at St Andrews Hospital in North Street, Toowoomba under the auspices of Drs Jim Blaikie and Len Knott and physiotherapists Ans van Erp, Annette Scott and Tracey Franssen and coordinator Robyn Jackson. It is a marvellous course and I am happy to mention it here.

On a very sad note, one of the duties for which I broke my convalescence was to attend the honouring service for the three mental health workers and the pilot who died in a plane crash in Toowoomba on 27 November. Those killed were Allen Hughes, Katherine Thompson, Alan Duckett and the pilot, Bruce Johnson. In a sense I was happy to be able to attend that service with the minister, the Hon. Wendy Edmond, the director-general and Mike Horan, my co-member

for Toowoomba, at St Theresa's Church. The tragedy underlines the need to re-examine the adequacy of the Toowoomba airport. There have been at least six fatalities there over the last 10 years. I bring that to the attention of the government, particularly the Minister for Transport. One of the points about the Toowoomba airport is that, for example, the government jet cannot land there. In fact, the Premier has to land at Oakey and travel to Toowoomba by car.

Time is running out and I would like to indicate that I will make some comments about the prep school later in the day.

The fibre composites announcement is a \$10 million project setting up a centre of excellence at the USQ. This will provide for Toowoomba a brand-new type of industry. Toowoomba has been known as a rural service centre, a racing centre, an education centre and a processing centre. Now it will be provided with a 21st century, bold, exciting and innovative industry for our city. It will be of great significance for the future.

Dr Hilda des Arts

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (11.46 a.m.): On Sunday Dr Hilda des Arts died in Ipswich at the age of 86. Hilda led a wonderful life and made an extraordinary contribution to our community. On behalf of the people of Ipswich and the many members of this parliament I wish to record that contribution.

Hilda was born to German and English parents in 1915 during the Anglo-German war. As a child of both countries and both cultures, Hilda grew up to understand the animosity that a failure to understand and communicate can bring. Hilda's life was committed to sharing the spirit of humanity.

Unusually for a woman of her time, Hilda went to university and completed a PhD. She entered business, starting a printing company that eventually employed 300 people and she raised two daughters on her own. Midway through her life Hilda moved to Ireland, where she ran a hotel. In 1978 upon retiring from formal work, Hilda decided to move to Australia and chose Ipswich without ever having been there because she thought it would be a city with a strong community spirit. Her next career, she had decided, would be working in the community.

As a resident of Ipswich, Hilda made a driving contribution to a number of organisations. Before she came to us, Hilda had had the tragic experience of watching her daughter die in her early 20s. Hilda was distressed that hospital was not an appropriate place for a young person to die and she became committed to the idea of hospices for palliative care. In Ipswich in the early 1980s Hilda banded together with a number of other local people and established the first steering committee for the establishment of Ipswich Hospice Care. While the process was an extremely long one, the hospice is now an established haven in which six people at any one time can receive palliative care in a peaceful environment.

In the last decade Hilda had established Senior Net in Ipswich and, as the movement expanded, became its national president. Senior Net brings older people together, giving them the skills and support to use the Internet and, hence, to be part of the modern world. The organisation lists among its objectives bridging the generation gap between seniors and computer literate youth and being part of the present, not just clinging to the past. As part of her role promoting Senior Net, Hilda spoke to almost a dozen organisations and travelled as far as Perth last year. Hilda was a founding member of Youth Serving Australia, a counsellor with Lifeline and was closely involved with the Aboriginal youth organisation Teen Care. She was committed to bringing people together and breaking down social barriers, particularly the generation gap. She was a proud old person and lived in old age well. She fervently believed that there is a place in society for older people to contribute and that it is up to older people as much as it is up to society more broadly to create that place.

Hilda once said to me that she had no desire to be young again, only to be old well. Hilda made an immeasurable contribution to the Ipswich community and her death on Sunday has left a gap not just in our organisations but in our community spirit.

I was one of the many people who counted Hilda among their personal friends and that has been one of the privileges of my life. She had tremendous faith in me and encouraged me to contribute, to believe that good can be done and to be true to myself. Hilda showed a wonderful lesson that it is possible to contribute throughout life and taught me to look forward to, rather than dread, getting old. Hilda had been ill since before Christmas and she had sometimes been in serious pain. I feel that Hilda was ready to go and I wish her well on her journey.

Change in Electoral Representation

Mr FLYNN (Lockyer—ONP) (11.50 a.m.): If there is anything good you can say about the state Labor Party—and I do say some things—it is that it seems to engender more loyalty in its ranks. Although it is common knowledge that the bottom-line political philosophy of the Independents and that of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party is that all three major parties are out of touch, I am nonetheless surprised that the better people in the Nationals allowed such a move to their ranks by a person who quite aggressively fought an election with all three major parties in his sights. I ask them: can they trust such actions—and I hope that the member is listening—of a person or persons who ruthlessly betrayed the people who put them in office? I say: do not forget that, if you entertain the leftovers, it will come back and haunt you when the people speak again.

I recall frequent emotional addresses in this place about how precious it was to be independent, about how the major parties had lost the plot and moved away from the beliefs of their traditional supporters. It is perhaps a little different from moving from a party to being an Independent as party bureaucracies can be restrictive. In my party, we have had recent bitter experience of such party hopping, and we paid for it. Nevertheless, in a modest way, we have come back. Never again will this group suffer the indignity of political betrayal for personal interest.

I believe that this House must seriously examine the issue of the integrity of members deceiving the voter with their political values. In this case we had someone whom I trusted and considered a friend, whom the voters trusted, and who fought the election against the party to which he now belongs. If I were the National Party candidate who lost to him in the seat of Darling Downs, I would be extraordinarily angry at such actions. How can the electorate of Darling Downs rely upon a man who used to support the Nationals, if indeed he was not a member, then flirt with One Nation—as he did—then stand as an Independent, and then one-third of the way through his term hop across to the Nationals? I ask the member: was it because of a promise of a shadow ministry? He is but a shadow of his former self. To the Leader of the Opposition, I say that in one move he has truncated the political career of a man whom I consider to be a friend, whose motives and visions were pure, but now have been dashed because he will never get re-elected, if indeed he is preselected.

Whilst it is entirely possible that the party to which one belongs might betray the principles upon which it is supported, these events are generally a matter of a gradual process, not a quantum leap of faith after 12 months. In this regard, I point the finger, too, at the government for its recent lack of support for the union movement, then at the Nationals and the Liberals for their lack of loyalty to anything previously held dear. My colleagues and I may be new to this place but we have all learned the lesson of loyalty. In this instance, loyalty applies to one's adherence to the faith and the beliefs of the people who elected us.

There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever that most of us are elected because of the party to which we belong. To that end, if it had not been for Pauline Hanson and her supporters, I would not be here. If a member changes their political principles and departs significantly from their party tenets, or indeed changes their political allegiances mid-term, I believe that it is incumbent upon that particular member to return to the electorate to seek re-endorsement under new colours at their own expense. Only then can we dissuade the actions that we have witnessed.

I consider myself very fortunate in this parliament that I am now supported in my role as parliamentary leader by two women whose integrity is beyond doubt and whose devotion to party tenets has now been demonstrated. Thank God for integrity. It is a principle that other parties could develop.

I close by reminding this House that the future of this state parliament rests upon the perception of its reliability and integrity. Members would do well to consider this option before their own political survival. I have seen numerous newspaper articles, one of which was mentioned by the Premier this morning, about the state of the National Party. I ask the member for Darling Downs: has he taken a career downward path or up?

Reef Protection

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (11.54 a.m.): The Great Barrier Reef may well be Queensland's most valuable asset. The existence of the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef is not just a source of remarkable beauty; it also underpins the employment of thousands of people up and down the coast of Queensland. Each year more than two million people visit the reef, generating more than \$1 billion per annum in tourism dollars for the state.

Unfortunately, the reef is under threat on a number of fronts. One such threat to the reef, and in particular to the vulnerable fringing reefs that surround offshore islands, is that caused by the dropping of anchors onto coral and the dragging of anchor chains across coral beds. With approximately 300 commercial charter vessels operating in the Whitsunday section of the Great Barrier Reef and a further 800 recreational vessels registered in the area, it does not take a mathematical genius to work out just how much damage can be caused over time through the simple act of anchoring onto the fragile coral bed.

Mr Strong: Beautiful!

Ms JARRATT: It is indeed a beautiful area. In the Whitsunday area, the majority of the islands are fringed with extensive coral reef systems. During the early 1990s, it became obvious that if something were not done to protect those areas of reef from damage caused by anchor dropping, they may not survive at all.

In an attempt to reduce the impact while maintaining public access, a reef protection program was initiated and coordinated by local Whitsunday Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service staff. The program commenced with public consultation—as all good plans do—in bay planning and volunteer diver involvement to carry out physical reef survey work. In essence, the program has seen the installation of a series of reef protection markers located at particular points within a bay or along a reef edge to delineate a no-anchoring area. Triangular-shaped floats are attached to a line that is set in the seabed using a core drilling technique. Vessels entering a bay or reef to anchor are guided by these markers as to where the fringing reef starts. This is usually around the 10 metre to 12 metre mark where reef edges are not easily seen. Thus anchoring over the reef is reduced ensuring minimal impact on the reef system by anchors, anchor chains and vessel groundings.

In addition to the placement of reef protection markers, a system of moorings has been installed to allow vessels to tie up near coral systems without the need to drop anchor. Whilst such moorings are not a new concept, it is the method of securing the moorings to the seabed that is new. Traditionally, large concrete blocks were used to hold mooring ropes in place. But this method did not eliminate the risk of concrete blocks being bounced across the seabed by a vessel of too great a size. The new method involves drilling a core into the reef bed and inserting a steel pin encased in concrete into the core. Ropes are then attached to the pin, thereby providing a stationary anchor position as well as eliminating the risk of chain drag.

This unique system of anchor point installation was first developed for use in the Whitsundays and has now been copied by other groups around the country and possibly internationally. It has proven itself to be an innovative solution to the problem of coral damage while at the same time catering to the needs of the public by providing over 60 environmentally friendly mooring buoys on the reef.

A recent inspection of areas where the system of reef protection markers and mooring buoys have been in use revealed a high rate of coral regeneration. This is good news for everyone, and I congratulate Artie Jacobsen and his team from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Whitsunday for having the foresight and persistence to initiate this groundbreaking program in the name of reef protection. But this is not the end of the story.

Mr Cummins: There's more!

Ms JARRATT: Indeed, there is more. The reef protection program is now poised to enter a new phase that will see local tourism operators in the Whitsundays become involved in a mutually beneficial partnership with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The plan involves establishing a system of mooring buoys dedicated to the exclusive use of commercial operators who would pay a fee in return for the service. This allows operators, particularly dive and snorkel boat operators, to have guaranteed access to a mooring at set times on given days. It is anticipated that a single mooring would be shared between several operators depending on individual needs. During times when the moorings are not being used by the dedicated operator, they revert to public usage. Fees collected would be put back into the program, thus expanding the potential for safe moorings while diminishing damage to the reef. At present, GBRMPA is designing policy that will allow moorings to be installed and agreements entered into consistent with the vision developed in the Whitsundays. I call on the state Minister for Environment to develop mirror legislation that will allow the maintenance of a cooperative partnership between the Commonwealth and the state with regard to advancing the reef protection program.

Time expired.

Public Liability Insurance; ANZ Bank Branch, Kinkora

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (11.59 a.m.): I rise to speak on two matters which have the potential to diminish services in my electorate and in other electorates—one of them quite substantially. It has already been touched on during question time and in the ministers' speeches, and it is public liability insurance.

I think many members have been approached by people from a wide range of organisations in their electorates about the potential effects of the proposed premium hikes. The premium increases are substantial. They are not doubling; they are quadrupling, and more. People from many groups have talked to me about their insurance premiums increasing from \$600 to \$6,000, and from \$800 to \$7,500. It is not only P&Cs and community events organisations but also sporting clubs, which provide a wide range of opportunities for junior sport and senior sport, that will be significantly affected.

The Clinton Sports Club, a major group in my electorate, was quoted \$20,000 for their insurance from one broker. A second broker quoted \$12,000 for public liability insurance for one year. Clubs will not and should not have to spend their entire year's fundraising merely to cover insurance costs. I visited the Gladstone Bowls Club yesterday and the ladies from the club told me that it may have to fold because of the hike in insurance premiums.

Most members have acknowledged the impact of the insurance premium hikes in our electorates. It should also be acknowledged that not only will it mean the cessation of those particular clubs but it will mean the reduction or removal from our community of a significant amount of socialising opportunities. It provides our older people with opportunities to come together and meet. If smaller clubs cannot afford to reinsure or do not proceed to reinsure due to the cost, it will leave an immense gap in the community that will be felt for many years to come. Governments certainly cannot be expected to afford to fulfil the provision of those services.

Gladstone City Council wrote to me and I will quote a section of that letter—

This council, amongst many others, is alarmed at the enormous increases in public liability insurance premiums, especially those affecting non-profit charitable and sporting groups. The whole community is being affected and I anticipate that Gladstone City Council's premium will increase by about 50 per cent for the next renewal period.

The council acknowledges that the issue of public liability insurance has been discussed at the highest levels of government and that various options are being investigated. The council wanted to add weight to the argument for a system to be put in place that gives certainty of premium levels. I support that position. The amount of services that will be withdrawn with the closure of a number of sporting clubs, bowls clubs, P&Cs, community event organisations and RSL clubs would be catastrophic as far as our communities are concerned.

I will touch on another area of service provision. One of the major banks in my city, the ANZ Bank, has made the ill-informed decision to close its Kinkora branch. In spite of significant development and population increase in our area in the next few years and a very optimistic business environment, this bank has decided the Kinkora branch will have to close. This is not because it has lost business—in fact, the manager there has built business—and this is not because there is not a very faithful and loyal clientele—in fact, there is. Many of the customers, particularly the elderly, find the ANZ Bank in town difficult to access. It is situated on the side of a hill, with reasonably difficult parking options, so customers will not go up there. Those customers have said they will change banks; they will take their business elsewhere. When I discussed that with the ANZ decision makers, they said 'Well, that would be unfortunate.' Lip service only!

Rural and regional Queensland has a good future ahead of it, particularly our region. Through this chamber I implore the ANZ Bank to get real, to look at the number of objections by individuals and small and medium businesses, to review its decision to close this branch, to overturn it and to retain the ANZ Bank branch at Kinkora. The staff there are very efficient people. In fact, one person was relocated away from our region only three weeks ago. Some jobs will be lost and a lot of services will be lost. I ask the ANZ Bank to review its decision.

Tet Festival; Multiculturalism

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (12.04 p.m.): Chuc Mung Nam Moi! Happy New Year! On 8 February I had the great honour and pleasure of joining the Vietnamese community and my parliamentary colleagues the Hon. Henry Palaszczuk, Julie Attwood and John Mickel to open the Tet Festival and celebrate the Year of the Horse. For many Vietnamese, Tet evokes a magical

time of the year when people cast aside their misfortune during the previous year and embrace the New Year with hope.

Ms Stone: Hear, hear!

Mr BRISKEY: I thank the honourable member.

An honourable member: Why didn't you send us a horse as well?

Mr BRISKEY: I received a horse from the member for Capalaba and I thank him for that. In fact, it hangs proudly in my kitchen.

Ms Liddy Clark: The snake is a good year with the horse.

Mr BRISKEY: Is that right? I was actually born in the Year of the Goat. I do not know what that suggests.

The Tet Festival is a time of festivity, traditional rituals rich in symbolism, legends and superstitions. It is a time for family reunion, exchanging of gifts and best wishes, correcting faults, forgiving others, paying debts and starting the New Year on a good note. It is all about a fresh start and kicking off the New Year in a positive way.

This year, as we celebrate the Year of the Horse, we also recognise the horse's qualities of courage and strength. Many of our community have left family, friends and loved ones in their country of origin and it takes these qualities of courage and strength to come to a new country. It is hoped that these qualities will carry us through the coming year.

In the wake of recent world events, we need to embrace multiculturalism more than ever because it has the capacity to turn aside racial and religious tension and build more harmonious communities. True multiculturalism is something we have to work for, and that is what the Beattie Labor government is doing. Last year, the Beattie Labor government introduced amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act which make any public statement inciting contempt or hatred of people based on race or religion unlawful.

In November last year, the Beattie Labor government recognised 10 special Queenslanders for their contributions to promoting multiculturalism at the 2001 Multicultural Queensland Service Awards. I am pleased to say that a Vietnamese recipient, Mrs Tran Le Trinh, President of the Vietnamese Women's Association of Queensland, was one person recognised for her years of service to the Vietnamese community.

In the last financial year, the Beattie Labor government provided a number of grants to assist the Vietnamese community, including \$93,082 through Education Queensland to the three Vietnamese language schools in Darra, South Brisbane and Goodna; \$210,000 to engage Vietnamese speaking interpreters under the Queensland Government's Language Services Policy; and \$486,000 to the Australian Red Cross to develop a Training and Employment Strategy for Clients From Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds to assist Vietnamese and other ethnic community group members to access training and employment.

I was particularly pleased to note that the Beattie Labor government provided a grant of \$7,500 towards the running of this year's Tet Festival. In the last financial year, the government through its agencies—including the Queensland Police Service, Legal Aid Queensland and the Department of Primary Industries—employed bilingual Vietnamese speaking officers to better service the Vietnamese community.

These are just some of the ways in which the government recognises the Vietnamese community and multiculturalism in this state. After all, our society has benefited for generations, and continues to benefit, from migrants from all around the world. Today, Queensland is made up of people from more than 150 countries. People born overseas and living in Queensland represent approximately 17 per cent of the state's population. In fact, the number of Vietnamese in Queensland is now estimated at around 12,000, with most living in the state's south-east corner, particularly in Brisbane.

All communities are important to our multicultural society, and at the beginning of each year Queenslanders join in to celebrate the contribution that all ethnic communities bring to our state to make it an even better place in which to live.

Performance of Minister for Health

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (12.09 p.m.): The Premier is failing in his leadership to act against Health Minister Wendy Edmond, whose mismanagement is threatening patient and

public safety. When Premier Peter Beattie proclaims her as the best Health Minister ever, his own backbench and some of his frontbench cringe in disbelief, and the Premier's credibility is sullied. Caring for the sick and vulnerable in this state is not a joke. It is time to take action and put a competent and honest minister in charge of this portfolio.

Staff in Queensland Health wonder if this critical portfolio is of such little importance to state Labor that Mrs Edmond's incompetence and bungling continues to be tolerated rather than decisive action being taken to put a more capable person in that position. At least some of the Premier's backbenchers are showing enough guts to speak up, with Desley Boyle last week challenging the Health Minister to address the Cairns Hospital situation after constant denials from Mrs Edmond that anything was wrong. The Cairns debacle, with a lack of staffing and beds, cannot be ignored. The opposition initiated calls for an independent review to establish the resources that are required. However, I believe that top-heavy bureaucracy—at the expense of clinical staff—and poor management is ripping the guts out of this and many other hospitals.

Recently, the beautiful new Townsville Hospital opened with great fanfare. However, the complaints and concerns emanating from this major city and surrounding districts about a chronic lack of staff, unacceptable waiting times and, incredibly, a lack of beds to cater for demand in a brand-new hospital just cannot be ignored. But once again the Health Minister is tardy and missing in action when these issues come to the fore.

Then there is the debacle of the lack of obstetrics cover for Maryborough, where mums cannot deliver their babies on weekends. The minister again is absent in action in regard to this critical issue. The Beaudesert Hospital is a beautiful new hospital, as my colleague the member for Beaudesert would know, yet this government has allowed an outflow of staff and a situation to develop such that hundreds of babies cannot be born at that hospital because the government has not provided coverage. That was supposed to be fixed at Christmas time and it has not happened.

This morning we heard the Minister for Health, Mrs Edmond, being flippant and dismissive about the approach to notification of victims about the movements of mentally ill offenders. This morning the minister misled the House. Notification orders in respect of which victims have to apply to be notified under the Mental Health Act do not cover situations such as escapes. This is not covered in the new legislation. The opposition sought to amend the act to mirror the provisions available to victims of crimes by the non-mentally ill, yet this government, the Health Minister and the Premier voted against that. Today she is talking about a register, yet that is not something that is in the legislation. It does not require the department or the Health Minister, directed by the victims when they put in a notification order, to deliver on that.

Clearly, this minister is a disgrace and has let down the victims of crime. They also voted against minimum sentences in a secure facility for those mentally ill offenders who have committed very serious crimes. The minister claims that the new bill will address issues of public safety, but she will not give a guarantee that absconding mental health offenders will not kill or hurt someone again.

In addition to the raft of abuses occurring in the mental health system, last year we saw the example of how in relation to Claude John Gabriel the department, under this minister, failed to notify the victims and their families of his release. The media notified the family before the department got around to doing so. Under this minister, the handling of these situations has been disgraceful, with delays in agreed extradition procedures between states.

Three people from the Nambour Hospital died after walking out of its mental health facility. I know at least one of those people was regulated. Two went under trains. There are people who need assistance with mental health. I have spoken with the mum of one of those young victims. Tragically, the mental health system is failing patients, the wider community and the staff, who are saying that there is a mixture of violent and non-violent patients in inappropriately resourced situations where there are not trained psychiatric nurses to look after them. That is letting down people who are vulnerable and in need of mental health assistance. It is letting down the wider community, who expect public safety and public health to be dealt with. This minister is missing in action. She touts that the new bill will deal with this. I have talked to staff. They are distressed about the lack of resources that is resulting in these abuses.

Mental Health

Ms LIDDY CLARK (Clayfield—ALP) (12.14 p.m.): A sense of sadness accompanies my rising to speak in the House today. I am sure that there have been times in all our lives when we did not

think we were able to face the world, when the world outside our door seemed harsh, unjust and oft times a little frightening. Yet I am also sure that for most of us here today we are possessed of the skills, the support networks and the sense of inner self-belief that allow us to face the challenges and trials that beset our lives. Yet there are some in society for whom this is not possible.

I have risen previously in this House to touch upon matters of mental health, yet in the past I have been compelled to do so out of a sense of pride in the community. Today I am compelled to do so out of a sense of shame that we have not done enough to counter the recent violent vilification of persons with a mental health illness. I do not say 'violent' lightly. The recent media hysteria about persons with a mental illness has been violent. In seeking to portray all persons with a mental illness as deranged and dangerous criminals, the media has created an environment of fear, shame and distrust for the thousands of everyday people who suffer from a mental illness, and nothing is more violent than the lives of those who are suffering as a result.

A report by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission concluded that people with mental illness are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community. The report also provided clear evidence that they experience stigma and discrimination in many aspects of their lives. In recent weeks, this has been obvious in my community. When visiting community groups and centres and talking to the residents, I have become profoundly aware of a sense of fear that is pervading the community. People with a mental illness who do not have those coping mechanisms are shunning a society that does not understand and withdrawing into a world that is characterised by fear and despair.

There is another group who are suffering. We must also remember that it is not only persons with a mental illness who are affected by such stigma and hysteria; the public mental health system is a tough and demanding workplace, and skilled staff are very much in demand. When the opposition and the public display ignorance about the issues and challenges in this sector, the faith and the morale of these staff suffer as they, too, bear the burden of hatred and vilification.

Inherent in the role of government is the requirement of leadership. When the government is strong, educates the public and provides compassionate and reasoned understanding, the community will follow. If we fail in this task, we are tacitly supporting the stigma and vilification that we can see in our homes and communities. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Queensland Minister for Health, Wendy Edmond, for her leadership and compassion.

The portrayal of persons with a mental illness as violent and dangerous belies the truth that one in five people will suffer some form of mental illness. It belies the fact that such people contribute to society in exactly the same way as everyone else. We must all show that leadership in our communities so that no-one is scared to ask for help. Persons with a mental illness already live with feelings of guilt, shame and inferiority. They should not have to live with fear also. The ALP has always been the champion of those in society whose voice is not or cannot be heard. Now we must show leadership and be the voice of reason, compassion and truth.

Liquor Licensing

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Lib) (12.18 p.m.): On 11 January 2002, the Liquor Appeals Tribunal handed down a decision which overturned the decision of the Chief Executive Officer of the Liquor Licensing Division to refuse an application for a general liquor licence for a Cheers Tavern at Kenmore. In its decision, the tribunal seemed to accept the fact that the amenity of residents near the proposed facility would be degraded. But the tribunal, referring to legal precedent, was persuaded to place greater emphasis on need rather than amenity.

Logically, if a tribunal was indeed making that trade-off, it would seem fundamental that the evidence used to assess need must be based on the same locality as the evidence to assess amenity. If the evidence is other than this, no logical comparison can be made. Once the tribunal accepted a particular definition of 'relevant locality' and accepted evidence of need based on this definition of 'locality', its failure to elicit evidence on amenity over exactly the same locality was incompetent.

Worse than this, in a game theory sense it was not a fair game. The objectors' case was primarily based on the amenity impact—and this is what the CEO considered in his decision—of a general licence in a broad area around the proposed facility but not too widely drawn. The applicant's case was based upon need over a much wider area. Accepting the applicant's definition of 'locality' automatically biased the case against the objectors, this bias was evident

right throughout the tribunal determination. For example, the evidence presented by Dr Brannock failed to understand this distinction. In analysing the objections, she concluded that this sample was biased because the demographic make-up of the objectors did not match the demographic make-up of the locality. Anyone with a modicum of wit would have understood why. The demographics of the area from which the objectors were primarily drawn—that immediately surrounding the proposed facility—are different to the demographics of the total area accepted by the tribunal.

Being an educationist, Dr Brannock could have recognised this by looking at trends in school enrolments across the area—a fact I would have told her if she had bothered to come and talk to me about the issue. In fact, she failed to talk to any of the local members—myself or the local councillors. But more importantly, it does not logically follow that the attitudes towards the proposed tavern exhibited by the objectors are necessarily different to those of the broader locality population simply because they differ on some demographic variables. To answer that question, empirical evidence would have to have been collected across the whole area—something which both Dr Brannock and the tribunal conspicuously failed to do. If the amenity was defined as Queensland but the need was defined as New South Wales, one could see the logical inconsistency of this. But the same principle applies in smaller areas that are not coincidental.

Not only is the tribunal incompetent, its arrogance is beyond comprehension. Over the past two weeks it has failed to answer some simple questions put to it by the Parliamentary Library on my behalf. I will examine the tribunal's attitude and performance at another time. Earlier, its members refused to alter their program to accommodate my presenting oral evidence in this case. Unfortunately, their hearing dates clashed with parliamentary sittings, but I did offer to make myself available at any time on their final sitting day, 14 December 2001. Apparently, the tribunal only wanted to hear final submissions on that day. But I would have thought the tribunal members could have gotten off their collective backsides, forgone their second cup of cappuccino and convened their hearings 30 minutes early. I would have been only too willing to point out the fallacy of their reasoning at that time rather than now.

In conclusion, I trust this sorry saga is not repeated by the Queensland Gaming Commission. Given the government's policy with regard to community consultation, let me be unambiguous. The community, as demonstrated by my own surveys, is firmly against gaming machines in both this locality and other sites in the electorate of Moggill. The local councillors representing the area, Councillor Margaret de Wit and Councillor Jane Prentice, are also against the proposal. Finally, as the member for Moggill, I am also against the application. Unless the government's policy with respect to gaming machines is a total sham, the application for gaming machines should be totally rejected by the Gaming Commission.

Public Liability Insurance

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (12.23 p.m.): I rise on a matter of some importance not only, I dare say, to my constituents in Cairns but to those of other honourable members and to draw to their attention, therefore, the serious and wide-ranging impacts of dramatic rises in insurance premiums. These problematic rises in premiums are affecting not only community based groups, charities and even sporting organisations, but they are also having a very significant impact on individuals and businesses in Cairns.

I must compliment the Premier who, at the end of last year, quickly realised the kinds of impacts that threatened our P&C associations and their very core activities—school fetes and the like—from the rising premiums. He took action and addressed that issue speedily and effectively. Unfortunately, this has not been sufficient. We in Cairns are pleased to know of the work of the liability insurance task force and look forward to some practical ways of addressing the sorts of problems that are occurring. I have received correspondence that demonstrates the tremendous impacts on organisations from various representatives of groups in Cairns, including Bob Collier from Meals on Wheels, Brian Swinton and Brian Turner from the Cairns Marine Radio Club, Ann Warrell from the North Queensland Amateur Gemcutters and Jewellers Association and Patty Davie from the Tropical Brass and Cairns Concert Band. I table their correspondence for the information of members of the House.

I have also received an eloquent letter from Mary Turner expressing a very real risk to individuals and their ways of life. As she quite rightly points out, it is the battler—the person in the middle—who can be caught by that person who is hungry for compensation and spots a way to

perhaps make more money than they are necessarily entitled to by alleging not just a mistake in life, not just an accident, but instead a failure in duty of care, or negligence, or even a deliberate act of harm. That person, the victim, the insurance companies and the solicitors then do battle, and eventually there is a resolution. But as Mary quite rightly points out, the battler—the man in the middle who really was doing nothing beyond his or her best—can be caught in the middle and, in fact, their financial circumstances can be ruined. I table her letter also for the information of members of the House.

In terms of business, though, we need to be alert to the kinds of impacts on small business. Recently I received a representation from a man who was truly worried. Yes, to some extent he was worried about the financial future of his own business but, more than that, he was worried about the safety of people in Cairns and described disasters that could easily be about to happen. His own business is that of roof cleaning. Mr Deputy Speaker, I know that you have visited the fair city of Cairns and would recall that it is full of lots of old Queenslanders—two-storey houses. Therefore, it is obvious that, in cleaning their roofs, there would be some real danger. Obviously there is a need for workers in such a business to have proper training and proper safety conditions and, of course, proper insurance.

This man tells me that in his business, when he equates the insurance cost per house across the amount of business that he did last year, this means an extra penalty of \$100 to \$150 per house on the cost of providing roof cleaning. Obviously this is a difficulty for householders, as well. But what has happened is that his competition has chosen, supposedly, the easy way out and has decided not to be insured. Therefore, it is able to undercut this business operator with insurance costs and to win contracts, with householders unaware that they have operating on their properties people who are at real risk of injury and for whom there is no insurance.

These kinds of impacts will not go away, but it is not just the province of the state government to resolve them. It is a matter for John Howard and his government to act at a national level. I am pleased to have received hot off the presses a copy of the insurance task force report. While I have not had a chance to read it, I do note a very important matter right at the front, that is, that this report is tabled for all Queenslanders and that feedback will be welcomed. All of us in Queensland have until 26 March to provide feedback and further suggestions on how to solve this invidious problem.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McNamara): Order! The time for Matters of Public Interest has expired.

TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. G. R. NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (12.28 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. G. R. NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (12.29 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this amendment bill to the House. The bill amends the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990 to address the impact on retail traders, shopping centres and consumers in south-east Queensland of a recent decision by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to introduce Sunday trading in the city of Brisbane area only. The bill also provides a single trading hours zone to include uniform trading on Sundays and public holidays in the south-east coastal area of Queensland.

By way of background, the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990 provides for three classes of shops—exempt shops, independent retail shops and non-exempt shops. Exempt shops comprise those shops that are considered to provide a necessary service and which should be accessible

to the public at all times, such as chemists, newsagents, bakeries, take-away food shops and service stations.

Independent retail shops comprise those 'small' businesses run by a single operator or a private company and where less than 20 persons are engaged in the shop at any one time or, where a number of shops are operated, where a maximum of 60 persons throughout the state are engaged. Non-exempt shops are those larger retailers such as department stores and supermarkets that do not fall within the classification of exempt shop or independent retail shop.

Exempt shops have unrestricted trading hours and independent retail shops are predominantly unrestricted except for certain public holidays. Trading hours for non-exempt shops are set by way of the act and various trading hours orders made by the Industrial Commission. Generally, allowable trading hours for non-exempt shops throughout Queensland are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

The commission may decide trading hours for non-exempt shops based on the merit of applications and submissions placed before it. This role includes the determination of extended trading outside the above allowable hours. In line with this process, the commission has previously granted extended trading, including on Sundays and public holidays, in a number of tourist areas and city precincts throughout Queensland including the inner city of Brisbane, which covers the city heart, Spring Hill, Fortitude Valley, Bowen Hills, Newstead and New Farm areas; the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast areas; the Cairns, Port Douglas and Whitsunday areas; and the Townsville central business district.

On 8 May 2001, the Retailers Association of Queensland Limited filed an application with the commission to introduce Sunday trading for non-exempt shops from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Brisbane and near metropolitan area as defined in the trading hours order. This area extends north to Caboolture, west to Ipswich and south to Beenleigh. The Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association did not oppose the application on the basis that any Sunday trading granted would be subject to existing employees working on a voluntary basis only. In this regard, the union and the Retailers Association agreed to the formulation of a specific award covering voluntary work on any extended trading hours in all non-exempt shops throughout Queensland. The award, known as the Voluntary Work—Extended Trading Hours—Non-Exempt Shops—Award—State has been filed in the Industrial Commission for ratification as soon as possible.

The commission concluded hearing the Sunday trading application on 17 December 2001 and a decision was handed down on Friday, 21 December 2001. The application was granted in part only to the geographical area of the city of Brisbane, with the Sunday trading to commence from 1 July 2002.

In granting the application to this defined area only, the commission was guided by principles established by previous full benches that there needs to be a degree of commonality within the whole of the area to justify a common trading hours result. The commission did not see the Brisbane and near metropolitan area as having the necessary degree of commonality. In granting the trading on Sundays the commission also stated that it relied on two assurances from the parties; namely, that traders within shopping centres would have the option to trade or not trade on Sundays and that existing employees would not be forced to work on Sundays.

There has been a strong reaction against the commission's decision by industry parties who consider that it is inappropriate and discriminatory in respect of the areas in close proximity to Brisbane. It is generally held that the decision disadvantages traders, shopping centres and consumers in these areas by disallowing access to Sunday trading and, as such, is not in the public interest. Areas excluded from the decision include Ipswich, Redbank, Strathpine, Pine Rivers, Arana Hills, Caboolture, Redcliffe, Capalaba, Browns Plains, Springwood, Redlands and Logan.

A further important issue raised in consultation with various industry parties is the current unsatisfactory situation whereby numerous trading hour zones exist between the existing Sunshine Coast area and Gold Coast area, resulting in both industry and consumer confusion. Separate trading hour zones that fall within this area include the Sunshine Coast Area, Near North Coast Area, Inner City of Brisbane Area, Area of the City Heart, Area of New Farm of Inner City of Brisbane and the Gold Coast Area. These areas all have individual trading hours, with different trading applying for the areas in between.

An anomaly exists in that the growth areas to the south of the Sunshine Coast area and north of the Gold Coast area currently do not have Sunday trading. These areas have a

combined population of approximately 140,000 and are growing by some 4,500 annually. Also, nine shopping centres currently operate within these areas, with another two centres proposed.

The Beattie government is committed to addressing these concerns by way of improving the commission's decision in the interests of both the retail industry and consumers. It is proposed to introduce a single trading hours zone known as the South-East Queensland Area, extending from Noosa to Coolangatta and west to Amberley. This would include the area known as the Brisbane statistical division, which covers the Brisbane and surrounding metropolitan areas. It will involve extending the current northern boundary of the Gold Coast area to join the southern boundary of the new Brisbane area and adjusting the western boundary of the Gold Coast area to align with the boundary of the city of the Gold Coast. The current Sunshine Coast area would be extended southerly along the Bruce Highway to include Bribie Island and the Sippy Downs-Chancellor Park areas.

Uniform trading hours are to be adopted based on the current hours applying on Sundays in the Sunshine Coast, inner city of Brisbane and Gold Coast areas. These uniform hours of 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. will apply on Sundays and public holidays for all non-exempt shops within the area. All shops will be required to close on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Anzac Day, Labour Day and Christmas Day. Currently, in the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast areas shops are required to close on Good Friday, Anzac Day, Labour Day and Christmas Day. Accordingly, the only additional closed day will be Easter Sunday. Easter Sunday was to be an agreed closed day under the Retailers Association's initial application for Sunday trading in the Brisbane and near metropolitan area. Closure on this day will provide a better balance of trading and non-trading days over the Easter period.

The changes as proposed will introduce uniformity of hours on Sundays and public holidays within the one trading hours zone. These changes will operate from 1 August 2002 to ensure that industry parties have a lead-in period in which to make any necessary administrative or commercial arrangements. To ensure that all trading hours for non-exempt shops remain consolidated within the appropriate trading hours order made by the Industrial Commission, the Industrial Registrar will be required to amend the order to reflect the new trading arrangements for the South-East Queensland Area. The commission will continue to decide trading hours for non-exempt shops by way of the trading hours order, with the proviso that the new uniform hours introduced in the South-East Queensland Area on Sundays and public holidays cannot be reduced.

This process requiring amendment of the order by the Industrial Registrar reflects a similar process followed in 1994 when legislative amendments were made introducing extended trading hours of 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays for all non-exempt shops in Queensland. These extended hours were introduced following a review of trading hours by the government at that time.

Tenants in shopping centres throughout the South-East Queensland Area will be protected from being forced to trade on Sundays and public holidays under their retail shop leases. This will be achieved by providing that the trading hours on Sundays and public holidays are not allowable hours for purposes of establishing core trading hours under the Retail Shop Leases Act 1994. The Retail Shop Leases Act 1994 operates in conjunction with the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990 in that it provides for the establishment of core trading hours for shopping centre lessees. Core hours are established by a 75 per cent majority vote of lessees and must fall within the allowable trading hours. Lessees can be required to trade core hours. In cases where allowable hours are permitted on Sundays or public holidays and a vote was passed to include core trading on these days, some tenants in shopping centres who did not vote for the core hours may be forced to trade.

The proposed amendments will protect shopping centre tenants from being forced to trade on Sundays and public holidays and are supported by the key industry parties. Should this protection not be applied uniformly within the whole area, inconsistencies could exist in respect of those areas that currently trade on Sundays and public holidays, such as the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and the inner city of Brisbane. Core hours could be established within these areas thereby forcing tenants to trade whereas in other areas such core hours could not be established. Similar provisions have been used in the past where special trading hours have been provided for in the act and where it was considered shopping centre tenants should not be forced to trade. An example of this was where special trading arrangements were legislated for the Christmas 1999-New Year 2000 period.

In relation to the protection for employees concerned at being forced to work on the proposed new hours, such protection is currently afforded by various federal industrial laws applying to retailers. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association has filed in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission a specific award for all non-exempt shops in Queensland which spells out clearly that extended Sunday working hours by existing employees will be on a voluntary basis only. Consultation on the bill has been undertaken with the following key industry stakeholders: the Retailers Association of Queensland; the Property Council of Australia, incorporating the Shopping Centre Council of Australia; the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association (Queensland Branch); the Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association; the National Meat Association of Australia (Queensland Division); and the Australian Workers Union.

Other amendments to the act are proposed following consultation with industry parties. In this regard, amendments will be made to clarify that an object of the act is to decide allowable trading hours of shops rather than to regulate hours. In the past, an interpretation has been that the act has an objective of regulating and restricting trading hours of non-exempt shops. These changes will also be consistent with the current provision whereby the Industrial Commission may decide trading hours for non-exempt shops. Additional amendments will ensure that the commission must take account of issues such as employment and local government views when deciding trading hours.

In closing, the government's action in improving the original decision of the Industrial Commission is in the public interest and will not affect the position whereby the commission will continue to determine trading hours based on the merit of applications made to it. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lester, adjourned.

EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND STUDIES AUTHORITY) BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 12 December 2001 (see p. 4518).

Hon. K. R. LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (12.44 p.m.): The opposition will be supporting this legislation to create a Queensland Studies Authority. There is no doubt that the three statutory bodies—that is, the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority and the Queensland School Curriculum Council—have served Queensland well. However, Queensland has had to adapt to changing social ideals. I am fortunate to have started a teaching profession in Queensland more than 40 years ago. The reports and reforms that we have seen in that time all reflect the significant changes which have occurred.

As a teacher in the early 1960s we taught with year 8 students in our primary schools. In 1968 the Bassett report recommended that year 8 students move to high school and that year 8 be a purely transitional year with a very generalised curriculum to enable these students to get ready for years 9 and 10 with more specific studies. Of course, at that particular time many students were leaving at the end of year 10. However, the concept of year 8 has changed in that not only does year 8 offer transitional education and very generalised education but years 9 and 10 are also becoming very transitional and generalised because it is generally expected that more students are moving from year 10 to year 11 and continuing their education.

The 1970s saw the Radford scheme—that is, the Queensland Department of Education's *Public examinations for Queensland secondary school students* report. There was the Campbell report of 1975, the Scott report of 1978 and the Queensland Legislative Assembly report under Mike Ahern entitled *First and second interim reports of the Select Committee on Education in Queensland*. Then there was the Pitman report from the Joint Advisory Committee on Post Secondary Education and the Board of Secondary School Studies. In 1990 there was the very famous and well-known Viviani report from the Queensland Board of Secondary School Studies entitled *The review of tertiary entrance in Queensland*. At that time we had to look at ways of telling universities which students would be suitable to go on to tertiary education. Unfortunately, the education system has not explained this system well to parents. It is still open to criticism. It is difficult to explain to parents how, at the end of year 12, we are able to explain to universities which students in rank order are more likely to succeed at university. For example, let us take a student in Cunnamulla and a student in Brisbane doing five or six completely different subjects

with a common subject of, say, English. Somehow or other we had to develop a system which would assess which of those two students was more likely to succeed at university.

Unfortunately, that system has been taken as a guide to the IQ of the student. That is not true. It has never been true, but somehow or other we have had to explain it to the universities to get students into a rank order. I support the scheme where the universities themselves offer more generalised courses for school leavers as they enter university. If we can advise universities of students who are likely to succeed in a course such as medicine, it is up to the university to offer a more generalised science course in the first and second year in which they themselves can ascertain which students are more likely to succeed. I would support that concept. Then of course there was the Wiltshire report, a report of the review of the Queensland school curriculum. However, all of these changes reflected the social changes occurring in our society.

During that time we also saw a worldwide system of supposedly assessing students' IQ. In the 1960s that was just not done. We did not have systems which supposedly could work out a child's IQ. But then we found systems which supposedly could. So into our schools came horizontal streaming in which we had the academic students, industrial students, commercial students, 10A1s, 10B3s, 10C3s and 10Ss. In 1969 and 1970 no education person would have ever been game to say, 'We will stream horizontally.' Now of course with our systems we are starting to stream vertically.

Now we find a new system coming into our schools, the P-12 system and other vertical systems. That is also a system that I have concerns about. I have always had concerns about a year 8 student, who might be so brilliant academically that he can progress through the grades, mixing with other students of 15 or 16 years old. There has to be some limit as to how far vertically a student can go. There is no doubt in my mind that we should have wider courses. If a student in year 7 is supposedly so brilliant, then we can have a wider course within year 7 that he can attempt. But I have concerns about moving that student into year 8, 9 or 10 where he is suddenly confronted by other students who are three and four years older.

I support the P-12 concept as long as the Education Department makes sure that it provides the facilities that are necessary for all areas. I have been concerned when I have gone into the Cairns P-12 school and found three administration blocks—one for the preschool, one for the state school system and one for the secondary school system. If we are going to have a complex that supposedly has a P-12 concept, why they would ever need three administration centres is beyond me. If that school can be designed effectively so that the administration block is at the front of the school—not in the middle of the school—and if that administration block can look after all of the enrolments and that side of things, then I would support having just one block. If the education system is going to have only one or two school ovals like that Cairns school and not have three or four ovals where there would be an excellent oval for the young students and brilliant facilities for the older students, I would be concerned.

I have always had concerns that we have been well behind Western Australia in the provision of auditoriums. In Western Australia the education portfolio, the sports portfolio and the local government portfolio are generally together. So the funding in those three areas can be incorporated so that they end up with a brilliant auditorium—not just a shell like we unfortunately find in many of our Queensland high schools—that is a complete complex for sport, drama and all the other facilities that need that particular concept. If we are to move to this P-12 concept, then the ministers and the government should look at combining with local government, sporting groups and the education system so that all of that funding program can be brought in to maintain a magnificent stadium—a magnificent concept—that can be used by the community and that can be used by the schools. But we have been talking about this for 20 years and still none of us have ever been able to come to grips with it. If we go to Western Australia we find that there are those magnificent stadiums within a school program that provide drama and sport facilities and that are used by the community.

One of the other significant changes which has occurred within our system is the fact that very few students repeat grades, and this is hard to explain to parents. Parents still do not understand why a year 7 student cannot repeat year 7. It is done but it is very, very unusual. So our whole school curriculum has changed to take these students through the programs with very few repeats. Those of us who taught in the old scholarship examination days know that generally if a child did not pass scholarship they went out into the work force. That is not done these days. Therefore, our curriculum changes have had to reflect that. It is a similar case with junior and senior examinations.

Many of us would realise that in the olden days our academic and vocational programs were completely separate. As early as the 1980s, with people like Les Winkle, the father-in-law of the member for Cleveland, as Director-General of Education—we had a pure education system which did not say, 'We will train kids for vocation.' That side of it was taken by TAFE. We remember the very famous Roy Wallace. There was no way in the wide world that Les Winkle and Roy Wallace would ever have agreed that the educational system could be combined such that education was for a job. They were bitter words in those days. But that has changed, and thank goodness it has changed.

One of the excellent systems in Tasmania was that, when a lot of money was put into TAFE the money went into the one complex and they had schools with magnificent manual arts facilities, home economic facilities and commercial facilities. But unfortunately in Queensland in the early 1980s when we were looking at transitional education we decided to put the massive wealth into the QIT. That was where most of that money went. Our education system was left with our basic structure of classrooms. Now we are fighting to bring both systems together. In Tasmania people will find that both systems are together. That is something that we have to try to overcome. Hopefully this advisory council will work towards that. We have now moved on to full secondary education for all students. We have now moved on to a balanced curriculum. We have now moved on to new curriculum structures in content and vocational orientation.

I support the government's decision to put out a green paper. I wondered why this green paper indicated that the government was concerned with the emerging trend manifested in a decline in the number of students completing grade 12 and the number of students cancelling their university enrolment in their first year of study. I would not have thought that the figures would have reflected that there is a declining number of students. I would have thought that those reports would have indicated that there are a lot of year 12 students who are going out into vocational studies, but not a decline in the number of the year 12 students completing the year. However, if it does indicate that these students need that sort of vocational education, then surely the educational system should move towards that system, but not as it did in the old days when it said, 'We must provide a pure education system—an academic system—which will not be job oriented, which will move towards kids going on to university.' That was how it was in the old days. I would support any change by the minister and the government whereby we move towards vocational education. If our year 11 students can move out and get an apprenticeship or traineeship during year 11, I would support that completely.

This green paper has indicated three possible options that this government could take. When I have said that the opposition will support this move and this legislation, I know that there was some discontent out there. There was some discontent about whether we formed one special statutory body out of the three or whether we formed two. I know that some people might still say that we should support two. However, as far as I am concerned we would have had just as much criticism whichever way the minister went. I am supportive of the one system decision that the minister has taken and I do not think there is any use us sitting here criticising the decision and saying that we should have two. I think there would have been just as much criticism if we had had two as we do now with keeping just the one. I will support the minister out there with the public.

Option 1 was obviously to extend the jurisdiction of the Board of Secondary School Studies to include year 10, to extend the powers of the School Curriculum Council to include the creation of curriculum standards in a monitoring framework from preschool to year 9 and to introduce accountability measures between the School Curriculum Council and the Board of Secondary School Studies for the establishment of a strategic plan for syllabus development from preschool to year 12.

Option 2 was to create a single curriculum authority for the preschool to year 12 years by amalgamating the Board of Secondary School Studies, the School Curriculum Council and perhaps the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority to allow consistency in relation to standards and curriculum development and assessment practices.

Option 3 was to amalgamate the Board of Secondary School Studies, the School Curriculum Council and the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority into the one statutory authority to be responsible for standards and assessment from preschool to year 12. The preferred option is obviously this one, the single statutory authority. As I have said, the opposition will certainly support that.

It is very important to note that at the federal level we have the new Minister for Education already trying to identify these problems. Minister Nelson stated—

The most important thing that we need to do as a nation is to see that every Australian, every young Australian especially, is able to find and achieve his or her own potential—whatever that is. We want to create a culture where every student is encouraged and is able to complete his or her year 12, but equally we want to make sure that students who feel that they are not equipped to complete year 12, see options in new apprenticeships, in training and vocational education and training as being equally legitimate to choices in higher education.

To me, that is a massive change from the early 1980s when school principals, especially in Queensland, would never have even dared to utter those words. Minister Nelson stated further—

There is nothing worse for any human being and for a young Australian growing up in this modern country to feel that you are being forced. To feel that in some way you are being pressured to study things which in your heart, you feel you are not equipped. There are many young Australians, unfortunately, whether they be in universities or whether they be in other institutions of learning who feel a great sense of unease about what they are doing. The most important thing that we need to do is to see that young people be the best that they can be and that we do everything we can to help them to find who they are and achieve their own level in life.

I believe that is a very, very important change for a federal minister to be saying that. I am not talking about the minister's politics; I accept that the Queensland government is doing exactly the same thing.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Mr LINGARD: Before the luncheon break I referred to the fact that the new federal Minister for Education has certainly shown a different attitude towards the combination of vocational and academic studies within our high schools. That is very pleasing. The new minister stated—

Today young Australians in their mid-teens ... face a future in which they can and will change their career up to around 7 times before they ultimately retire.

That points to the fact that our new university courses, our higher education courses, our training and new apprenticeships are obviously going to be very relevant to those people. The federal minister stated further—

It's absolutely critical that we do everything we can to increase, and certainly sustain Year 12 retention rates, and no more so is that challenge more pressing than for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Having taught at Bamaga and taught in schools with 100 per cent of their students being indigenous, I can certainly confirm that.

This bill provides the new authority with the specific function to advise the Minister for Employment and Training on relevant vocational and educational training matters. Further, the bill provides specifically for the minister responsible for vocational education and training to refer matters to the authority and, in concert with the Minister for Education, to issue written directions to the authority about those matters.

Those provisions, which facilitate the involvement of two ministers in the work of a statutory body, are administratively novel. However, they send a very clear message about the determination of the government to ensure that every possible opportunity is provided to young Queenslanders to complete 12 years of schooling or their equivalent in the training and related sectors and for that to equip them for work and, wherever possible, tertiary opportunities. Administrative structures and portfolio responsibilities must not stand in the way of sound educational outcomes and opportunities.

The bill allows for the existing functions of the statutory bodies to be taken over by the new Studies Authority. That is important to ensure that there is continuity and certainty for the education community. As I have said many times in my speech, it makes sense to have one single statutory body advising Education Queensland instead of three. However, my support for the bill comes with the belief that several aspects must be monitored. Firstly, in terms of the joint reporting lines, the authority will report to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Employment and Training. Although that has the potential to allow greater program flexibility and help students progress between school levels and between school and tertiary study or jobs, it also has the potential to add more red tape to a system that will be operating effectively under two government departments. The government must ensure that administrative structures and portfolio responsibilities do not get in the way of sound educational opportunities for Queensland students.

There must be adequate funding. The new Queensland Studies Authority will have massive responsibilities within Education Queensland. It is vital that adequate funds are provided so that the authority can responsibly set standards and assessment from preschool to year 12. Increased funding for initial set-up costs for the new authority should be made available. Ongoing funding should equal that given to the three bodies that are currently operating.

The continuing inequity between rural and metropolitan education should be a priority of the new authority. At secondary school level, rural students continue to be overrepresented among early school leavers, with 29 per cent of students in rural and remote areas leaving before year 12. That compares with 17 per cent for metropolitan areas. Last week I travelled through Charters Towers, Hughenden and Richmond looking at schools in those areas. There is no doubt whatsoever that the facilities that are offered in those schools do not equal the facilities that are offered in our metropolitan schools. Certainly, airconditioning is one big problem, but when it comes to year 11 and 12 students, they are certainly not receiving the same sort of opportunities that our urban children receive.

The opposition has given its support to the new policy of bypassing, but for an area such as Richmond, where quite obviously most of those students will bypass that school and go to areas such as Charters Towers now that they will be subsidised, it will be difficult to see how the Education Department can maintain the facilities in that area in two years. Although they have given a two-year guarantee, that means that in the third year the Education Department will make a new judgment. If the number of students going to the school in Richmond is not sufficient to maintain the curriculum or the classrooms, then I worry for that area. So although there are certainly going to be some benefits of bypassing—where country children can attend schools in areas such as Charters Towers—I worry that areas such as Richmond might unfortunately be victimised because students will not be attending schools in those areas.

Boys education should also be a priority for the new authority. The gender gap of participation by girls and boys in year 12 and higher education is still widening, with girls outnumbering boys in both areas. Since the 1980s, the gap has increased and currently it is 10 percentage points. Unless boys education becomes a key priority of the authority, I fear that that disturbing gap may widen further.

Another grave concern for school students and families throughout Queensland is that, before last year's election, the Labor Party promised to aircondition hundreds of schools in north Queensland. During summer, high temperatures make it almost impossible for students in those areas to learn properly. Labor promised to pay for 80 per cent of the airconditioning costs and urged P&Cs to raise the remaining 20 per cent. Dozens of schools have raised their money—in most cases, thousands of dollars. In fact, many of the schools raised the funds months ago and are still waiting for the ALP government to deliver on this promise. The government has become so arrogant that it refuses to release the full details of the number of schools that have applied under the Cooler Schools Program and detail which schools have raised their amounts. Not only that, the government refuses to list the schools that will be provided with this subsidy. That means two things: firstly, those schools in north Queensland, which would expect to receive airconditioning under the Cooler Schools Program, do not know if they are on the program; and, secondly, those schools that have raised their 20 per cent do not know whether they are going to be compensated or receive the other 80 per cent. Today, all I have asked the minister to do is to release the list of those schools that will be provided with airconditioning.

This morning I referred to the comments of the member for Thuringowa. I know that, when a member is facing a barrage from a radio interviewer, they have to try to cover their tail. But some of the things that the member for Thuringowa has said are exactly what the opposition would say. That is why I referred to her comments this morning. She stated—

... we really should have better conditions for our children if we're going to be a smart state.

She stated further—

I have asked people from the district office of Education Queensland about where they sit and the replies have just been unsatisfactory.

I know why those replies have been unsatisfactory—because the government is not allowing the list of those schools that are to receive airconditioning in the third phase to be released. That is covering the government's tail. Quite obviously, the government does not want to release it. The member stated further—

... one of my schools put an application in, in March 2000 and have now been told that they're one of seventy-three schools that might be air conditioned next year. I mean, it's just not good enough.

Out at Richmond, three schools all had airconditioners. We went into the third room and it was 35 degrees with the existing airconditioning. Obviously, that is not satisfactory.

The member for Thuringowa continues—

I mean, the government has made a commitment that they will do this for schools that contribute the money themselves. My schools have done this and they are still at the bottom of the list.

Ms Phillips also states—

I think not only will I be able to do it by helping the minister to be able to implement any of the Education Queensland policies that we would like to pursue in this environment; kids can't learn, they can't learn to read, they can't concentrate when it is like this.

Here we have a massive amount of money being spent, supposedly to improve the education of Queensland kids, yet we have these comments directly from an ALP member—a member of this government. The government has refused to release the list. The QCPC does not even know what is on the list, because it cannot get the list out of the minister. If the government intends to hide in this manner, quite obviously these north Queensland schools will not be getting air-conditioning. At the last election, the coalition stated that \$53 million to \$63 million would be released to extend the Cooler Schools program to stage 4. The ALP still has not even done the stage 3 schools.

In relation to the standard of education, I want to raise the issue of suspension of students, which is bringing a new problem into Queensland schools. In all Queensland schools, especially state schools and those in lower socioeconomic areas, kids are being suspended by the hundreds. I believe that these figures will come out very soon. Queensland school principals are allowed to suspend students for one to five days, placing them under the responsibility of their parents, without providing any remedial programs to improve that child. A child may be suspended for five days, brought back for three, get into trouble again, be suspended for another five and continue to be suspended for five days without undertaking any remedial program at all.

When questioned during the estimates committee stage the minister will say that this is the responsibility of the regional areas. Yes, it is the responsibility of the regional areas to provide behavioural management, but there are insufficient funds. If members talk to the staff at inner Brisbane schools, they will find that there are no programs or very few programs for students to attend. If a student has done something wrong and should be suspended for six to 20 days, that student cannot be suspended unless he or she is sent to attend a remediation program.

As you would know, Mr Speaker, in parts of your electorate and in parts of mine umpteen students are being suspended with no remediation programs to attend. Instead of being suspended for six to 20 days and provided with remediation, they are being suspended for up to five days continually and supposedly placed in the care of their parents.

I have always criticised bureaucrats for thinking that kids want to go to school. They think that kids believe that being suspended is a terrible thing. Anyone who has had anything to do with the education system, especially in some of the state schools, knows that kids take great delight in being suspended.

Ms Molloy: No, they don't. You don't know kids.

Mr LINGARD: Some government members believe that kids hate getting suspended.

Mr Cummins: The majority of kids like going to school and getting an education. Wake up to yourself.

Mr LINGARD: The majority of kids do, but there are many other kids who love the suspension program. They love running around the streets and climbing fences and being a thorough nuisance while they are suspended for up to five days.

The government is not being fair dinkum in providing this supposed behavioural management program if it will not fund remediation programs. In some regional areas funding is provided for a behavioural management person to be at the school. I know that kids can be suspended for between six and 20 days if that behavioural management person provides some sort of remediation program, but sometimes it is not anywhere near sufficient.

Whilst the minister might continually talk about my views on corporal punishment and say 'Not allowed', 'Not able to', at least with that punishment program we were able to deal with the students at the school. What we find now is that these kids are being kicked out into the community and the community is left to suffer. This, I am afraid, is the problem with many of the bureaucrats within the ALP government, especially when it comes to places like Boystown. Those sorts of places, which provide remediation programs and remedial rehabilitation, are no longer accepted by the bureaucrats simply because the government does not want to take the responsibility of improving these kids.

This morning, in answer to a Dorothy Dixer, the minister talked about Flagstone high school. I know that the member for Bundamba is to follow me, so she can say whether I am right or not.

The member for Bundamba went out to the Flagstone community school site and, according to the paper, this is what she said:

The school will open for an anticipated 150 to 180 Year Eight students next year.

It was only about a month away from the opening. The minister stands up this morning and says that the school has been a great success; it has 125 students. I know where the other 60 went. They were thoroughly disgusted that in the first week of December there was not a building—not a thing—on this particular site. I think back to the 1970s. If we as a government had ever thought about building a high school and not providing the facility, not appointing the staff, not taking the staff to seminars, not taking them to the school, not bringing in the feeder schools so that the kids could get used to the school, the Labor Party would have gone berserk.

The minister, with the first school that she is to have built, has not got a thing on site at the start of December. She puts in a demountable school. The staff are supposed to walk into the school and be ready to go; they are supposed to be appointed; they are supposed to have seminars; they are supposed to bring the kids in from the feeder schools so that they can get used to their school. And the minister starts building it on 14 December. Yes, she got it ready with demountables; she got it ready with concrete paths. She spent \$2 million building the school and it is not even on the right site. It is on the corner of the property, so by the middle of this year it has to be moved and a new school has to be built. Yet the minister stands up in here in answer to a Dorothy Dixier and gets stuck into the opposition and says 'Fancy criticising this'. The government should be looking at its own standard. Teachers are being provided with a high school comprising six demountable buildings and concrete paths. They have not even had a seminar. And the minister tries to criticise me! In addition, most of those 125 students have had to be bused in from the adjoining Jimboomba area to get the numbers up to 125.

I acknowledge that I have had a personal involvement with this school. However, I am also shadow education minister, and if the government cannot cop this criticism, something is very wrong. If this is the first high school that this minister has built and the government thinks that it can do this to teachers, to students and to staff, then I think something is very wrong.

The minister said that I had never come into this House and stated who owned that particular site. Well, if she reads the Hansard record, she will find that I did. However, as I said this morning, she might not have been in the chamber. The particular site was owned by the Motor Traders superannuation group. It was not owned by the Education Department when the member for Bundamba went out there and opened it. It was not owned by the Education Department. That is why the government could not get the project going; it was owned by the superannuation fund. The minister said I was wrong. I now table the document from the Department of Natural Resources which refers to that particular block and says that the block is not owned by the Education Department at all but is owned by the Motor Traders superannuation fund. No wonder the minister could not have any buildings constructed on that site.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mickel): You are seeking leave to table that?

Mr LINGARD: Yes, I seek leave.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

Mr LINGARD: With those words, I indicate the opposition's support for the legislation and I trust that it will go successfully.

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (2.49 p.m.): This bill marks the culmination of a journey that began in the 1980s. Since then there have been a number of initiatives to address curriculum development, assessment and certification and tertiary entrance procedures to ensure that we provide our students with the best possible support.

Currently in Queensland these functions are managed by three separate statutory authorities within the Education portfolio: the Queensland School Curriculum Council for years P-10, the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies for years 11 and 12, and the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority for tertiary entrants. Each of these entities has separate legislation and each has provided excellent service to Queensland students, and this bill is not about changing what they did so well. This bill is providing for the future.

The combined effect of these three separate legislative regimes determines the conditions of learning in Queensland schools. Extensive review and analysis of future education has highlighted that there are anomalies in the current legislative regime. The current system for curriculum development, assessment, certification and tertiary entrance is complex, with the three

authorities operating independently rather than collaboratively. There are overlapping roles and functions and different reporting and accountability responsibilities between the three authorities.

The separate responsibility for syllabus and assessment in years 1 to 10—the compulsory years of schooling—from the non-compulsory years of schooling does not support the development of consistent approaches to learning across the full 24 semesters of education, and this disconnection creates difficulties for students, particularly those at risk of not completing year 12. Further, it can be argued that the current legislative regime favours those students who seek to enter university or other tertiary institutions on completing year 12. This accounts for approximately 35 per cent of students of the age cohort. Operating separately, the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies and the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority have little scope for ensuring clarity of definition or effective articulation and coordination of the learning pathways and qualifications framework for the wide variety of post-school education, training and employment destinations of the majority of school leavers.

Under the previous Minister for Education, the Honourable Dean Wells, a consultation process based on the green paper Student Achievement in Queensland was undertaken to address these issues. When I was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, the minister requested me to chair the process, meeting with all of the stakeholders and other interested parties and reporting directly to her. This stakeholder group included representatives from the existing authorities, parent groups, unions, government agencies, the independent, Catholic and state education sectors, indigenous education, higher education and industry. This has been my major undertaking in 2001 and, whilst time consuming, it has been enormously rewarding.

Out of the extensive consultation process several options emerged as possible models. These were reviewed by the broad reference group which, through me, provided advice to the minister. The minister, after careful consideration, made the decision that a single statutory authority was the most appropriate solution to meet the future needs of students in the state.

In coming to this decision, it was recognised that this was not about changing what the current authorities were doing well but building on their success and achievements and positioning education in Queensland for the future. In fact, the minister was anxious to ensure that for those students entering years 11 and 12 this year there would be no disruption. As I have a daughter in year 12, I am particularly mindful of this issue.

Clause 54 makes provision to ensure that persons studying to receive a certificate will not be disadvantaged by any changes to the requirements for certificates. For example, a student may be studying for a senior certificate in year 11 and might be affected by a change in the requirements for the issue of the certificate. The authority must ensure that the year 11 student can continue the course of study towards the senior certificate as planned without being affected by the change.

Once the decision to progress to a single authority was made, an intensive process of consultation and development took place, with three separate working groups being formed. These groups were representative of the independent, Catholic and state schooling sectors, the unions and the current authorities working together to inform on the drafting of the legislation, policy issues and providing advice on the transitional arrangements. The chair of the legislation group was Mr Brian Rout of Education Queensland; the chair of the policy group was Mr Jim Tunstall, Director of the Queensland School Curriculum Council; and the chair of the transition group was Mr Bob McHugh, CEO of the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies. These groups also reported to the wider reference group on a regular basis and to the minister.

The bill before the House today was largely constructed out of this cooperative process, with each sector having substantial input and ownership of the words and an understanding of the effect of the proposed legislation. Draft legislation was put before the stakeholders, and I chaired an intensive process of general and individual briefings, the results of which were again conveyed to the reference group and to the minister. I put on record in this House that the spirit of cooperation and the willingness to think outside the constraints of sector boundaries characterised the working groups.

The Queensland Studies Authority seeks, through its objects, to help schools achieve quality learning outcomes for their students, to facilitate the transition of students through the sectors of education and, most importantly, to maintain public confidence in the certificates of achievement issued under the act. The principles for achieving these objects include, firstly, that collaboration and cooperation should be promoted across all sectors of education, that is, preschool, primary,

secondary, special education and tertiary education as well as across state and non-state schools.

The second principle was that students should be encouraged to gain a certificate of achievement on completion of secondary education or an equivalent qualification issued in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework. The third principle was a recognition that there are many pathways that may lead to qualifications and certification, and that studying board subjects is simply not the only way. In OECD countries, such as Germany, a job seeker must have a schooling qualification to seek employment.

The fourth principle was that encouraging students to complete the non-compulsory years of schooling has a much wider effect by contributing to the social and human capital of the state and the nation. The fifth principle was that the professional role of teachers in schools be recognised. Our model of school based assessment is strongly based on an acknowledgment of the professionalism of teachers, and this principle aims to ensure that the authority has regard to and takes into account this role when developing syllabuses and determining procedures for assessment and moderation.

The sixth principle was that the diverse educational needs of students should be catered for. We recognise that one syllabus does not necessarily fit the needs of all students, and it is anticipated that the authority will develop syllabuses and preschool guidelines to meet the needs of students with special needs, such as students with disabilities and students from non-English speaking backgrounds. The final principle was that students should be helped to achieve their career goals. This will be done by making available information to assist students choose the pathway that suits their needs.

The guiding principles thus focus on our students, and our students are our state's future. Honourable members should note that, beyond the power to develop, revise and approve 1 to 12 syllabuses and guidelines, the authority will also develop and revise documents supporting the implementation of approved syllabuses and approved preschool guidelines. Most importantly, the authority will also develop resources and services for the professional development of teachers to support the implementation of approved syllabuses and preschool guidelines.

The legislation ensures that under the transitional provision in clause 87 all syllabuses and preschool guidelines currently recognised by the Queensland School Curriculum Council and syllabuses and study area specifications currently approved by the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies are taken to be approved under this act. Most importantly, the act provides for the authority to accredit syllabuses developed by entities outside the authority. This is a function that none of the current authorities has, and allows the QSA to review what is best practice throughout Australia and the world and, subject to the usual rigour, accredit it for use in Queensland schools.

A further area of outstanding cooperation and goodwill was the agreement by the sectors and the stakeholders around the composition of membership of the authority. Necessarily, with three authorities being subsumed into one and each with its own board or council representative on the stakeholder group, downsizing to one authority was a sensitive issue. The working group suggested a fair model of equal state and non-state representation in the new authority.

As honourable members would be aware, the Minister for Education, in her second reading speech, made mention of the membership and referred to the authority accessing broader representation and advice through a relevant committee structure. The minister in particular said—

I expect the new authority to canvas the full range of parent views through appropriate committee mechanisms.

As chair of the reference group, I am aware of the enormous contribution by all stakeholders and the education sectors. From the Association of Independent Schools Queensland, I make mention of the CEO, Dr John Roulston, and Dr Barry Arnison; from the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, Mr Joe McCorley and Mr Damien Brennan; and from Education Queensland, Mr Brian Rout and officers of the project team led by Mrs Donna George and the external consultant engaged to facilitate the process, Mr Kent Maddock.

The chairs and CEOs of the existing authorities, including Professor Colin Mackerras and Mr Jim Tunstall of the Queensland School Curriculum Council, Professor Diana Davis and Ms Bernadette Roberts of the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority, and Associate Professor Richard Fotheringham and Mr Bob McHugh of the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies and their staff have made an enormous contribution to policy development, drafting of the legislation and the transition plans. The representatives of the parent bodies were Mr Garry Cislowski of the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens, Mr Paul Dickie of the

Parents and Friends Federation, Mrs Patricia Waldby of the Independent Parents Federation Council of Queensland and Mr Jack Beach of the Isolated Children's Parents Association. I commend their dedication, commitment and professionalism in dealing with the relentless flow of paper and providing excellent input and comment at all stages of the development of this bill. In addition, the process was resourced by representatives of the education unions, the principals associations and other government agencies who ensured a high level of rigour was applied in the process of policy development and the drafting of the bill.

This legislation is yet another plank in the Beattie government's Smart State structure. This legislation is about creating the best possible circumstances in which education in Queensland can respond to the needs of all students. This legislation is about the government not resting on its laurels but looking to the future to provide the structure and process for an increasingly complex educational future. This legislation is about helping Queensland students to be the best that they possibly can be. This legislation is ultimately about all educational sectors and stakeholders caring enough about the future of our children and our children's children to get the best go in life through the educational system.

In conclusion, I thank the Minister for Education, the Hon. Anna Bligh, for giving me this rewarding legislative task. On behalf of the reference group, the educational sectors and the educational stakeholders, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (3.02 p.m.): At the outset I indicate that the Liberal Party will be supporting this bill. The bill itself is the culmination of a long journey by Education Queensland and the private schools in Queensland. It is interesting to refer to history. In 1991 the then government under Wayne Goss commissioned a report into the curriculum structures in Queensland to try to find a commonsense solution to all the various structures we had at that time determining curriculum in Queensland. We had the Department of Education doing it for state schools. We had the private sector looking at the department's document and then modifying it for use within their own schools. Usually the Catholics did one set of documents and the independent schools could have done another if they so wished.

The government at that time commissioned Professor Phillip Hughes, a Tasmanian academic, to come to Queensland and provide some advice on how these issues might be resolved in Queensland. I think that at that time there was a common view, particularly within the non-government sector, that we had a bit of a mishmash and needed to sit down and think about where education in Queensland was going to ensure that resources were not unduly wasted. Professor Phillip Hughes produced a report to the effect that Queensland needed one statutory authority overseeing curriculum development, assessment and accreditation in Queensland. So it was some 10 years ago that this idea first came to Queensland. It is not a recent construction of the Beattie government. In fact, it was over 10 years ago. So it has taken us a long time to get to this position.

After that, the government never accepted Hughes' report, and the report was buried. The government then commissioned Ken Wiltshire to go into the Queensland schooling system and produce another report. Wiltshire also came to the conclusion in 1994 that there ought to be one statutory authority overseeing curriculum development in Queensland. Again, the government moved in that direction, but it did not move to give the curriculum development bodies a statutory authority basis. It left the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies in place and appointed another body to oversee curriculum development from year 1 to year 10 and had a semiformal relationship, if you like, with the Department of Education. It was not a statutory authority with the fully independent basis that everyone required at that time. In fact, that was one of the issues that I had to deal with when there was a change of government in 1995-96. We had organisations in Queensland that were developing curriculum but without independent status, and long after Wiltshire's report they were not really getting on with the job.

When I was minister the body overseeing P-10 curriculum development had not come to grips with the enormous task in Queensland of modernising the curriculum that was being taught in our schools. It had been there for the best part of 12 or 18 months but had not got cracking on the task which Wiltshire identified as a critical component in upgrading the curriculum that was being taught in our schools. The coalition at that time moved to give independent status to those bodies. We moved legislatively to ensure that they were statutory authorities, but at that time I took the decision that because we were lagging so far behind with the revision of the curriculum we simply could not spend another two or three years in a consultation phase to determine whether or not we wanted one curriculum authority. So we really had to get moving. Those authorities got cracking at that time and started to produce new curriculum for our

schools—desperately needed curriculum. As I said, this was on the agenda for quite a number of years. We now have the Queensland Studies Authority, which is a culmination of all the work that has gone on before. It is where we wanted to go, but it has taken us a long time to get there.

This bill continues the tradition of intersystemic cooperation in Queensland. We have a long and proud history of the state school sector cooperating with the non-government school sector to ensure that there is not a wastage of resources and that everyone understands that there is a need for high-quality curriculum in all schools around Queensland; that no matter where parents send their kids to school, it is important that they have confidence that the curriculum being taught in those schools is of the highest quality. That is the idea behind this: one curriculum for all schools in Queensland. That is where we wanted to be after 10 years. However, it is important that Education Queensland is mandated to put the curriculum into its schools. There is now a responsibility on those in the non-government sector to make sure that they do the same, although this does not necessarily impinge upon their independence. They can still make changes if they so wish, and some of the smaller independent schools may do so.

It is also important to note that whereas in the past the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies almost exclusively focused on children going into the university stream, it is now focusing on the 70 per cent of kids who are looking at a vocational education outcome. That is a great move in terms of trying to integrate those subjects into the school curriculum to make sure that those kids are catered for right through to the end of year 12. I think it is important that the Minister for Training has an input into the outcomes of the authority. The mechanism to allow that to happen, that is, the issuing of a written direction to the board or to the authority, is very important. It was one of the features of the original legislation that went through under the coalition.

I support the legislation. This legislation does not represent a new initiative. It is not something dreamt up by the Beattie government. It is something that is over 10 years old. It is about time this happened. It has been a slow progression since 1991, but we have finally arrived. This brings us in line with most of the other states, which simply have one curriculum authority.

If there is to be a further advance on this system it is, I suggest, that there needs to be one minister for education and training in this state. The gap between the two ministers can sometimes cause problems in terms of resolving issues. We need to look now at whether it is time to merge those two responsibilities, as has been done in other states.

Training is not solely training by definition. TAFE stands for 'technical and further education'. It encompasses education. I think we need to come to grips with that and start thinking along those lines. The next step towards seamless education from preschool right through to year 12 is to have all students catered for under one minister and one authority. That would eliminate all the anomalies in the system. This legislation takes us part of the way. The next step is the political step of understanding that there needs to be one person in charge in this area. The turf warfare between ministers that has been conducted in the past—I can attest to it—cannot go on any longer, because we need to ensure the welfare of students. The highest quality education is at risk here. This legislation takes us a long way towards our goal. We need to take the further step, which is to bring together those two departments. As I said, the Liberal Party will be supporting the bill.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.11 p.m.): Last night I attended the annual general meeting of the Jamboree Community Kindergarten. It was encouraging to see the extent of parent support at the meeting. All of the activities provided by the centre over the last 12 months were listed in the director's report. The diverse range of learning activities involved a number of events which prepare young people for the years of education ahead of them.

All levels of preschool, primary and secondary education are equally important to a child's progressive development and their social interaction with others. Education is becoming more and more holistic. Teachers, out of necessity, are being required in some areas to deal with a child's psychological and behavioural issues. Education of the whole person means not just the imparting of knowledge but also teaching the student how to deal with their immediate environment.

The Beattie government is aware of the needs of our children in this current environment and the difficulties they face. I am delighted with the quality of education provided at all levels in the electorate of Mount Ommaney. I keep in contact with schools and P&Cs where possible on a regular basis. They tell me what they need to make their children's education more effective. Over the last few years I have lobbied ministers and achieved for my schools an extension to the

Middle Park State School library and various additions, maintenance, repairs and enhancements to facilities at Jindalee State School, Jindalee preschool, Jamboree Heights State School, Corinda State School and Oxley State School. Many thousands of dollars have been spent on each state school in the area over the last few years, over and above their standard allocation. I have been able to assist private schools to receive special grants and funding to improve their facilities.

It is part of my role as the local member to assist wherever I can to take the concerns of parents, schoolteachers and students back to government. The safety of our children is of utmost importance to me. Traffic around the schools continues to be a problem, particularly around pick-up and drop-off time. P&Cs and safety committees attempt to find solutions to potential safety issues for their children. Recently I was successful in lobbying the minister for an internal car park at Jindalee State School. This joint project with the BCC will greatly benefit surrounding residents and, by decreasing the number of cars on the road at drop-off and pick-up time, will improve child safety. The welfare and future of children and students in Queensland schools and preschools are this government's priorities. Legislation which reflects this commitment is a direct result of the Queensland State Education 2010 strategy.

The Mount Ommaney electorate's population supports 11 schools in the area. Eight of these are state schools and the remaining three are private, each of different religious faiths—Anglican, Catholic and Lutheran. I take great pride in the achievements of students in all of these schools. Each school is unique in the way they provide learning opportunities to our young people. Many awards have been given to students who have excelled in certain areas in their education. These schools continue to produce quality educational opportunities for all who attend.

Corinda State High School continually produces a high percentage of the state's award winning students. The principal, Bernadette O'Rourke, takes a personal interest in each student and encourages high standards of behaviour and performance. Her students have gone on to be highly acclaimed sportspeople, one example being Natalie Cook, Olympic gold medallist in volleyball. Dux of the school in 2000, Dylan Tovey, won the coveted T. J. Ryan award. These students set a fine example to others by returning to address the school at speech nights.

The principal and the P&C at Corinda High lobbied me when I was first elected for an upgrade of facilities to match the quality of learning at the school. The Beattie government allocated \$7.2 million to construct a performing arts centre, a sports centre and an information technology facility, all of which have now been completed. The official opening of these facilities will occur soon by the Hon. Minister for Education, Anna Bligh.

When I became elected I wanted to ensure that local residents were consulted over construction issues affecting the local environment of stages 2 and 3 of the Centenary State High School. Residents' concerns were dust, noise and traffic congestion, particularly along Moolanda Street bordering the length of the school. Unlike the previous member, I ensured that locals were fully informed about the progress of these stages. Issues were addressed and continue to be addressed by the contractor, Education Queensland and the principal. I thank the Minister for Education for her support in relation to making funding available for the timely completion of these projects.

The Centenary suburbs and surrounding areas are continuing to grow, and more families are choosing state education. The need for appropriate facilities to match the diversity of curriculum available and the growing population of this school increases at the start of each term. The Centenary State High School was established in the Centenary suburbs in 1998 and now has a school population of over 1,000 students. The Centenary High School provides an excellent curriculum in the arts. I have attended a number of performances by students and have been impressed with the enthusiasm and professionalism displayed by participants.

These schools provide the basis for the individual to make appropriate career choices. It is essential in today's competitive job market that students complete year 12. The transition from schooling to post-school options needs to be supported and we need to ensure there are no learning gaps which would interrupt the transition. It is important that the education system in Queensland becomes more flexible to follow the changing job market.

The Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001 is consistent and supportive of the Queensland State Education 2010 strategy. This bill is about flexibility in the state education system. The legislation will subsume QSCC, QBSSSS and TEPA into one authority. It allows the new authority to advise the minister on and have responsibility for syllabus development, assessment, certification and tertiary entrance across diverse P-12 contexts and settings with articulation to post-school destinations.

There is a strong emphasis on the correlation between syllabus and post-school education and training. The authority's ability to accredit syllabuses and preschool guidelines developed by entities other than the authority will ensure that students will have access to the best syllabuses throughout Australia and the world. I believe that this bill will result in Queensland students receiving the best learning opportunities available and will draw on a wide range of diversity, innovation and expertise outside of the state. It will truly make Queensland the Smart State.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.18 p.m.): I endorse the principle of the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill. It seeks to improve education in Queensland schools. I refer to clause 87, which relates to the curriculum of P-10 schools and is probably one of the most important facets of the legislation. This provision is relevant to many schools across rural Queensland and probably all schools along the coastal strip and in the major metropolitan and regional city areas.

I refer to retention rates. At the annual general meeting of PCAP in Cloncurry last year—I stand to be corrected on the figure—the Director-General of Education, Jim Varghese, mentioned a year 12 retention rate in 2011 of something like 84 per cent.

These figures have to be supported, and everyone in this House would certainly support them. However, the most important factor relates to equality of education, because that will enable us to arrive at that retention rate by that year and will give people who live in remote areas the opportunity to give their children an education regardless of whether they live in remote settlements or in smaller settlements like Tambo, Quilpie and those types of towns where there are P-10 schools. This will give them the opportunity to take advantage of a grade 11 and 12 education at a closer high school as opposed to a boarding school.

I compliment the minister today on the change of policy direction last year in relation to P-10 schools and the bypassing program. That policy is certainly very advantageous because it gives rural kids the opportunity to take advantage of a higher school education. The minister, the government, Education Queensland and other bodies such as P&Cs, P&Fs and the Isolated Children's Parents Association were very instrumental in the formulation of that policy. It was good to see the ICPA, under the stewardship of Jack Beach, working so closely with the minister, the Hon. Anna Bligh, to bring about this change. This change has not resulted in losing teachers from those schools but gives the people living in those areas the opportunity to take advantage of higher education and specialist subjects. Those children could go on to pursue a professional career after tertiary study but a lot of the time they were disadvantaged because of the subjects offered in those P-10 schools.

I note that the honourable member for Charters Towers is in the chamber and I have no doubt that she supports this concept. There are many members in this chamber who find themselves in the same situation—that is, schools in their electorates are now giving kids the opportunity to pursue a career. Whether those kids want to be professionals, receive a tertiary education or whatever, that opportunity now exists without impeding the local community by the loss of teachers or something else from that school. It all comes back to the retention rate. We should all be aiming for 100 per cent, but we know that we are not going to be able to help every child through to grade 12 because of disabilities or the fact that some people are not as gifted and blessed as others. Therefore, we will probably never see a 100 per cent retention rate but we are working towards a goal of 84 per cent. This is about bringing equality into Education Queensland and giving children the opportunity, regardless of where they live, to be educated in the best possible facilities available.

The other area I want to touch on today relates to remote education. When I talk about remote education I am not talking about school of distance education but the one-teacher schools in many of our isolated and remote communities—and members would appreciate that I have quite a few of them in my electorate. I have spoken in this chamber, to the Queensland Teachers Union and to the Director-General of Education Queensland about endeavouring to place a second teacher in those schools, especially where student numbers are in the high teens or the early twenties. It certainly is a big impost on the teacher at such schools to be the custodian of the school, the principal, the teacher, the manager of the finances, the administrator, the disciplinarian and have all of that responsibility while having to interface with parents and the parents and friends associations in relation to keeping that school viable and operational.

In many western areas indigenous children attend the same schools as other European kids who live in those remote settlements, but it is important that there be understanding. I am not saying that these teachers are not qualified, because they are qualified. I saw an instance many years ago where a young teacher went from Brisbane to Bedourie. He was qualified in teaching

Aboriginal children but could not handle the harshness and the environment when he got there. It is very important that these teachers know what they are in for when they go into such areas. They need to be aware of what they will be subjected to, what the conditions are and the types of environments they will be working in.

My colleague the honourable member for Beaudesert, who is a former principal himself, has worked in the remote communities of Cape York and knows full well what I am talking about, and members on the other side of the chamber who have a background in teaching would also understand this. It is so important in this modern day and age that, regardless of where we are, there is expertise in the field and trained staff. Nevertheless, two teachers in one-teacher operations are needed to help kids if they are struggling in school work or if the principal has to do administration work, see parents or attend seminars. In the far west of the state one teacher travels between those schools, but it would create a more balanced situation if we could see two teachers in those settlements.

The other issue I want to touch on today relates to acting principals. Appointing an acting principal for six months or 12 months will put a cloud over any type of operation. Sometimes at the start of the year people will not accept transfers and the school finds itself in the predicament where it has to appoint somebody in an acting capacity for three or four months until a permanent replacement is found. However, there is always a destabilising factor because of the uncertainty as to whether that person will stay at that school for 12 months, two years or whatever. It is so important that we send couples to those centres, because they will have each other's company. This is a more stabilising and secure situation than having young single teachers in remote areas, because they can be confronted with a great deal of loneliness away from home. Working on a policy where married couples or people with partners go to such places will eliminate a lot of angst. The whole issue comes back to improving education and qualifying that retention rate.

In the first speech I ever made in this House in 1990 I made mention of one of the most important things—that is, equality of education for all our children regardless of where they live or their socioeconomic background. Everybody would agree that all children, regardless of what family they are born into, are entitled to that. If we are going to attain that retention rate, we have to ensure that the facilities for kids in these schools are up to scratch, that teachers are happy in the environment and that the technology is available, regardless of whether it is in a remote school, in a rural school in a country town or a school along the coast or in the south-east corner. We have to ensure that everything is mickey mouse. I do not say that lightly, because I know the cost of running Education Queensland. But what cost can we put on the education of a child?

The other issue I want to touch on briefly today is that of the Priority Country Area Program vehicles in rural and remote Queensland. Prior to Christmas the school communities at Birdsville, Bedourie, Windorah and Jundah were asked to again put in place extra funding for the retention of those vehicles. This is an impost that those communities cannot sustain. They are small communities. They are isolated and remote. To be drawing those extra dollars—in some cases, \$500 and \$600 a month—from the local people and out of those communities for the retention of these vehicles is another impost and a slur on those living in those remote areas.

I know that a lot of work has been done by Sandy Kidd, who has been very instrumental in the PCAP operations in western Queensland over a period. I urge the minister and the federal government—and I have certainly made representations about this in the past—to make absolutely certain that this program is retained so that those communities can retain the recreation facilities that PCAP provides and the other extras that come with PCAPs for those children.

Before I sit down I want to place on record my thanks to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, Rob Swarten. I am a firm believer in giving credit where credit is due. Since he has been the minister he has certainly had a soft spot for a lot of those isolated and remote schools. He has been making certain that the paint job is right, the airconditioning is right and seeing whether a rainwater tank has to be replaced or whether something else has to be done. He should be applauded for that, and I want to put that on the record. I say to him: thank you very much.

I urge Education Queensland to once again make absolutely certain that it monitors very closely those one-teacher operations and, at the same time, the P-10 schools. I urge the minister to monitor that program—and I know that she will—over the next couple of years. The important factor again is to make absolutely certain that those communities in question are well and truly informed about their entitlements and that they are not concerned that they are going to lose teachers. We are about working together in those communities to make absolutely certain,

through our district offices, that we have the best possible arrangements for our teachers, the schools and, most of all, the students who are participants at the schools in question.

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (3.32 p.m.): As the minister responsible for vocational education and training, I rise to support this forward looking and practical piece of law reform. This bill includes provision for certain powers to be exercised by the minister responsible for vocational education and training and, as such, it takes an unusual step for the statute book. It does so as a result of cooperation. This bill exemplifies cooperation between the training sector and the school sector. Such cooperation is absolutely vital if we are to combat unemployment. It is absolutely vital if we are to help young people bridge the gap between school and the workplace.

I place on record my thanks and appreciation to the Minister for Education, the Hon. Anna Bligh, who has worked in a collaborative way in the development of this bill. The bill reflects certain powers for the minister responsible for vocational education and training along with the Minister for Education with regard to the Queensland Studies Authority. The bill provides in particular for the minister responsible for vocational education and training to have the power to refer certain matters to the authority, to give directions to the authority jointly with the Education Minister and to have the power to get information from the authority by requiring the production of documents. Why is it necessary to have this unusual arrangement for an authority to be answerable to two ministers? It is said that no-one can serve two masters, but that is not the whole truth when it comes to dealing with the great challenge of convergence of our general education and our vocational education and training systems. This bill seeks to get a practical resolution to the way in which these two systems operate.

Consider the functions of this new Queensland Studies Authority. It has many functions which impact directly on the vocational education and training system. For example, the authority has the function of developing and revising 1-12 syllabuses. Clearly, such work impacts on the way in which students passing through those studies will prepare themselves for vocational education and training and, ultimately, for the world of work. The bill provides that the authority has certain specific vocational education and training functions. The authority has a function to exercise powers delegated to the authority by the Training Recognition Council under the Training and Employment Act 2000. The authority also has a function of informing the public about vocational education and training courses accredited under the delegation and vocational placement schemes recognised under the delegation and training organisations registered under the delegation.

The authority also has a function to advise the minister responsible for vocational education and training about vocational education and training matters relevant to the authority's functions. The authority has a further function with regard to tertiary entrance to confer and collaborate about tertiary entrance with a wide range of bodies, including TAFE colleges, the Vocational Education and Training Department, industry training advisory bodies and group training organisations.

It is commonsense that the Queensland Studies Authority should have these responsibilities. If we are to train our young people and if we are to educate our young people as whole people, then this requires that they be prepared, among other things, for the world of work. This is not to say that the process of education is to be reduced merely to producing cogs for the economic machine—far from it. Indeed, vocational education is far broader than mere training.

There has been considerable success in recent years in driving the training system closer to industry, and that is a good thing. However, we should never allow that process to proceed to the point where we lose sight of the true goal of vocational education, and that is to bring about the education of the whole person, including their calling in the world of work. So vocational education, far from being antithetical to the deep goals that inspire a liberal education, is an integral part of the process of a good education.

I am very pleased to see that Queensland leads the way in terms of school based apprenticeships and school based traineeships. Indeed, earlier today I spoke with students from the Nyanda State High School in my own electorate, some of whom were engaged in school based traineeships.

There is one area in which we are seeing broad agreement across the political spectrum and between state and Commonwealth levels of government, and that is in the area of the pathways for young people between school and the workplace. At a recent meeting of the Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs there was unanimous agreement

to establish a ministerial subcommittee to work on the problems confronting young people in making that transition from school to the workplace and, in particular, for those young people disconnected or at risk of becoming disconnected.

The Pathways report to the Prime Minister provides a very useful blueprint for that exercise. I am honoured to have been appointed by the Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs—MCEETYA—to chair that subcommittee, which has met twice in order to progress that issue. That subcommittee has been monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the Pathways report. It has also been working on the development of a ministerial declaration, which would set out the principles, the values and the objectives for tackling the problems in this area.

It is absolutely vital that industry groups, trade unions, TAFE colleges, schools, educators and curriculum developers work together and talk to each other. It is sometimes said that education is too important a matter to be left to the educators—it is the responsibility of parents; it is the responsibility of the whole community. It is certainly, among other things, the responsibility of those in industry. I urge the leaders of industry and the leaders of the trade union movement to take an active interest in the process.

Today, in this legislation we are not seeing the continuation of a petty turf war between the VET system and the school system; quite the contrary: we are seeing an enlightened, cooperative approach to ensure that our general education system works hand in hand with our vocational education and training system in the best interests of the young people and, in some cases, the mature-age people who are involved in the system. In order to achieve cooperation and in order to achieve clarity for the Queensland Studies Authority, the bill makes specific provision that, where the power of direction is exercised—that the authority comply, for example, with a policy standard or other instrument—then that power of direction must be exercised both by the Education Minister and the minister responsible for vocational education and training where the matter deals with the vocational education and training functions of the authority. I hope that that will send a strong message to all in the system. I hope that it will provide some clear message that the government is serious about getting our school systems and our vocational education and training systems working together.

The young people of this nation depend for their future upon the leadership of their elected members. This bill is an attempt to respond to that challenge and to set out a new framework for decision making in general education and vocational education and training for the years to come. I support the bill.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (3.43 p.m.): I would like to speak to the Education Queensland Studies Authority Bill 2001. The minister has stated that only 35 per cent of students are favoured under the three statutory bodies system in our education system and that they are specifically students seeking entrance to university or tertiary study at the end of school. Technology and travel have made our students very much international and we must ensure that our education requirements meet the demand. It appears to me that, if we are to provide excellent education for our children, the key factor is the quality of the staff and the resources to fund technology. The minister claims that the establishment a single statutory authority will enhance and integrate existing education system functions. But does it mean that we are going to be bogged down with another huge statutory body?

The minister has already acknowledged that key factors that hinder student achievement and progression to post-school destinations were the focus of a 2000 green paper titled 'Student achievement in Queensland'. I fear that one single entity will tend to focus on the needs of high-density areas and not take into consideration the needs of communities in rural areas. Hopefully, this concern will prove not to be justified. But, as yet, there does not appear to be equality for remote areas or, indeed, for rural areas such as the Nanango electorate. I look forward to seeing such equality.

These communities have different needs. So how will the government afford to provide the necessary technology to make education equitable for all students? As most other speakers have said, we cannot even aircondition the majority of our classrooms in rural areas. So students are already at a disadvantage. Will one education body treat all students' needs in these areas equitably also? The bill proposes that the Minister for Education will have a strategic role in the oversight of the effectiveness, efficiency, economy and timeliness of the authority and its systems and processes. I have to ask: what has the minister been doing up until now? Why are so many rural schools still lacking the facilities and equipment that are enjoyed by high-density schools in the state system?

I refer to an article from a distinguished headmaster in my electorate who stated—

There are plenty of challenges for education during this year and a firm belief that there is a very worthwhile future available to us all if we choose to create it.

I cannot see that creating one authority will address that aim, but I live in hope. For instance, to provide balance and an appropriate role model for students, more young men need to be encouraged to become teachers. That is another thing that I look forward to seeing. The best of our youth need to be encouraged to travel, to study and get more life experiences and then return to serve us in our schools. If we are ever going to be the Smart State that constantly pops up in ministers' speeches, then let us get really smart.

P-10 schools and their establishment in rural areas is an issue of concern for my electorate. The minister will be aware of the recent proposal for the P-10 school for Kilcoy, which had the full support of the community but did not get the go-ahead by the minister. During the term of this government I will be pursuing the minister to reconsider that decision. At present, many schools have varying curriculums, which adversely affect a child's schooling if that child has to move from school to school owing to their parents work commitments. The schools in my Nanango electorate have a wonderful reputation. The teachers at those schools should be commended for their efforts, considering that they often work with fewer resources than there are in other schools.

I know that, during the formulation of this bill, the minister consulted with both state and private school boards, parents, unions and representatives of the statutory bodies. Can the minister explain how amendments to the state school system on the implementation of syllabuses and tests, giving total power to the minister to mandate curriculum and syllabus, will apply to state schools with rural studies? For instance, Kingaroy High School has a special curriculum for students interested in furthering primary industry studies within the usual school curriculum. Such schools are already constantly raising money to provide equipment for students that should be included in the Education budget. In the minister's second reading speech, she said—

As this authority has a broad remit from preschool through to tertiary entrance, it is difficult to include representation from each of the interest groups or areas of expertise that this encompasses.

In that statement, the minister is referring to stakeholders. I ask the minister: how much rural interest and input was involved in drafting this legislation?

I commend the government on any effort to give every student access to technology to better their education, provided that access is given on a level playing field. I do not see one gigantic authority being able to let rural schools access the set 'quality assured syllabuses developed throughout the world' unless a lot more basic needs are met. In that regard, I hope to be proven wrong. According to the minister, a key function of the authority is to set and develop studies that include the eight key learning areas, which include maths, English and science, training packages, vocational education modules and learning frameworks such as the New Basics. I would like to see some more specific involvement of rural and remote areas in education.

Education is not an easy portfolio to administer. I support the minister in providing the ever-widening avenues of technologies that are needed to be incorporated in the education system to ensure that our students are well equipped to enter the job market in future years. I also support the intent of the bill and I look forward to seeing it being as great as members expect that it will be.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (3.49 p.m.): This bill creates a new Queensland Studies Authority. At the outset, I congratulate the minister, her parliamentary secretary, her departmental officers and the many representatives from various bodies in the education community for their participation, support and input into the development of this significant policy initiative.

There has been extensive community consultation in the development of this bill. There was over 12 months of consultation on a green paper released by the former minister, titled *Student Achievement in Queensland*. A number of working groups, involving representatives from the Catholic, state and independent school sectors were formed. A stakeholder reference group, chaired by the minister's parliamentary secretary, Jo-Ann Miller, met regularly during the preparation stage of the bill. All in all, there has been a significant amount of community input and support from the education sector, culminating in this bill. I believe it will significantly advance the interests of educational output and the interests of children in our state.

In recent years, the Queensland Government document *Queensland State Education 2010 Strategy* has been a major catalyst for driving reform in the education sector. The creation of the

Queensland Studies Authority is another practical demonstration of the 2010 strategy being put into practice. The 2010 strategy of Education Queensland fits in very neatly with the government's Smart State agenda. In many respects, it is looking for smarter ways to administer and deliver quality educational outcomes for students and their families, carers and supporters.

An important objective of this bill is to align the administrative structure to the overall objectives for education in Queensland. One of the most significant objectives outlined by the minister in her second reading speech is the creation of a coordinated curriculum system for preschool through to year 12. There is no doubt in my mind that a single authority provides the best means of achieving that objective.

A number of problems or difficulties have been identified with the current system. Those include the overlapping roles and functions between the three existing authorities. Currently, there is a separation in responsibility for syllabus and assessment between years 1 to 10 and years 11 and 12. The current system tends to favour students pursuing tertiary study, as opposed to the majority who choose alternative paths into traineeships, apprenticeships, further vocational study or employment. Also, there is a separation between the senior school board and the Tertiary Entrance Authority. This works against an effective articulation and coordination of the wide variety of post-school education, training and employment destinations that the overwhelming majority of students choose.

One of the major focuses of this bill and, indeed, of government policy is to raise the level of completion of year 12 or equivalent. I have a particular interest in the issue of 'or equivalent', which is defined as an 'Australian quality framework qualification level 3 or higher'. While I believe it is good policy to encourage completion of year 12 or equivalent, there is also a need to formalise recognition of that equivalent status to year 12 not only within our vocational system but particularly within the tertiary sector. I think that a student who completes year 12 or equivalent in many respects should go before a body assessing entrance into university or any other further study as having an equivalent status to a person who has completed formal year 12 qualifications. Hopefully that issue is one that the new Queensland Studies Authority can address in a coordinated way.

I looked briefly at some of the research into why students decide to leave school prior to completing year 12. Two of the main reasons were, firstly, the desire to obtain employment or an apprenticeship—that accounted for 54 per cent of people surveyed—and, secondly, the next highest was people who did not like school, at 13 per cent. In some respects, that is consistent with my own experience. I left school after year 10 principally because I thought that only students who wanted to attend university completed year 12. Also, the electrical trade apprenticeship I did required only year 10 as the standard for entry.

Mr English: That is a very skilful trade.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: Yes, it is an excellent trade. I am pleased to note that there are three electricians in this parliament.

Mr Cummins: Only two railway electricians.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: Only two railway electricians, yes.

In my own case, I was very proud of my trade and it gave me a good grounding and entry into the work force. Importantly, I soon realised that not having completed year 12 presented some obstacles to progressing further to more satisfying work. I did attempt, unsuccessfully, to complete year 12 part-time at night school. I found it difficult to study Shakespeare after such a long absence. However, after some years I applied for tertiary study as an adult entrant. Thanks to Gough Whitlam and his policy of free tertiary education, I was able to undertake tertiary study. Without that free education, I certainly would not have been able to—

Mr Mickel: You would still be a jockey.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: A track work rider, not a jockey.

The point is that students today will not be as lucky as I was in having access to a free tertiary education. I owe my position now to that opportunity to undertake further study which would otherwise have been denied to me simply because of financial constraints. That reinforces the necessity for today's students to complete, where possible, year 12—and the emphasis now is to include that 'or equivalent'. It is exceptionally important that we continue to reinforce the message to young people to complete year 12 or equivalent to enable them to progress into further education and to improve their chances in life and their employment prospects.

The member for Beaudesert touched on an issue which I have had a strong interest in; that is, developing partnerships between educational institutions and the community. I believe this area has not been pursued as vigorously as it should be. A massive amount of capital and infrastructure is invested in our school systems and in our schools. In many cases—but not all—that equipment and those facilities are underutilised. There is an enormous opportunity there for those involved in the education system to pursue strategic partnerships with community and other organisations, not only to enhance the usage of facilities on school grounds but also to broaden and enhance the opportunities for our schoolchildren. That extends to such things as employment or vocational partnerships, the arts, sporting and community facilities, and so on.

The use of facilities is something that needs to be designed into our schools. When I was Chair of the Public Works Committee—and the member for Beaudesert was a member of that committee—we looked at the Bentley Park P-12 School. During its design discussions, the need to look for partnerships with the local community was incorporated into the design. One of those partnerships, which was not pursued in the end, was a joint library facility with the local council. Also, the school hall, or the community hall, was designed and built in such a way that it had easy access from the street for community usage. They are just a couple of small examples, but there are numerous opportunities to develop partnerships with industry, community, sporting and cultural groups, et cetera, which will strengthen our educational system and the opportunities available to schoolchildren.

The P-12 concept is one that I support. In my view, I am very lucky to have the support of Education Queensland and the minister in developing a P-12 school in my electorate. It is unique, because we are combining two existing schools that are currently across the road from each other. It was a difficult decision for the community, because it meant the closure of Nudgee Primary School and the eventual rebuilding of a junior school on the Banyo High School grounds. However, we were open with the community and the concept received overwhelming support.

In my view, the P-12 concept, an integrated school on a single site, provides a number of advantages. In this instance, the school will be divided into a junior, a middle and a senior school. That gives us an opportunity to focus attention on the individual and collective needs of children and students as they are developing, not just in a curriculum sense but also in an emotional and physical sense. In relation to the subschool structure of junior, middle and senior, when we get to the point at which we have curriculums, programs of study and activities specifically focused to the individual needs of students at those three levels, the opportunities for advancement and achieving good educational outcomes will be greatly enhanced in these schools. I am not saying that it is a perfect model, but there are definitely some great opportunities, and I am looking forward to supporting this in my school community.

There is another issue that goes beyond some of the points made by a number of speakers to date concerning pathways from school. I see a role for schools to continue to support students to some extent beyond the school gate. If we look at the situation at the moment, if we count preschool, students are in the system for 13 years. As soon as they complete their year 12 final examinations they are out the gate and the school has no further responsibility for them.

An important issue for any pathways study or work that looks at improving the opportunities for students in these pathways will be to examine ways in which our system can give them some initial support beyond school, if necessary, as they move into either further vocational education, employment or tertiary study. To me there is too much of a finality in terms of the involvement of our education system. There is some role in the transition period between year 12 examinations and whatever pathway people choose. I note that Minister Foley chairs a MCEETYA task force, which is undertaking some exceptionally important work in identifying ways to maximise the benefits to young people in relation to the various pathways they choose.

As Minister Foley outlined, the bill gives the Minister for Employment and Training some responsibility in terms of referring vocational education matters to the authority and, if necessary, issuing written directions. Also, the authority has the power to advise the minister on vocational education and training matters. As has been outlined, that highlights the increasingly important role that vocational education and training is having within our school sector. That role is strengthening as each year goes by. It emphasises the need for both departments to continue acting collaboratively on vocational education and training matters. I think it was the member for Robina who suggested that both the Departments of Training and Education should eventually merge. I know that is the case in other states. It is probably something that in the future needs to be looked at in this state also.

I will refer briefly to some local school initiatives. I have referred to the P-12 college created on the Banyo High School grounds, which involved the amalgamation of Nudgee Primary School and Banyo State High. That is a project to which Education Queensland, through the government, has contributed \$8.8 million. Plans are well under way for that project and there have been a number of public meetings to receive input and feedback from the community, which to date has been very constructive. There has been a lot of community support.

The other significant development in my electorate is the relocation of the Australian Catholic University to the Banyo seminary site in January 2003. Again, the state government has contributed \$6 million towards this \$20 million project. It is a very exciting initiative. In a sense, we are creating a unique educational precinct in Banyo. I have made the point on numerous occasions that we needed to develop strong links between not just the local high school, the vocational education sector and industry but also the tertiary sector. We will have that opportunity when ACU opens its doors in Banyo in 2003.

Last year, the Zillmere State School received funding from the Brisbane City Council to produce a CD of its school song. This magnificent school song is called *Aim High*. The CD, which is available at \$5 a copy, was launched last year by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Jo-Ann Miller, and has generated enormous interest around the country. The song *Aim High* is played regularly on ABC Radio. I do not know why the other stations have not picked it up, because it is a great song. As I said, it was the culmination of support from the Brisbane City Council, which gave financial assistance, the local Chermshire office of Lifeline Community Development, which played a significant role in bringing together the community to produce it, the parents, staff and students, of whom there are too many to name. So many people were involved that I would be fearful of missing someone out. They put so much time and effort into producing this wonderful CD, which is a credit to them all. In addition to the song *Aim High*, which is the school song, they have also adapted a Kev Carmody song, *From Little Things Big Things Grow*. That song expresses the wishes and desires of many students about what they might do with their lives. It is well worth listening to, and I encourage all honourable members to ring the Zillmere State School and purchase a copy.

Last year, the Boondall State School, in my electorate, was very lucky to receive funding from both the Brisbane City Council and Queensland Transport for a school drop-off zone and parking area—\$120,000 in total on a fifty-fifty basis. That new drop-off and parking area was opened in time for the commencement of this school year. We thank Queensland Transport, the minister and also the Brisbane City Council for their support and also acknowledge the strong support of Councillor Victoria Newton in gaining approval for that project. With those few words, I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (4.07 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001, I pass on my appreciation to the Minister for Education for making available Don Wilson and officers of her department for a briefing. They gave their time very generously and I appreciated the information and clarification they were able to pass on.

The feedback that I have received on this bill has been generally supportive. One of the people I spoke to said that they had suffered some frustration in the past, having received different answers to the same question according to which governing body or agency they put the question to. That person felt that there was a need for a more cohesive approach. From the briefing that I received, I gathered that that is the intention of this bill. It draws together the three areas of the Board of Secondary School Studies, the Queensland School Curriculum Council and the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority to form one authority—the Queensland Studies Authority. Generally, they have the same functions as one entity as they had severally.

There is a new function and that is that the authority will be able to accredit year 1 to 12 syllabi—I know the OPC says 'syllabuses', but it does not sound right—and preschool guidelines developed by other entities other than the authority for implementation in Queensland schools. That in particular will be syllabi developed for non-state schools or syllabi that specifically address the needs of smaller schools. I pass on a concern—perhaps a concern without any basis until this new authority has had time to function—that some assurance should be given that non-state school curricula which may be different from the state school focus will receive a fair and equitable review.

I say that without any sleight intended on the current members of those three existing entities. Many of the private schools are faith based—Christian based—and they incorporate into their syllabi their own faith teachings. It is not intended to undermine good educational practice.

Indeed, most private schools have a very high educational attainment rate and a high expectation of their students. The guideline that was put to me was that the syllabi should be of a reasonable or comparable standard. Perhaps the guiding line will be the state school curriculum. However, I do seek some assurance from the minister that there will be a significant amount of latitude allowed by this new authority, the Queensland Studies Authority, to ensure that the diverse interests of the private schools—the non-state schools—will be allowed to be incorporated into the development of those curricula and syllabi.

I notice that one of the things that the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee referred to parliament was the question of whether some form of review should be provided in relation to any full or partial rejection of a syllabus developed outside the authority. I seek clarification from the minister as to what happens when a party, particularly an independent school or a non-state government school, develops a syllabus and part or all of it is rejected. What is the appeal process or what will be made available to them?

There is another issue that I want to raise which has been canvassed by other members. The existing bodies and this new body will be required to establish a standard of assessment. We were talking during the briefing about one of the frustrations that not only parents but also some students have felt. I will use the example—certainly not exclusively, but this is the one that I have most experience with—of TAFE colleges that issue a certificate of proficiency to the effect that a person is competent in the area in which they have received training. That competency standard allows for no reflection on that student's ability. It brings everybody down to one common denominator. Provided that students have worked to their ability, they should be able to reflect the extent to which they have been able to achieve. State schools are able to reflect that. Students who have worked very hard and put in the time to study, to do their assignments and to achieve well find it frustrating that all they can get is a competency certificate. I hope that, in the fullness of time, as the new authority assesses new approaches to education it does not reduce the ability of schools to reflect the true energy and the true work that a student does.

One of the reasons given for these competency certificates is that they enable students who are not high achievers—not because they cannot or will not work but because their intellectual ability is in some way diminished—to get a competency certificate. I do not have an argument with that group of students. I think it is wonderful that they can study and achieve in order to get employment or advance themselves. But it is disadvantageous for those students who have perhaps a greater ability in scholastic issues and would like to be able to reflect that in their recorded results. This issue has not arisen with this bill, but I believe it would be a tragedy if the new authority ever considered watering down the reflection of the students' work to competencies to the fact they are competent in this particular subject.

Comments have been made about vocational education and training and its marriage with the school system. In my electorate that has been exceptionally successful. We have a very strong vocational education stream. In particular, there are protocols in place between the high schools, the TAFE college and industry. There are also protocols in place with the Rosella Park school in my electorate which caters for children and young adults who have some learning disabilities. The school has focused particularly on hospitality training. I have seen kids go into that training program at the beginning of the year very nervous and ill prepared to be able to work in the hospitality industry. But at the end of their training program—certificates 1, 2 and 3—their skills base has improved out of sight, their confidence has improved out of sight, and they would be employable in almost any hospitality area. It is a thrill to see those students and the confidence that has grown in them.

I turn now to the tertiary entrance functions. We had some discussion during the briefing about OPs and the way that they are graded. Because of the opportunities for non-state school education—and they are proliferating—and because of the variety of schooling options that are available to parents, the opportunity of not only getting an OP but some sort of a core skills test is fundamental, whether it be the SAT or some other comparable test. I think that nowadays we have—more so than when I and most other members were in high school—a greater choice as far as furthering our education. To enter most tertiary facilities, students must have some sort of OP, SAT or core skills indicator. I certainly would be supportive of this authority maintaining and even enhancing the ability of students from varied educational backgrounds to gain entry into our tertiary educational facilities.

One of the problems that we face in rural Queensland, even at the campus in Gladstone, is that many of the university courses still provide only the first year. We have some courses that can be completed at the campus, and a couple of IT courses that cover from the first year right

through to graduation. However, the majority, such as engineering and those sorts of courses, still have students starting off at Gladstone for their first year of university then having to move to Rockhampton, Brisbane or Townsville for their second and third years. That bleed from our community means that a lot of those kids do not come back; they form friendships and relationships in the cities that they go to for university, they become young adults, and we lose the opportunity to incorporate them into our work force with their skills and their gifts. I hope that, in the near future, the Gladstone electorate as a community will consider this and try to enhance the opportunities for tertiary education starting and finishing at the Gladstone campus.

The part of the bill relating to the minister's power in relation to the authority is clearly set out. It says that the minister may give the authority a written direction about a matter relevant to its function if the minister is satisfied it is necessary to give the direction in the public interest. Then it outlines some of the things that can be made directions and some of the things that cannot. My only concern about that—and I expressed this at the briefing—is that there are times when an independent authority goes in a direction with which the broad base of the community does not agree. Education in the main is a state-funded opportunity for our students. It is a wonderful opportunity. But what happens if an authority is going in an opposite direction to where the community believes it should be going? The complaint that I receive is, I am sure, the same as that which many elected members receive. It relates mainly to numeracy and literacy. If this independent body, the statutory authority, at some time in the future decides to continue or commence syllabi that do not reflect the desire of the community—that basic literacy and basic numeracy be reinforced and ensured—I believe that the minister should be able to give directions about that type of issue if it is strongly regarded by the community at large.

Some concerns have been expressed about the make-up of the authority. In discussing the make-up in detail with the group from the minister's office and the department, there seemed to be quite a good retained balance. I refer to the minister's second reading speech in which she said—

In particular, I expect the new authority to canvass the full range of parent views through appropriate committee mechanisms.

The concluding stages of the bill refer to a review to be commenced on the third anniversary of the date of assent. I commend the minister for this. I believe it is an excellent provision. No piece of legislation is perfect. One that intrinsically influences educational outcomes for our young people is critical. If it can be shown over a short or longer period that some of these initiatives have not achieved what was expected, then there needs to be an opportunity for them to be amended. If it can be shown, even before that three-year review date is reached, that insufficient attention is being given to parents' views, I would hope that also would be addressed by the minister.

Because of the change in structure from three statutory authorities to one, I raise a concern about the budget. Instead of three single budgets there will be only one budget. What will be the ability of Treasury to in some way or other reduce the resources that will be available to this new authority? This new authority will have quite significant responsibilities. It must be resourced appropriately, with both human and financial resources. I hope that, as part of a government that values education highly, the minister, the Premier and the Treasurer will ensure that this new authority is appropriately funded.

As I said, the feedback on this bill has been generally positive. Education is valued greatly in my electorate, which has around 25 schools. The principals and staff of each of them value greatly the influence they have on their students. In both the state and non-state school sectors they work very hard, going well above and beyond the call of duty, to provide that education. I commend all of the teachers in my region for the hard work they do.

The schools in our area face a very critical challenge, that is, the population growth that is anticipated not only for this year but also for the next four or five years. I commend the department, based in Rockhampton, on its infrastructure planning. I have discussed the issue with Jeff Krause and a number of other people in the department. No new schools have been constructed in preparation for growth, but there are contingency plans in place to take account of the growth when it reaches the point at which a new school has to be built.

I ask the minister to keep a very close eye on the preschools, primary schools and secondary schools and on tertiary and vocational education to ensure that, as the pressure builds with increasing population, adequate resourcing is made available to enable them to cope, particularly with teacher aide hours, in the science stream and in the IT stream. We find that there is a great shortage of information technology officers to adequately maintain the computer systems

throughout the schools. The numbers of IT service people in private industry and in our school system do not rate a comparison. Certainly with the growing number of students in my electorate, because of its industrialisation, that will need to be carefully monitored and certainly resourced as the demand grows. As I said, the response to this bill in my electorate was generally very positive. I look forward to seeing the benefits to our children as we develop a sound and strong education system.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (4.23 p.m.): It is an absolute pleasure to rise in support of the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001. While I will take this opportunity to discuss in reasonable detail some of the aspects of the bill that I think are important, I say at the outset that, as most members know, I am one who is always proud to talk about the great achievements of the schools in my own electorate. I am really looking forward to this Thursday morning, when the students from 7J and 7S—Ms Julie Jelley's class and Mr Steve Schumacher's class—from Fig Tree Pocket school will be visiting Parliament House.

Mr Cummins: A fine school.

Mr LEE: A very fine school. I am really looking forward to spending some time with the teachers and students of year 7 of Fig Tree Pocket school.

The basic object of the bill is to contribute to high levels of completion of year 12 or its equivalent in Queensland. This will be done through increased retention and improvements to the social cohesion and the social and human capital of Queensland. It will provide seamless development of syllabuses across the compulsory years of schooling, which are years 1 to 10, and into the post-compulsory years 11 and 12. I am looking forward to a day in Queensland when the compulsory years of schooling are extended to include years 11 and 12 or their equivalent.

The bill will also provide a supported transition from formal schooling to post-school options, support the development of a coherent set of principles which inform the conditions of learning across the span of schooling, and build the foundations for lifelong learning in this state. It will provide, importantly, a statutory arrangement that will allow schooling sectors—namely the state, independent and Catholic sectors—and individual schools to achieve their common and specific objectives and to meet the needs of their students. It will support the effective transitions between stages of schooling, between formal and informal learning environments and to post-school work or further study and, indeed, active citizenship.

I think the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001 is necessary, because previously this area was administered by three acts. They were the Education (School Curriculum P-10) Act 1996, the Education (Senior Secondary School Studies) Act 1988 and the Education (Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority) Act 1990. Certain sections of the Education (General Provisions) Act 1989 also applied. Three acts, enacted at different times, allowed for different and divergent reporting and accountability responsibilities among the three authorities. There were overlapping roles and the authorities acted independently, as permitted under their legislation.

The present legislative regime did not promote seamless education in Queensland from preschool to year 12 and through to post-school destinations. The present legislative regime was not in step with the need of Queensland to be active and in step with the global economy. The present system tends to favour those students seeking to enter university or other tertiary institutions on the completion of year 12. This rate within Queensland is currently around only 35 per cent of the age cohort. Acting separately, the current bodies have little scope for working together to ensure that Queensland students are provided with the best support and advice to move from preschool to year 10, to years 11 and 12 and then to work or to other study and training destinations. With this bill the government has moved to ensure that Queensland has forward looking legislation that complements the Smart State agenda.

The process of developing this legislation involved former Education Minister the Hon. Dean Wells issuing a green paper entitled *Student Achievement in Queensland*. It was distributed widely at all levels throughout the education community. The green paper canvassed three options for reform. Option 1 proposed minimal change with minor adjustments to the responsibilities of the QSCC and the QBSSSS, option 2 proposed the establishment of a single authority, and option 3 proposed the establishment of a single board of studies across preschool to year 12, with TEPA to be retained as a separate entity.

Over 200 written submissions were received after statewide forums that included all sectors of education—independent, Catholic and state. Nominees from EQ, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland convened a working group to analyse the submissions and prepare a draft report. The report identified the

need for a single authority with a strong focus on alignment of mechanisms for addressing retention rates, welfare and service provisions to students and better management of the areas of transition, at both year 10 to year 11 and year 12 to post-school destinations.

The report also identified that schools required curriculum development, assessment, certification and a tertiary entrance system responsive to such things as technological innovation, fluctuating labour market requirements and evolving education and training needs. A reference group representative of all interests was formed under the chairmanship of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education to discuss the report and provide advice to the minister. The minister recommended to cabinet that a single statutory authority be formed. Three working groups were constituted—that is, legislation, policy and transition—and were representative of the stakeholders. Draft legislation was produced and provided to the reference group. Individual briefings were held with key stakeholder groups such as parents, the sectors, the unions, the principals, professional associations and other government agencies. An independent facilitator was engaged to run the process. The process was notable for its high levels of inter-sector commitment, cooperation and innovation. The bill before the House is the final product of this.

The Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001 will subsume the QSCC, the QBSSSS and TEPA. All existing functions of these authorities will be maintained. This is important to ensure that there is continuity and certainty for the education community. Students currently enrolled in years 11 and 12 will not be disadvantaged. The new authority will advise the minister on and have responsibility for syllabus development, assessment, certification and tertiary entrance across diverse P-12 contexts and settings with articulation to post-school destinations. The new authority will advise the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth on relevant vocational and educational matters. The bill specifically provides for the minister responsible for vocational education and training to refer matters to the authority and, in concert with the Minister for Education, to issue written directions to the authority about these matters. The provision to facilitate the involvement of two ministers is novel. However, it sends a clear message that the government is determined to ensure that every possible opportunity is provided to young Queenslanders to complete 12 years of schooling or its equivalent in the training and related sectors. The bill before the House will provide a platform for education to support the Smart State agenda.

The authority set up under the bill will develop and revise years 1 to 12 syllabuses and preschool guidelines. The authority will approve years 1 to 12 syllabuses and guidelines and will develop and revise documents to support the implementation of approved syllabuses and preschool guidelines. The authority will also develop resources and services for the professional development of teachers to support the implementation of approved preschool guidelines and approved syllabuses in schools. The authority will have an accreditation function which will enable it to accredit syllabuses, and I must say at this stage that I agree with the member for Gladstone. I think I would almost prefer to use the term 'syllabi'. The authority will also accredit preschool guidelines developed by entities other than the authority. This will ensure that Queensland students will have access to the best syllabuses available throughout Australia and the world.

Utilising the accreditation function, the minister may develop a syllabus and apply to the authority to have it accredited. If accredited, the minister may direct state educational institutions to implement it. Similarly, a private school that has developed a syllabus may apply for it to be accredited by the authority. The authority is responsible for a testing function. A test may be prescribed under regulation and the authority is responsible for developing and administering such a test. The authority is responsible for providing principals and students with information about student performance in tests. The authority also has the function of analysing systemic information about the performance of students in the test and reporting such analysis to the minister, the chief executives of EQ, ASIQ and QCEC. The authority also has assessment and moderation functions, a tertiary entrance function and a responsibility to monitor, review and recommend changes to tertiary entrance requirements to institutions within the state. It also has a responsibility to inform the public about procedures and requirements.

It is important at this point to briefly mention what the minister's powers will be under this new legislation. The bill provides the minister with the power to refer matters relevant to its performance to the authority in writing. The minister may give the authority direction in the public interest about a matter relevant to its performance of its functions. However, the minister cannot direct the content of a syllabus or preschool guidelines, the approval of a syllabus or preschool guideline developed or revised by the authority, the accreditation of a syllabus or preschool

guideline, or the recording of results of a particular person in an area of learning or on a certificate of achievement issued to the person.

Consequential amendments to the Education (General Provisions) Act 1989 provide that the minister may develop and revise years 1 to 12 syllabuses and preschool guidelines in state schools only. The minister may direct a principal of a relevant state educational institution that in providing education in the area of learning the institution must implement a stated approved syllabus or accredited syllabus for the area of learning. The minister may direct the principal of a relevant state educational institution that in providing education in the preschool year of schooling the institution must implement a stated approved preschool guideline or accredited preschool guideline.

The authority will subsume three authorities which each have boards and councils representative of the education community and will become one authority. By virtue of that fact, it is a reasonably sensitive task. Simply transferring membership of all representatives across to the new authority would be unworkable. However, the sectors have agreed that the philosophy of equal state and non-state membership should apply and that an executive committee comprised of the chair, a nominee of ASIQ, a nominee of QCEC and the CEOs of EQ and DET should be formed to set the agenda. The membership covers representation from state, independent and Catholic sectors; both education unions; state and non-state parent bodies; industry; higher education; teachers and principals, including both primary and secondary; special education; and education of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. That such a sensitive task of reducing numbers to a manageable but justly representative number was achieved is testament to the commitment of the sectors and the stakeholders. The authority will access the broader representation and advice through a relevant committee structure.

In her second reading speech the minister made particular mention of parent bodies and the role she expected them to play in the committee structure. It is at this point that I make mention of the hard work that the parent bodies at a number of my local schools have been putting in recently. It is fair to say that parent groups at all schools do a tremendous amount of work, but today I want to mention just a small number of the schools in my electorate. I begin by very sincerely thanking the outgoing executive of the Indooroopilly State High School P&C Association. There are a number of executive members who, over the years, have contributed above and beyond what would have been expected of them. I am very grateful for the great work that they have done. I also commend the principal of Indooroopilly State High School, Pat Heenan, and his deputy, Lynelle Rafton, for getting the year off to such a great start.

I also wish good luck to the student leaders at Indooroopilly State High for this year, many of whom I know from various school activities. I mention in particular Jenny Boyne and Jack Fuller, the school captains; Susan Kennedy, the academic captain; Eliza Burke, the arts captain; Daniel Jackson, the cultural captain; and of course Lucas Sullivan, the sports captain. It is worth briefly mentioning the commitment of Lucas. He manages to enthuse the students about sport at Indooroopilly State High School. I was very impressed with the way he has managed to do that. That is a great bunch of student leaders for that school and one that I am absolutely certain will provide valuable role models for the younger students.

On 7 February I had the pleasure of attending the commencement mass at St Joseph's Nudgee Junior College in Indooroopilly. The theme for the mass was 'Our Journey'. When I visit Nudgee Junior I am always impressed at how the school manages to get young men so involved in activities, whether it is performance, reading or even choir and dance. A lot of the credit for that obviously has to go to the teachers, but I think it is also important that we acknowledge the leadership of the school: the principal, Mr Sean Gordon, and his deputy, Mr Patrick Colley.

I found the evening absolutely wonderful. I was impressed with so much. Martin Koleczko and Phillip Crossin were delightful and very polished in welcoming the students and those parents who were present. The school was lucky that Father Chris Jenkins from the Toowong parish could come along and celebrate mass for them. Anthony Xavier, Dominic Howe and Chris Dodd provided the penitential rite, but the first reading was read by Ros Peters. I have spoken of Ros in the House before because of her valuable contribution to the Future Problem Solvers team at Nudgee Junior, one that has been exceptionally successful and hopefully one we will see going to America to compete at an international level in the next 12 months.

It is unusual at a school made up only of boys to see people participating in the performing arts in the way that these young men do. On the evening the responsorial psalm was actually a performance of *The Windows of Gold*. It was read by Luke O'Kane and Harrison Bray and acted

by Jack O'Hare and Nick Allen-Ducat. It is also wonderful to see the choir performing as well as it did. I am continually impressed with how well the choir at Nudgee Junior performs.

I would like to mention Jack O'Hare again and Roland Hlavka for reading the gospel and also Adam Edmestone, Robbie Raffa, Sam Waller, Nick Allen-Ducat, Stephen Nugent, William Martin and Rowan Conaghan for performing it. At the same time I would like to make very welcome Brett Cashmere, a new teacher to the school, and I would like to also make welcome all of those new parents. I very briefly send my best wishes to Tom Pyke, the school captain; Damien Moulton, the vice-captain; Christian Raftery and Corey Triffet, the choir captains; Nicholas Lavan and James Carr, the band captains; and also the house captains of Nudgee Junior, Dominic Fanning, Joseph Mitchell, William Sullivan, Clyde McIlroy, Dougald McTaggart and Nathaniel Hancock.

I am looking forward to working with the boys this year. I know that they will make their parents very, very proud. I am also looking forward to representing the Minister for Education at the opening of the Montessori School's new administration block in a couple of weeks time, just as I am looking forward to being at the opening of St Peter's—

Time expired.

Mr FLYNN (Lockyer—ONP) (4.44 p.m.): In general, I find it impossible to support the principles of this bill seeking, as it does, to facilitate movement between educational arenas and containing duplicity of efforts between the multiple bodies presently in place. My few concerns include the need to ensure an even presence on the new body of members of the three bodies it replaces. We do not need to lose the expertise of the three bodies at the expense of a totally new input.

I note the comments made by the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee to a possible conflict of interest when the new authority considers submissions of interest on its own options. To this end I would like to see an independent body to referee such cases. If the government is going to put in place a body to discuss syllabus for private and public education, if there is a conflict there, an independent body would decide whether the non-state education body would be able to be represented.

Many of us here from whichever party have been subject to either private or public education. We all have our own opinions on which education system is the best. I do not think there is a best education system. I think the two complement each other. I went through a private school education. I hate to give the government time at my expense, but I probably was not their best example.

Mr Lawlor: You failed plasticine, didn't you?

Mr FLYNN: I did, yes. The member is quite right.

There is most definitely a place for private education. The state could not afford to take on board what the private system does. I think that we do need an independent body to judge this conflict of interest. My children and my wife all went to public sector schools. My wife has more educational qualifications than I do and so do my son and my daughter. I am extraordinarily proud of them and the achievements they scored under the public education system. Nevertheless, we need to address the fact that the public education system would drown if it were required to take on the load of the private body.

The government controls conflict with what we learn and how we learn. Any move to ensure that everything we see, learn, hear and do is controlled by government is a backward step, but I think the government is supposed to represent what the public feels, and hopefully it does. Nevertheless, we do need a counterbalance, and I am absolutely certain that the government here today does realise that.

I was assured today by Education Queensland that private education will have an equal voice. It is sort of like a smorgasbord. These are the options available to you; you can take your pick. However, this can be overridden by the fact that the statutory authority set up by the government has the power to license somebody as a person who can set syllabi. But are they likely to set the syllabus if it is in opposition to what they think? This is what I doubt. When government is clearly the champion of state education it has the final say to the private sector. I think the private sector will be diminished as a result.

It would be pleasing to have a committee made up of equal government and non-government members. I appreciate the state government's attitude towards committees in this parliament. On those committees we have three non-government and three government members, but we have a chairman who is a government member. With all the goodwill in the

world we know that if the government wants something to take place, that is what is going to happen. I have a belief in the integrity of the committee system, but if we are going to be really true about this, if we are going to be fair dinkum, then we need to have a situation in which, firstly, the opposition and, secondly, the government has an equal say in what is going on. My only concern is that this authority will have the final say at the expense of the private sector.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.50 p.m.): It is a great pleasure to rise to speak in support of the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001, particularly because it is a smart bill. It is part of the Smart State strategy, because it really complements and fulfils the objectives of that great document, Education 2010. That is the blueprint for education in this state in the future. I am passionate about that document, and so is the majority of my school communities. It is not just an airy-fairy dream; it has been derived from the community. I feel very much a part of it and the rest of my community feels very much a part of it, because we were part of the original consultation process.

The Education 2010 blueprint came right from the schools in my community and other communities across Queensland. It is an intelligent document that sets the foundation for an education system in Queensland that will give children a strong and competitive future in this state and in the world economy. This bill certainly complements Education 2010, because the fundamental elements of that document ensure continuity through the school system from P-12. The document is about providing alternative pathways for children to find their way through the education system. Indeed, I am not just talking about children but also about young adults, because the implementation document refers to the need to support people until the age of 24 through the secondary school education system and prepare them for employment and/or post secondary education.

In educational terms, there is a great consciousness in the community of what I refer to as seamless education, that is, an education system that works smoothly from P-12 and in the way the Education 2010 blueprint dictates, that is, that our communities are interconnected and that our schools are no longer isolated islands. It is not long ago that the ethos of many people in our school communities was to have a barbed wire fence around their little domain. Those people did not have to connect with the rest of the world and they felt very safe and comfortable within that domain. I am very pleased to see that our school communities are supporting this great move to ensure that those days are long gone and that our schools interact with each other—primary schools interacting with other primary schools and primary schools interacting with secondary schools.

This move is manifesting itself in many ways. An exciting example of this in my electorate is the Whites Hill College, which is the amalgamated Camp Hill Secondary School and the Whites Hill Primary School. The Deputy Premier, the member for Chatsworth, and I have the privilege of representing that school. Although only the school ovals fall within my electorate, I still have a great interest in that school and many of my constituents have children who go to that school. This campus will become a P-12 school, with a lower, middle and upper school. That is a very exciting concept, because it is the embodiment of the fundamentals of the Education 2010 blueprint. It is an exciting concept in that not many of these schools operate in Queensland. Certainly, they have been operating to a limited degree in the private sector. But it really is an adventurous move in the secondary sector and I have every hope that it will work extremely well. There is a buzz of excitement in my local community about the school. The Xavier Special School will become a form of satellite campus to the Whites Hill campus, which is also very exciting.

The bill is indeed important, because it fulfils the exact requirements of the 2010 strategy by providing the requisite institutions that will support a smooth transition from P-12. It will provide all the relevant infrastructure in one place—what one might call a one-stop shop—for all of the relevant aspects of syllabus development, assessment, certification, and tertiary entrance in the P-12 context with articulation to post secondary destinations. So it is certainly very logical and very timely that this apparatus be put into place. It is very consistent with that Smart State blueprint, Education 2010.

In my electorate, the fundamental direction of Education Queensland and the implementation of Education 2010 can be seen in AccessEd being established at the Coorparoo education precinct. This is a great venture. The government has spent \$9.2 million on putting Education Queensland's AccessEd into that campus. I tell my local education community that we have a nuclear power station of education curriculum material based in my electorate, with distance education and people who are at the forefront in researching and developing the relevant technology to promote computerised education in the future. This is a fantastic

opportunity for my community. Also housed at that precinct are the main education teaching libraries and corporate libraries for Queensland. I know that the teachers in my electorate are making great use of this facility. The education community in my electorate is very excited about plugging into this power station of educational energy.

A couple of other elements that I would like to touch upon very briefly relate to the issues that this new body will be required to confront. One of those is the issue of assessment. That issue will continue to attract some controversy. Today, I have heard other members set out eloquently the progression of various reports in Queensland that have resulted in major shifts in curriculum assessment and the assessment of students over some years. I think it can be safely said that there is a tendency in education for the pendulum to swing very extremely in one direction and stay there. In some circumstances, that can be unfortunate, because I think that often we throw out good ideas and practices and tend to lose some balance.

In the future, I would like to see some care taken and some caution exercised in the way in which we swing that pendulum. In the past, the pendulum has swung away very extremely from assessment by final examination at year 12 to the continuous assessment system that is now dominant, especially within the realm of schoolchildren.

I do not think the debate is over and I would like to see some continuing debate on this topic. I am constantly exposed to the arguments put forward by very experienced and intelligent teachers who still see merit in balanced assessment systems or, indeed, in some further provision of choice in our education system. I refer here to a capacity within the education system to continue with final examination assessment as well as continuous assessment.

The final examination system is in place within my electorate at that excellent institution, the Coorparoo Secondary College. This is an exciting institution because it, along with its two sister secondary colleges in Brisbane, has the capacity to deliver secondary courses by way of single examination or continuous assessment. The continuous assessment system does not suit everybody. There is clear evidence that the final examination arrangement has been of great benefit to many people, especially to women and to other people who may have suffered some disadvantage in their lives or who have difficult living conditions which present problems in terms of attending for the regimented hours expected under the continuous assessment system. I have seen a lot of women return to study after being unable to complete their secondary studies for various reasons. I have gotten to know a number of these women who have fitted perfectly into the final examination requirements but would not have fitted so well into the continuous assessment. Those women have excelled and I have felt very proud to see them walk across the stage on speech night at Coorparoo Secondary College and receive their awards for excellence. In that context especially, I urge the relevant authority in the future to give close consideration to ensuring that that flexibility is provided.

The debate is certainly not over at the classroom level in terms of school-age children. This issue should be kept open for debate in the future within the educational community and the wider community. In the future, I am sure some schools will wish to revisit it and to provide exactly that flexibility for school-age children to proceed—where it is attractive to them or appropriate for them—through an examination system rather than a continuous assessment system. In this context, I will not go into the relative merits of the various arguments which exist in the educational community. However, I think it should be debated and it should be kept foremost in our minds because it goes to the heart of educating children. It also goes to the heart of the fundamental relationship between a teacher and a student. There is a very different relationship between a teacher and a student during a continuous assessment system as opposed to the final examination system. In the future, I would like to see it discussed more broadly within the community.

Finally, I will touch upon the issue of vocational education and training, which now falls within the purview of this new authority. The issue which will require close consideration by the authority and the minister is the way in which educational institutions, training institutions and the government in general informs itself about training needs. I refer here to the existence in the community of ITABs, Industry Training Advisory Boards. I know that other honourable members share my experience of hearing mixed views about the effectiveness of the current ITAB system. If one looks into various industries, one finds various reactions about the effectiveness and viability of their ITABs. Those reactions about the effectiveness of ITABs range from despair and negativity through to great confidence. I make it clear that I am not tarring all ITABs with the same brush, but I believe this is an area which needs close scrutiny in future. I appreciate that there are federal dimensions to it, but it is an issue that the new authority will have to confront in terms of

ensuring that it is appropriately and properly informed about training needs, that these ITABs are accurately representative of industry training needs and that they are doing a good job.

There are some major challenges ahead for this new organisation. I trust that it will be a body which connects with our local communities and engages in these major pedagogical debates. That must continue. They must be connected to the community. Our communities are increasingly vital to, interested in and articulate about these matters. In the future, it will be increasingly important that this authority recognises that and provides our communities with adequate opportunity to be heard on matters which affect all of its charter, particularly the matters I have referred to of student assessment and the assessment of specific training and education needs.

This is a very important development in our state education system. It is one which will certainly fulfil our needs in terms of implementing Education 2010. I commend the work of the minister in bringing these authorities together into a rational and functional body. I wish the new head of that body and its staff well in executing their duties. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (5.08 p.m.): It is my pleasure today to talk to the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill. Members would be aware that I have raised the issue of airconditioning in schools on numerous occasions in this House. It is certainly the single greatest issue in my electorate. There are always education issues such as health and so on, but this is an issue which has really grabbed the people. They really believe they are not getting a particularly fair go.

The explanatory notes list the following policy objectives of the bill—

To contribute to higher levels of completion of year 12 or its equivalent to improve the social cohesion and the social and human capital of Queensland;

...

To provide statutory arrangements that will operate to enable schooling sectors and individual schools to achieve their common and specific objectives to meet the needs of their clients ...

How on earth can our students achieve those levels given the conditions they have to learn under today? Schools west of 148 degrees longitude were airconditioned in 1988, nearly 14 years ago. In the meantime, school P&Cs have been fundraising and looking at options for airconditioning schools. Some of the very small schools are already airconditioned, where enough money has been raised. A lot of the Catholic schools are airconditioned. P&Cs have been looking at airconditioning one or two rooms or the library so as to provide some comfort for the children.

Today, our houses, cars, buses and prisons are airconditioned. In north Queensland, reverse-cycle airconditioning is nearly always necessary due to the high humidity levels. However, reverse-cycle airconditioning is not necessary in western areas; evaporative cooling is sufficient. It is also a lot cheaper and better. In many instances, the cost would be even half or a quarter of the cost of installing reverse-cycle airconditioning. Therefore, a lot more schools could be cooled.

People are doing all sorts of things to raise money to aircondition schools. For example, the week before last a full-page *Sunday Mail* article reported on the airconditioning efforts of people at St George and highlighted the problems experienced by students, such as bleeding noses and so on. Councillors John Stone and Robert Buchan are two weighty gentlemen who have sponsored each other \$100 a kilo for every kilogram of weight they lose, with the funds raised going towards airconditioning for the school. They have a maximum of \$3,000 each; by the same token, the minimum, if they do not reach the maximum, is still \$3,000. Of course, we hope they will reach the maximum, which I am sure they will. They are putting personal effort into raising funds for the school. In the *Balonne Beacon* Robert Buchan is reported as stating—

I'm on a 'More or Less' diet ... I exercise more and eat less. I've been doing some weights as well, lifting less food to my mouth in more mouthfuls.

Dr Stone said he was exercising more. 'I walk to work each day now. The kids are at home and I can't get a car to drive!

The whole town is watching us, we've both had lots of people asking us how we are going ... So to keep us honest Dr Don Harvey and his wife Sandra are the official weighers and judges.

They are making light of this, but they are putting a real effort into raising funds for that school. The article continues—

'The primary school really needs airconditioning,' Councillor Buchan said. 'It's hard to expect the children to study successfully in the torrid heat we have here. The fundraising committee is doing a great job, we just thought we'd like to help the funds along.

Quotes for the school project are around the \$75000 mark and it is hoped to have most of those funds in by June 30, 2002—

so they have a target to aim for—

That's when the challenge finishes, but we would love the whole town to get into the spirit of the thing and join us ... We don't expect everyone to pay \$100 per kilogram, maybe \$1 would be realistic. Perhaps people could even gather sponsors like the children do with readathons.

Think how much healthier the town would be if everyone got into the act,' Dr Stone said.

I am prepared to put in \$10 a kilogram for whatever they lose. I am prepared to put up my money. I really do not mind how much they lose; it is a great cause.

When we examine a map of Queensland showing airconditioned schools under the Cooler Schools zone, we see that the zone starts at about 24 degrees latitude and goes up to about 20 degrees latitude. It does not really cover a lot of Queensland. Importantly, the heat discomfort map shows areas by their number of discomfort days per year. A line runs from just below Cairns and Townsville right down to Bundaberg, just misses Taroom and goes out to Charleville and around to the border, coming in somewhere around Bollon or Dirranbandi. In other words, the heat discomfort is exactly the same in places such as St George, Roma, Goondiwindi and Tara as it is in Townsville, Mackay and so on, even though those places have higher humidity. Why shouldn't those people be included in the same zone? They have the same, if not greater, levels of discomfort. It is hotter out there, but I do appreciate that the coastal areas have high humidity, which can be overbearing.

I wish to read into the record a list of schools that are still eligible and which do not, in some cases, have airconditioning—and these are in my area alone: Arcadia Valley State School, Auburn River State School, Brigalow State School, Bymount East State School, Chinchilla Christian School, Chinchilla State High School, Chinchilla State School, Condamine State School, Cockatoo State School, Drillham State School, Dulacca State School, Guluguba State School, Grosmont State School, Injune State School, Hopeland State School, Miles State High School, Miles State School, Muckadilla State School, Peek-A-Doo State School, Roma Junior State School, Roma Middle State School, St John's School, St Joseph's School Chinchilla, Wallumbilla State School, Yuleba State School, Begonia State School, Bungunya State School, Dirranbandi State School, Dunkeld State School, Meandarra State School, Moonie State School, Rocky Crossing State School, St George State High School, St George State School, St Joseph's School Tara, St Patrick's School St George, Surat State School, Talwood State School, Tara State School, Teelba State School, Thallon State School, The Gums State School, Westmar State School, Wycombe State School, Yellowbank Junction State School, Glenmorgan State School, Hannaford State School, Hebel State School, Kioma State School and Lundavra State School. All of those schools are still looking to be airconditioned. In a lot of instances they have raised funds and have started to install airconditioning as best they can.

Ms Bligh: They're not in the zone.

Mr HOBBS: I know they are not in the zone. That is exactly my point.

Ms Bligh: They are a lot closer to the zone than they ever were when you lot ran the show.

Mr HOBBS: No, that is not the case. We committed to include all of that area in the zone.

Mr Bredhauer: That is not true.

Mr HOBBS: We did.

Ms Bligh interjected.

Mr HOBBS: No, that is not true. Our commitment was to go from 151 degrees west to 26 degrees north.

Ms Bligh: When did you commit to that?

Mr HOBBS: At the last election. The honourable member should not forget that we have committed to airconditioning those schools and she has not. I am not sure whether the minister was here earlier when I pointed out that the heat discomfort levels are almost the same for the coastal areas as they are for the western areas. Why aren't they included?

Ms Bligh: I appreciate that.

Mr HOBBS: As the minister mentioned, I have asked the minister on several occasions, and every time I have received an answer along these lines: '... but at this stage the government has no plans to extend the current zones' or—

The current policy and guidelines associated with the implementation of the Cooler Schools Program does not allow an expansion of the Cooler Schools zone to include schools in south-west Queensland. A separate policy decision by government would be required to enable this to happen.

Can the minister do that? That is the issue. These schools need airconditioning. However, a lot more schools could be cooled using evaporative airconditioners. That is something that would be appreciated and is desperately needed in those regions.

Mr Lawlor: Why didn't you do it when you were in government?

Mr HOBBS: We did a lot when we were in government, as a matter of fact.

Mr Lawlor: Rubbish!

Mr HOBBS: The member was not even here. In fact, in my former electorate of Warrego every school was airconditioned. The boundaries have since changed, of course. We have a very strong policy on this. We have been in government for two and a half years of the last 12 years. The Labor government has been in power for the rest of that time, yet we still do not have airconditioning in all Queensland schools.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr HOBBS: The member is part of the government, and I am pointing out to him that there are schools that desperately need airconditioning. As I said, people are trying desperately to raise funds to help those kids.

Mr Bredhauer: You could have used the \$14 million from the Connolly-Ryan inquiry.

Mr HOBBS: The minister could have used some of the \$29 million on that footbridge. Was his department involved in that?

Mr Bredhauer: No.

Mr HOBBS: Maybe it should have been. There are many examples of how money that has been spent on various projects could have been rechannelled. But the airconditioning of schools is a particularly important and serious issue. I certainly hope that the government is prepared to put a genuine effort into that.

I also want to raise another issue relating to the increase in the criteria for two-teacher schools, which I understand is going from 26 to 28. This is causing some concern in my electorate. Members would understand that, if there is a change of criteria and we lose one of 10 teachers, we lose 10 per cent.

Mr Bredhauer: You're a veritable Einstein, aren't you?

Mr HOBBS: Absolutely. But if we have only two teachers and we lose one, that is a bigger problem.

Mr Lawlor: That's 50 per cent.

Mr HOBBS: Absolutely, 50 per cent. What I am saying is that this creates a more serious impact on a community. That is something that we really need to consider. If we are going to change the criteria for two-teacher schools from 26 to 28 students—is the minister not doing that?

Ms Bligh: I'm not aware of any proposal, but I'll get back to you on it.

Mr HOBBS: I am pleased that I mentioned that to the minister.

Ms Bligh: I'll get you something accurate on it because I want you to have good information.

Mr HOBBS: If that is the case, that is fine. But the criteria should not impact on those two-teacher schools because of the effect on those communities.

While the Minister for Transport is in the House, I think it is important to raise another issue. I spoke to the minister late last year in relation to school bus runs. When school bus runs are not operating properly we have problems keeping schools going. The minister might recall the case of Drillham State School, which was to have five children, including one preschooler, in 2002 and nine children in 2003, including four preschoolers. There would have been some real problems in getting that school going again if the school bus was unable to operate. It was quite clear that student numbers had dwindled because of the exceptional circumstances of drought in that region. People who had been working on various properties had left their farmhouses because there was no work. As well, there was no water. But it was evident that as soon as it did rain they would come back. We went through a torrid time. Families were unsure about whether the school would operate. I attended meetings that were held up to December last year and in early January. There was a great deal of uncertainty surrounding that school when it was quite evident

that all that was needed was a stay. Next year, the year after and the year after that everything was right; the numbers were there to enable the school to continue operating. But there was one thing that really hurt the most.

A meeting was held in January, and it was decided by the departmental people present that, 'Yes, we will try once more.' In fact, the bus driver even offered to receive less than his normal rate because he was very confident that he would get enough students using that service. Whereas the community was told that the departmental people were going to try to negotiate their way through this, the very next day another departmental group rang to say that they were coming out to measure the school bus route to try to cut it back because there were two school bus routes in the area.

There was no coordination or compassion in relation to this issue. No genuine position was taken by the department to consider these issues compassionately and maintain some flexibility. We cannot cut off services at a particular number. For instance, if one of those school buses had been lost, the kids would not have been able to get to the nearest pool at Miles for swimming lessons. The preschool would have closed down. A combination of events would have occurred. Members would not believe the add-on problems associated with that. That was a stressful time for those people, and it was disappointing because it did not have to be like that. There were ways to overcome that. The minister needs to reconsider the school bus policy because it is very important. It is also important that the Minister for Education is made aware of that.

Education obviously is a very important issue for us all here in Queensland. We strive to do our best to achieve the best options for our kids. In many ways this is very difficult because we have a very diverse state. We have a huge area to cover, and in many instances we have some very difficult conditions. But I believe that we can work towards improving this situation genuinely. We can have our political argy-bargy but, at the end of the day, we have to educate our kids in the best way we can. We need to take notice of the issues that have been raised, because they have been raised with the most sincere intent to make sure that we can get the very best for our kids here in Queensland.

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (5.27 p.m.): I am pleased to join other honourable members of the House in supporting the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001. I pay compliments to the minister, Anna Bligh, and her staff who have clearly done an excellent job. It is arguable whether the provision of health or education services is the most important responsibility of government. Certainly the priority for education is in the top two. To bring into the House, therefore, a bill that is as important as this and to have it supported by all members of the House is indeed an achievement, and I give recognition to all involved.

I would like to recognise particularly the important objectives of the bill that will hopefully be well accomplished through the bill. The first of these is to contribute to high levels of completion of year 12 or equivalent. Surely there can be nothing more important as a goal for us to work on in education at the moment. Members of the House would be aware of the not wonderful figures that we have in terms of high school completion, yet they would also be aware of the sheer importance of high school completion. I know that the high schools in Cairns have done wonders in terms of innovative ways of keeping those at risk of leaving school interested in their studies and motivated towards staying at school and that they are having some degree of success, but further work needs to be done. I must say that there are some parents who need to participate more than they already do in this process of promoting to their children the importance of completing high school.

I draw to the attention of members of the House, in case they had missed it in one of the discussion papers prepared under the leadership of the former Minister for Education, Dean Wells, a really important imperative as to why our children should stay in high school. Leaving school early means that young people are more likely to be unemployed and results in considerable financial costs for the nation and the individual. The discussion paper recognises that it has been estimated that by the time individuals have reached 24 years of age completion of year 12 reduces their odds of unemployment by 58 per cent. The lifetime cost to Australia of each early school leaver is estimated at \$74,000, with the overall cost to the country of one year's early school-leaving cohort in the vicinity of \$2.6 billion. Early school leaving also increases costs to government in terms of higher rates of criminal activity and increased demands on the health system. For all these reasons, that top priority of increasing levels of completion of year 12 is essential.

The objective of increasing retention, improving the social cohesion and the social and human capital of Queensland, is also important. That is about a smart future and hope for the

future for the young people of Queensland in recognising that education is part of their drive towards finding a life that is fulfilling for them as well as a contribution to the betterment of the state of Queensland and the lifestyle of all Queenslanders.

Another of the objectives is to provide seamless development of syllabus across the compulsory years of schooling and into the post-compulsory years. This is very different from schooling in those years when I was young. There was such a rigidity then about year 1 or year 4, about passing all levels of achievement required before being able to move on and about ages for being in year 4, year 7 or whatever. In retrospect, that rigidity looks ridiculous. It is, therefore, an objective in this bill to be supported.

Another of the objectives of the bill is to provide a supported transition from formal schooling to post-school options. In these days where we no longer have the formality of 'I'm a school student and now I'm not', as though they are two very distinct and separate stages of our lives, this is indeed appropriate. As we move to lifelong learning—for all of us, whatever our age—flexibility to transit between schooling in a formal sense and subsequent years and in the transition to other school options is essential.

I recognise the importance of the bill in providing a statutory arrangement that will allow schooling sectors—independent, state and Catholic—and individual schools to achieve their common and specific objectives to meet the needs of their clients. I think the words of that objective are very well crafted to indicate the importance of setting standards for education that are common across all sectors and, at the same time, to allow for individuality and for the additional, special goals that different sectors within education may have. For example, I am pleased to inform honourable members that recently in Cairns we opened the first of the Montessori schools. I know that enrolment has been good, and I have no doubt that that school will be successful. We have a range of excellent Christian schools in Cairns offering a variety of education with that special extra of the religious education that underlies their school structure.

Another goal of this fine bill is to support the effective transitions between stages of schooling, formal and informal learning environments and to post-school work or further study and active citizenship. I am pleased to see the words 'active citizenship' included. It had seemed to me in my middle years that the goal of forming our children into active citizens had fallen from favour within the school system, with the pressures there have been towards higher standards and broader learning in terms of globalisation, computers and the like. I recall citizenship activities from my school years—participating in important events such as on Anzac Day and in the local celebrations that we regarded as essential. In some schools, time devoted to citizenship activities and the development of citizenship skills has not been as great as it perhaps could have been in recent years, though I am pleased to say that in several of our Cairns schools it has been highlighted in recent years—with wonderful benefits, I have no doubt, not only for the organisations in the community who are benefiting from these citizenship activities but also for those students as individuals who will likely be the leaders of Queensland in years to come.

One of the innovations in the bill is a new authority to advise the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth on relevant vocational and educational matters. It provides for a facilitation of the involvement of the two ministers. However, it sends a clear message that the government is determined to ensure that every possible opportunity is provided to young Queenslanders to complete their 12 years of schooling. It is appropriate—obvious, even—for the Minister for Education and the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth to work together. It is nonetheless innovative to recognise in the bill the integration of government across several departments and portfolios. I recognise the importance of that and that sign of a smart government.

I note that there was broad consultation and that the minister received over 200 written submissions. That is indeed a large number, yet I wonder whether very many of those came from parents of students in schools in Cairns. I looked at and was interested in the discussion papers, yet I suspect that for many parents with busy lives—with commitments to all of their children, to families, to jobs and to other things—taking the time to really go through those discussion papers and to respond would have been too hard. I suspect, too, that some of the language and honesty that we use in the discussion papers is easier to understand for those who are familiar with education as a profession than it might be for the consumer and the consumer's parents, as it were.

I know from all of those activities in which I am engaged with parents, teachers and students in schools in Cairns that the standards by which they measure the performance of their schools may be in different words to the words used in this bill. I know, for example, that they really value

a school that can cater for the diversity of students—students who are bright and forward and other students who may need a little help along the way; students who come from different cultures, some of whom do not have English as their first language; and students who are skilled in sports or performing arts but maybe not so good in science or maths. Parents look these days for a school that can take account of people's different talents and yet manage all needs.

All of the public high schools in Cairns are excellent in this regard. I recognise in particular the changes made by Richard Huelin and other teachers at Woree High School in Cairns over these last several years. The tremendous cultural diversity of the school has become one of its key focuses and one of its outstanding successes, rather than, as maybe had been regarded in many years past, a nuisance or difficulty. The pride the students are taking in that diversity, particularly their cultural diversity, is wonderful to behold. That showed particularly in the awards presentation evenings held at the end of last year. The talents on display were wonderful in academia, wonderful in sports, wonderful in dancing and in the performing arts and wonderful in the organisation of the event by the students and in the citizenship skills that showed.

I must recognise also the importance to a lot of parents of the special focuses that are developing particularly in our high schools. An example of this in Cairns is the development of particular focus in two areas at Trinity Bay State High School. Under the principalship of Stephen Savvakis, that school is excelling in science and in visual arts. I must admit that on the latter topic I share some frustration with the principal, the teachers and the students of Trinity Bay State High School at the slow progress there has been to date in the building of the arts block, which was long overdue and recognised by the previous minister and confirmed by this minister as a priority project. Nonetheless, difficulties with the nitty-gritty of the tender papers and detailed design have held up the project. I hope that project will start shortly and it will indeed be welcomed by all in that school community when it is completed.

In terms of increased facilities that will allow the development of new areas of focus, I give recognition to Cairns State High School and the tremendous boost that it has received under the Secondary Schools Renewal Program. As it is the oldest high school in Cairns, unsurprisingly it has buildings and facilities that are not designed for the education focus of today. We have opened one of the new buildings at that school, which has allowed the development of a new sports centre which the community is invited to use. This has allowed a new development, particularly in basketball, for the high school and other sports will follow suit. At the same time, work is being carried out on the refurbishment of what was previously a sports centre but which will now become part of the network of performing arts facilities at this high school.

I am also pleased to say that parents in Cairns expect much better communication directly with them from their schools these days, whether it is about a particular problem or even a success that their child is having at school, whether it is about events within the school and ways that they can participate or whether it is about changes in the way education is being delivered. There are some primary schools in the electorate that are making excellent inroads into a dialogue with their local communities.

I give particular recognition to Kath Johnston, the Principal of Cairns West State School for the excellent leadership she has shown in this regard and in other regards. We all hear that Kath is getting close to retirement. She mentioned it to me, not in the context of looking for us to pat her on the back and put the dates in the diary for a celebration to recognise her sterling career but more because she wants to ensure that there is a smooth transition from her leadership. She wants to ensure that there is a period where she can hand over the excellent initiatives that the school has undertaken under her leadership whilst allowing for the development of leadership of others in the school who will remain there when she has moved on. The numbers of parents who have participated in all kinds of exercises, events, training and just sheer good times at Cairns West State School over recent years has been tremendous. There are others on the staff of that school who also deserve commendation for this happening.

I must give recognition also, as have previous speakers, to the P&C associations, and what a vibrant and important set of organisations they can be in furthering facilities and other events at their schools. I am pleased to say that I have been working closely with the P&C Association at the Balaclava State School and also at several of our Catholic primary schools such as Our Lady Help of Christians and St Francis Xavier.

One important area of concern in a growing city like Cairns is that many of our schools now find themselves in areas where traffic has increased dramatically around the perimeters of the schools. This therefore means that the P&Cs and the school staff are engaged in looking strategically at how best to keep their students safe and allow for easy and smooth pick up and

delivery to the school while at the same time manage the increasing traffic loads on nearby roads. In this regard, the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads should be congratulated on the SafeST Program where expertise from the Department of Transport and Department of Main Roads is lent to school committees to assist them in planning improved ways of ensuring access to the school that is safe for those arriving by foot, bicycles, cars or buses.

I also give recognition to the importance of setting high standards in education, and that of course is mentioned in this bill through and through. The New Basics curriculum is part of ensuring that we go back to what in the old days were regarded as the three Rs—that is, reading, 'riting and the so-called 'rithmetic. Of course, we need our students to have that underlying quality of core educational skills. I must say that one of the core skills needed these days in my view is the ability to use computer systems to access information and to search and learn for oneself. While we as a government can be very proud of the roll out of computers to our public schools in particular, I must say that it concerns me that there is a great discrepancy, particularly by the time students reach high school, in the number of students who are able to access computers in their own homes. The familiarity, the ease and the advantage given to students who have home computers is showing. It is an issue that, while peripheral to education, is important to education.

There is no doubt that there is more work to be done. Unfortunately, the retention rate figure at high school through to the completion of year 12 of our indigenous students is nowhere near as high as we would wish it to be. There is considerable effort put in by the Department of Education and considerable funds put in by government to work on this problem, but it has not been very successful to date. There are also problems with the education of our boys. Their motivation, particularly by high school, to engage in academic tasks and to compete in areas where our girls are excelling seems to have flagged. Finding ways to attract male teachers to the system, to keep them there and to raise the profile and importance of teaching as a career choice in our society is important. For all of these reasons and yet with the challenges still ahead, I am indeed pleased to support the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (5.47 p.m.): In joining this debate, I recognise the importance of education and curriculums in the state schools, the high schools, the primary schools and the preschools around the state of Queensland. Education is very important. With the speed at which technology is presently moving throughout the world, a good education is one of the prerequisites for anybody to engage in future life endeavours. While we change curriculums and consider different options as to how to induce learning within the students themselves, it is important that we allow them to absorb this information in a manner that will be to their long-term benefit.

When looking at the different options and different prospects that each student has, we have to remember that some have particular abilities in certain areas. Some are particularly bright academically, and that will be a very important feature of their future development. But of course others are more inclined to get into trade areas. As a result, an integration between academia and TAFE, which takes them into a training area in the trades that gives them jobs and provides opportunities for them in the future, is essential. Therefore, curriculum is so important and the syllabi that we look at in the future has to cater for a very broad spectrum of students who attend schools these days.

It is extremely important to have a high retention rate because if students are enticed to leave school too early they may find it difficult to pick up and go on to different strands of learning sometime in their future. Within the high schools themselves it is important that we have different strands, particularly in grades 11 and 12, that enable students to go on to universities. These strands are so essential to their future endeavours. It is not always possible to study a particular area of learning at the smaller high schools. Sometimes when they go to university they have to pick up certain subjects that they were unable to take at high school.

Retention, as I said, is extremely important. We have to create a good learning environment for students. I know that during the period of the coalition government it was recognised that airconditioning of schools was important in north Queensland, and a commitment of some \$63 million was made to do exactly that. It is essential, particularly as we have seen in these last few months, that students can carry out their learning in airconditioned premises. I note that the Beattie government has also continued with the Cooler Schools Program. But some students are still being denied the opportunity of studying in an airconditioned classroom. I have visited some of these schools. In the morning the ability of students to learn is quite reasonable. They will go out at lunchtime, but when they come back in the afternoon, very often we find that they cannot concentrate. The younger ones tend to go to sleep.

Mr Lawlor: Just like parliament.

Mr ROWELL: The member opposite would be one of the ones who would be going to sleep most of the time.

There are a few hours in the afternoon in which students at those schools have a great deal of difficulty in really concentrating on the essential subjects that they need to study in order to go on with their future endeavours.

I know that the government has said that it will contribute 80 per cent of the cost of airconditioning if the individual school's P&C can raise 20 per cent. Then there are good prospects of the school getting into the program. I have raised with the minister the difficulties of the Mission Beach State School getting airconditioning into that school. I have written a number of letters to the minister. The school has raised the money but it is not certain when it can get onto the program. It is absolutely devastated, particularly considering that some of its classrooms face the west. I know that at times the temperatures can reach 40 degrees. It is particularly difficult for those students in those classrooms. Nobody wants to go into that classroom because of the heat that is generated from the western sun in the afternoons. I think it is essential that, when a school can raise the necessary funding, they have access to that finance that has been provided. As I have indicated in relation to the Mission Beach State School, I have written to the minister on a few occasions, but it is not clear when the program is going to be implemented in that school.

I have seen other schools that are partly airconditioned. Some rooms have been airconditioned over the past few years and some have not. There are difficulties at those schools because teachers are very, very reluctant to enter the room if it is not airconditioned. They do not want to teach in a non-airconditioned classroom and, of course, the students are also reluctant to enter the rooms. It is certainly an undesirable situation in which some students are able to be schooled in an airconditioned classroom and some are not. This is an undesirable situation and it is totally inequitable.

Many of those schools took up the offer during the period when they were able to get the Cool Schools money, but some have not. I know a lot of the small schools certainly took up that offer. Amongst those smaller schools it is unique to see schools that do not have airconditioning. Their P&Cs have been particularly active and they have certainly taken advantage of the situation to bring about a pleasant learning environment for their students.

There is another strange occurrence up there in relation to temporary buildings. If a temporary building has been built in the last few years it is airconditioned, but there is no covered walkway to that temporary building. Very often those students who have to go into the temporary building must walk out in the rain, particularly at this time of the year in the wet season. They get drenched trying to get to their classroom. In fact, I know of some classrooms that have been 'temporary' for 20 years and still do not have a covered walkway. The rain and heat are excessive and are major problems. Very often we see that the ramps that have been built for disabled students to access those classrooms become very slippery. The non-skid material that is applied disappears and it can then be quite dangerous for students who have to access those temporary classrooms.

I would now like to turn to playground equipment, particularly where Koppers logs have been used in the past for playing areas. It is great that children are able to go out during the recess and lunch periods and take advantage of playground equipment. However, we are finding that, because of heat and wet weather, some of those logs have tended to split and splinter. It is quite dangerous for children to be playing on Koppers logs that have been provided for playground equipment. Very often we will see those areas fenced off because they are dangerous.

Some of the administration areas are quite crowded. Often if counselling is required it is very difficult to get enough room. If a parent is involved in the counselling it is extremely difficult for the student, the parent and the teacher to carry out the necessary counselling. With the additional paperwork that is now occurring in the education system there is a need for that administration area to also be the engine room and to carry out the necessary jobs that are required of a school. Sometimes it is difficult.

The external and interior paintwork of schools in north Queensland is quite important. Because of the harsh weather conditions we see rapid deterioration occurring. Very often mildew is a major problem and the school buildings need painting and cleaning more often because of it. I have experienced situations in which the budget allocation needs to be improved to maintain the asset. Once we have a massive deterioration in the external or internal cover, the aesthetics are lost, there is a general downturn in the way that school is viewed by students and I do not

think it is looked after as well as it should be. When maintenance is required, it is often quite substantial and very costly.

In Queensland we have minimum designated coverage areas for students. It concerns me greatly that, while this is a state policy, there is no true recognition that some parts of the state, whether it is in the western areas or the northern areas, need a greater area—they certainly do need a great area, particularly if it is very wet and very hot—under which students can eat their lunch, spend a little bit of time out of the classroom and get away from the general learning area. It is a pretty difficult situation when an estimate of the covered area is done. Often when the walkways and the overhangs of various buildings and those types of things are added up, they come to a figure which has been recognised by the Education Department as the minimum covered area for students. That is not in the best interests of the school or the students who have to live and work in that part of the state of Queensland.

Sometimes drainage is a problem. I have been to a number of schools, particularly in the Wet Tropics, where work needs to be done under the school building. Sometimes the yards are also quite inadequately drained. With the constant rain that we get in the north, it is essential that good drainage is provided to the schools. I am just talking about basic drainage so that the students do not have to walk through six or eight inches of water to get into the school and there is not an excessive amount of water under the building.

Staff stability is another important issue for schools. I know that at times temporary staff are provided. However, there is a degree of uncertainty about how long a teacher will be in a particular position. Sometimes a teacher wants to move into an area. Of course, that transfer can be contested. That leads to a great deal of instability for the students and P&Cs. Very often in small schools there is a very close relationship between the staff of the school and the P&C, or the parents in general. The staff become part of the community. I believe that, if those people are shuffled around at short notice or do not know whether they are going to stay in the area, that creates a great deal of concern amongst parents and students. They do not know how long the teacher will be at the school and who they will be dealing with if that teacher goes. Although the parents and children of that one or two teacher school are satisfied with the teacher, unfortunately, because that teacher is there on a temporary basis only, that creates instability.

Another major issue that I have come across relates to disadvantaged students in a classroom. Over a period, a lot of these students have been assimilated into the classroom. They require additional assistance and place extra demands on the teachers. Very often, so much effort is put into dealing with the requirements of that student that the other students are not given the time that they are entitled to receive. That issue is quite important. If we do not provide additional staffing to cater for those students who have learning difficulties—and sometimes it is a matter of 15 or 20 hours a week—the whole emphasis on education is lost. Those students who have learning difficulties as well as the other students do not receive the education to which they are justly entitled.

There are also difficulties with toilet facilities in schools, particularly when a preschool is involved. Sometimes the toilets of a school are not designed for a preschool situation, but that small school may be absorbing students from preschool to year 7. From time to time the intricacies that are involved in a teacher taking a young person to the toilet at the school creates some difficulties.

Generally, Queensland's education system is in good shape. Over a period, some changes have been made. Of course, every time there is change, uncertainty is created. We have requirements for getting children to school. Very often that entails bus runs and special consideration. I know that, in some cases, if a school bus travels in a certain direction it picks up students to attend a small school, but if it travelled in another direction it would not. A number of these small schools are very dependent on community interest so that student numbers are maintained, otherwise those schools lose teaching staff. It has been my experience that those schools do not provide their students with a lesser education than that which is provided by schools that are well staffed, have high student populations and have all the sport and recreational facilities that some parents believe are necessary. I believe that the children who attend those small schools receive a good education. In some instances, when those children go on to further education, such as university, because they have had to learn by themselves, to study work that has been set for them to do, they have done particularly well compared with students who attended bigger schools.

I believe that the important issue in education in Queensland is equity. Children who attend schools, whether they be in the north or the south of the state, should receive a certain level of

entitlement. I am not talking about an excessive entitlement. I do not think that we have to be overly pedantic about their requirements. I believe that we have to offer those students the basics. Although a school curriculum is important—and I am not denying that fact—other ingredients also have an importance in terms of a student's ability to learn. If we can ensure that all students in Queensland are provided with those ingredients, then they will all have an equal opportunity to realise their potential. Potential can be realised only by giving people opportunity. Opportunity is probably the most important ingredient of any type of education that we adopt in the future. Irrespective of where students come from—whether it is from the northern part of the state or the western part of the state—very often they undertake higher education and do not return to those areas where they received their basic education.

Time expired.

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (6.07 p.m.): I am pleased to support the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001. This is important legislation that draws together in one bill what up until now has been covered by three acts with different and divergent reporting and accounting responsibilities and then administered by three separate authorities. The bill will assist in increasing retention and provide a supported transition from formal schooling to post-school options. In particular, this bill will ensure that Queensland students are provided with the best support and advice as they move from school to work or study or other training destinations. This bill provides that the new authority will advise the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth on relevant vocational and educational matters. This is an important innovation as it facilitates the involvement of two ministers, the Minister for Education and the minister responsible for vocational education and training, in issuing written directions about these matters to the authority.

This recognition of the interconnectedness of vocational training and general education is particularly welcome in my electorate of Hervey Bay. For some years now Hervey Bay has been a hub of innovative and cooperative schooling and training arrangements. The Principal of Hervey Bay State High School, Mr Glen Vaughan, and the chairman of the school council, former Mayor of Hervey Bay, Fred Kleinschmidt, have vigorously supported vocational education programs over the years. In 1996 programs such as TRAC, which stands for training in retail and commerce, commenced at the school. Originally, that program was sponsored by the Dusseldorf Skills Forum and it continues today as the SITE scheme, which stands for student industry and training experiences. These vocational training schemes involve the private sector, which accepts students into work sites to receive practical training in real work. It is supported by schools with theory training being held either at school or at TAFE.

Through the hard work of local coordinators, businesses are encouraged to work with young people to assist them in building skills for their future. In passing, I would like to pay tribute to the late Raylene Reibelt, who was the original coordinator of the Hervey Bay-Maryborough TRAC scheme. Raylene was a teacher at the Hervey Bay State High School and took up the challenge to make vocational education happen in the Hervey Bay area in 1996. Raylene was a dynamo, and the enormous benefit which hundreds of students have enjoyed by experiencing vocational training is down to the solid and successful start which Raylene gave to TRAC. Tragically, Raylene died early last year and her passing was a terrible sadness not just for her family but for the whole community, particularly for the Hervey Bay State High School community.

There are now dozens of school based apprentices being assisted while at high schools in Hervey Bay by organisations such as the Wide Bay Group Training Scheme Limited. The Wide Bay Group Training Scheme, under the outstanding leadership of CEO, Ross Tregidga, and his senior officer, Errol Hanlon, and with the support of a highly committed staff, is working within the education system to strengthen and broaden the options available to our young people. It is first-class support. The Wide Bay Group Training Scheme recently won contracts from the state government to manage all the apprentices at the Aviation Centre of Excellence in Ipswich and from Ergon Energy to look after its apprentices state wide. In my opinion, Hervey Bay students are being supported by the very best apprentice managers in the state. This bill assists in this growing integration.

The bill also sets out to enhance the transition from secondary to tertiary education. It recognises another growing area of interaction between these two levels of education. In Hervey Bay, Urangan State High School, under the leadership of principal Ross Zelow, previous P&C president Dorne Wallace and current P&C president Danny Mattsson has entered into a dynamic relationship with the Hervey Bay campus of the University of Southern Queensland. Students

studying Chinese at Urangan State High School can now obtain degree credits for that study when they continue on at the local university after completing year 12.

Mr Cummins: A very positive initiative.

Mr McNAMARA: It is. I take the interjection from the member for Kawana, who shares my concern about improving education across-the-board and who speaks to me often of his concerns and the work he is doing in his electorate.

Mr Neil Roberts interjected.

Mr McNAMARA: I take the interjection from the honourable member for Nudgee, who also has a very strong and proven commitment to education.

This sort of innovation has been encouraged by the very hard working university campus principal, Dr Malcolm Cooper, and his academic administrative staff. This bill supports further innovation and integration along those lines. This is timely, Smart State legislation. It legislates a whole-of-government approach and enhances the innovations happening on the ground in our schools. It aims to provide for seamless education through to year 12 and beyond to post-school study, training and job placement. I congratulate the minister on bringing this bill before the House and commend the legislation to honourable members.

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (6.12 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak during the debate on the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001. We live in a rapidly changing world, with rapidly changing demands being placed on our young people and, therefore, on our education and training systems. Hopefully, the provisions in this bill will assist in meeting some of those changes and assist in developing as quickly as possible methods to meet any future changes.

The electorate of Cunningham which I represent takes in part of Toowoomba, which has a very high profile and very good reputation for its educational facilities. That crosses all boundaries, whether it is public, private, church or independent schools. All of those schools have benefited from the rivalry and competition between them. The services and the education those facilities deliver, regardless of what they are, are very impressive indeed. Of course, that also applies to the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE and the University of Southern Queensland, which is in my electorate.

Some members may be surprised to learn that my electorate of Cunningham contains a large number of small schools, particularly one-teacher and two-teacher schools. I do not represent one of the very large western or far-northern electorates. There are a large number of small schools, as well as the normal P-10 schools, state primary schools and state high schools. I encounter a whole range of issues which are raised through each of those schools. Each of them present very different requirements and very different needs. Hopefully, over time we will be able to respond more quickly to some of those changing needs.

One of the principles stated in this bill is the improvement in retention rates. That is one area that really does require work. Earlier today some figures have been quoted regarding retention rates. It is a matter that needs to be addressed. There is a particular need to address it in relation to P-10 schools. I have certainly seen that in a couple of schools in my electorate. It was publicly highlighted last year at the presentation evenings of those schools that a surprisingly high number of students are not continuing after grade 10 to finish their secondary education but are going off either to start a job or to start full-time vocational training. While it is good that vocational training is being done, there is a real need to look at the special requirements of P-10 schools to ensure that students are given every opportunity to continue on and finish grades 11 and 12, if they wish. That is an area that needs to be addressed.

An issue touched on previously by the member for Warrego and to a lesser extent by the member for Hinchinbrook is the need for coordination of policy development between the Department of Transport and the Department of Education when it comes to the delivery of school transport assistance. There are some very real concerns in my own electorate, specifically in the Clifton, Cambooya and Warwick triangle, which has some very difficult areas to deal with. Policies being delivered by the Department of Transport certainly mean Department of Education policies are either being left unaddressed or being delivered to a lesser extent than they could be. It is a difficult situation because there has to be a framework and there has to be restrictions within the framework, but it is one area that needs to be looked at. All members should try to develop a better policy and a better way of delivering school transport assistance. It is having a detrimental effect at a number of schools in my electorate and, probably more importantly, the parents and students involved are being adversely affected.

While I am giving some things a plug in my electorate, I will mention the University of Southern Queensland. A number of members over the past year while I have been in the parliament have given various campuses of the USQ credit for doing all sorts of fantastic things. The main campus of USQ is in the electorate of Cunningham, and I have spoken about it before. I pay tribute to the university for the intake in 2002. The vice-chancellor of USQ has indicated that the final enrolment for 2002 is likely to be more than 22,000 people. That is a terrific result for USQ and really indicates that it is continuing to build on the good work done in the past few years. Professor Swannell has said that, whilst such a final enrolment is very pleasing, it is even more indicative of the high esteem in which the community holds USQ. I think that is a fair comment. I will give the House a breakdown of that increased enrolment for this year: undergraduate is up three per cent; postgraduate up 12 per cent; on-campus up three per cent; off campus external up six per cent; and international, both on and off campus, up 16 per cent. That is a very significant number and really pays tribute to the way that the university is not only rolling out its online learning—and it has been recognised for its achievements with worldwide awards for its online learning—but also its promotion of and bringing on campus international students, which goes a very long way obviously to providing income for the university and, therefore, the state. That also enhances the whole feel and the whole culture of the university.

USQ provides vital opportunities for students from regional and rural areas through comprehensive scholarships. These regional and rural scholarships are part of a \$130,000 a year package of scholarships and bursaries provided by USQ, private sector supporters, government and student guild. Now that is delivering opportunities for people to study at USQ who otherwise would not be able to. I think it is something that applies not only with USQ, of course, but to all tertiary education facilities and the work that they are doing in providing those links.

One of the main focuses of USQ—and I note that last week at the country cabinet held in Stanthorpe there was some mention of this—is the landmark research being conducted into groundbreaking technologies and fibres that forge beneficial partnerships with industry. One example of this is the research into composite fibre technologies, which has witnessed a long-term relationship forged between Wagners Composite Fibre Technologies and USQ's Fibre Composite Design and Development Centre—the FCDD. This is groundbreaking research and has the potential to earn millions of dollars for the university and the private sector partner but, more importantly, create hundreds of jobs and earn income for our state.

Mr Shine: A great initiative.

Mr COPELAND: It is a great initiative. The work being done there is impressive, and I congratulate all of those involved. It is indicative of the work that universities are doing in terms of corporatising and commercialising their research. There are a lot of challenges to be faced in meeting the needs of our young people, whether it is providing education at a preschool, at a small primary school, at a P-10 school or a secondary school and, more importantly, through the vocational training initiatives that we have seen over the years and the tertiary training that we should be encouraging people to take up. Hopefully, this bill will address some of the difficulties being placed on schools and enable the policy framework position to be changed more rapidly than we have seen in the past to accommodate the more rapidly changing environment that students are having to work and live in. We will wait and see as to the proof of the pudding, but hopefully this bill will assist in that.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (6.21 p.m.): The purpose of this bill is to provide the best quality education for our children. Previously, the educational process was managed by a hotchpotch of organisations. We had the Queensland School Curriculum Council responsible for and managing curriculum from P to 10. We then had the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies looking after the curriculum for years 11 and 12.

Mr Briskey: An outstanding body.

Mr ENGLISH: The member for Cleveland is quite correct; it is an outstanding body.

The Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority was responsible for making the link between senior schooling and the tertiary level. As a result of this bill, the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill, we will have a seamless education process. No longer will our students be forced to suffer from bureaucratic problems in the handover and change between these three organisations. Previous Minister Wells and the current minister, Anna Bligh, are to be congratulated on persevering over many years to bring this to fruition.

Mr Briskey: And their parliamentary secretaries.

Mr ENGLISH: And their parliamentary secretaries, Jo-Ann Miller and Darryl Briskey, have worked hard.

Another highlight of this bill is that it treats all schools equally irrespective of type, be it a state school, a Catholic school, an independent school, an Anglican School or a Uniting school.

Mr Pearce: Up north, down south.

Mr ENGLISH: Up north, down south, out west and east. All of these schools will be treated equally in relation to the expectations and requirements for the curriculum.

This bill is a reflection of the educational mosaic that this Beattie Labor government wants to create in Queensland—a seamless educational framework that allows for local needs and circumstances whilst providing and ensuring a quality product. My electorate of Redlands has a diverse range of educational institutions all providing a quality educational experience.

Mr Briskey: Many fine schools.

Mr ENGLISH: There are many fine schools, and I will tell honourable members about them. From the Catholic education system I have St Rita's Catholic Primary School, Carmel College and Chisholm Catholic College, which all provide a high-quality educational product within the framework provided by the Catholic education system. This is no more evidenced than by Carmel College and principal Faye Conley. Faye exhibits all of the traits we would expect of a good principal within the Catholic system or outside it. Faye is an outstanding example of someone who is concerned about all aspects of children's welfare—educationally, pastorally and in the greater school environment.

Mr Briskey: She calls a spade a spade.

Mr ENGLISH: Faye definitely calls a spade a spade.

Calvary Christian College is a P-12 school, of which there are two in my electorate. Under the stewardship of principal Mike Millard, Calvary College is a fine institution within the framework of the Uniting Church. I have another church school in my electorate, the Faith Lutheran Primary School. Last year it was granted authority to extend to a new secondary campus, which will be opening in 2003. This increases further the educational opportunities for people in my electorate.

The other P-12 school in my electorate is Sheldon College, a non-denominational college under the very strong leadership of Lyn Bishop. Sheldon College is renowned for a number of academic feats. Its music program in particular is known far and wide. Sean Boyle was a leader in the music program last year. He is a fantastic conductor, arranger and musician in his own right. Recently, Sean Boyle's compositions and arrangements have been selected to be played at the CHOGM reception.

I turn now to the state schools in my electorate. The Macleay Island State School and the Russell Island State School are doing a lot of hard work in supporting those isolated communities. Errol Bishop, the principal of Macleay Island State School, and Ray Kiely, the principal of the Russell Island State School, are working to provide a quality product for the residents of those two islands. They are working extremely hard to get a pool.

It might interest members to know that currently the students on these two islands have to spend half a day commuting to and from the mainland to attend a half-hour swimming lesson. They jump on the ferry across to Redland Bay and then catch a bus to the Victoria Point State School for their lesson. Then they catch a bus back to Redland Bay and jump on the next ferry. These children commute daily on boats to and from the mainland and yet the educational system is experiencing difficulty giving them swimming lessons because of a lack of resources. The principals and those communities are to be commended for working together on trying to obtain a pool for the entire community. If the community, the local council and the state government can come together to provide this facility it would be a good thing for both the students and residents of all of the bay islands.

The Redland Bay State School is a success story in my electorate. Last year we provided a new preschool. The minister is to be commended for her commitment to increasing the number of preschools throughout the state. At the start of this year we also provided two new classrooms. I take this opportunity to extend an invitation to the minister to come to the Redland Bay State School and open those three buildings.

Ms Bligh: Thank you very much. I look forward to the opportunity.

Mr ENGLISH: Carbrook State School was also provided with two new classrooms for the start of this year. When I examined them I found that their standard is to be applauded. These

facilities are first rate. They are equipped with fibre-optic cabling in order to connect students to the Internet and move ahead under the Smart State initiative.

The Mount Cotton State School is another very small rural school in my electorate. 2001 was a quite difficult year for the Mount Cotton State School, as it underwent some upheaval.

Mr Briskey: A wonderful community, though.

Mr ENGLISH: It is a wonderful community. They are working through those problems. I recently attended a P&C meeting where we discussed some of the problems experienced by that school. The community and staff are working together to move forward for the benefit of the children of the Mount Cotton State School. The Victoria Point State School, under the leadership of Lex Bowden, is doing a fantastic job.

Mr Briskey: The deputy principal is a constituent of mine and a good friend.

Mr ENGLISH: I thank the member for Cleveland. This Friday I will be attending the leadership ceremony of the Victoria Point State High School. It should be noted that last year was the first year that the Victoria Point State High School had a senior year. Five years ago it opened with just year 8 students, and each year it has added another year. Last year the school had its foundation year students graduate. I was quite honoured to attend that ceremony and see the first students graduate from year 12 at the Victoria Point State High School.

Mr Briskey: And isn't Dr McKennarley doing a fine job?

Mr ENGLISH: Dr McKennarley is doing a fantastic job there. Both he and his P&C, under the leadership of Peter James, are to be applauded for holding the community together and working towards positive educational outcomes for the students.

On Monday of this week I was invited to attend the Thornlands State School leadership parade. The principal there, John Shelley, gave a quite stirring address in relation to what leadership involves. His story about leading from the front and not pushing from behind hit a chord with the students and me. In light of some of the debate that is occurring at the moment, I would like to mention high public liability insurance premiums. We should be careful that we do not necessarily believe a lot of the rhetoric coming from the insurance companies.

The Thornlands State School had a builder construct a quite extensive sunshade. The school was proactive about the Sunsafe program, so it bit the bullet and had the sunshade built. When it was torn apart in a storm early last year, the school went back to the builder and asked that it be replaced. Surprise, surprise: the builder had gone belly up. He had folded his \$2 shelf company and started another one—no guilt, no responsibility; he has moved on. However, the insurance company is now reading the fine print and saying that the school's insurance policy does not cover the damage to that torn sunshade, the reasoning being that it was not built to the required standards. So that poor school and the hundreds of children who attend it are being forced to suffer because of the greed and the pettiness of that insurance company. I believe that we should look at all causes of these skyrocketing insurance premiums. One of the underlying causes is absolute greed on the part of the insurance companies, and that should not be forgotten.

Last and certainly not least of the schools in my electorate is the Redlands District Special School. Not only are the students at that school very, very special but so are the staff. I have been to the school on a number of occasions and am always touched by the dedication of the staff to providing a caring learning environment for their students. I would like to make honourable members aware that in March this year the Navy charity bike ride will be riding from Rockhampton to Canberra and raising funds for various charities along the way. In early March the bike riders will be coming through Redlands, and they are hosting a fundraising function at the Mount Cotton winery. I urge as many members as possible to attend that function, as all the money raised in each area will be spent in that local area. So the proceeds from the charity function will be spent on building a hydrotherapy pool at the Redlands District Special School. I urge all honourable members to support this function. There will be a number of guest speakers, including two of the surviving Australian Anzacs, who are legends.

I forgot to mention Kimberley College, and I do apologise. This morning I had the pleasure of speaking to Kimberley College's legal studies students as they toured Parliament House. We discussed a range of aspects of legislation, law making and law interpretation. The Minister for Employment gave his talk from the perspective of a practising solicitor. I also provided input as a previously serving police officer. Paul Thomson, the principal of Kimberley College, is to be applauded for his vision. Paul Thomson fought to bring in multi-age education. This philosophy

was first introduced when he was principal of Kimberley Park State School. Having developed this philosophy in the primary school environment, he sought to extend it, building his own school—Kimberley College—and then applying this multi-age philosophy to the secondary environment with quite stunning success. Education is about choice. Education is also about quality. This government through this bill and other legislation seeks to ensure quality education for all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (6.35 p.m.): In rising to speak to this bill today, I must say that it disappoints me to see the figures relating to our rural students, with some 29 per cent in our rural areas leaving before year 12 compared with only 17 per cent leaving in our metropolitan areas. I ask today that top priority be given to our rural schools to address this problem. The new authority must focus closely on this problem. In my electorate, I have Crows Nest and Oakey State High Schools, which are located in very close proximity to Toowoomba, and no doubt we lose some of our students to that larger centre. As the minister is very aware, I have worked extremely closely with the principal and deputy principal of the Crows Nest school. We need education incentives for our rural students to stay and complete year 12.

My children attend a small, isolated primary school at Cooranga North; at one stage its numbers got down to around 10 students. They will then travel to Bell State High School, where they will complete years 8, 9 and 10. After year 10 it will be simply too far from schools for them to complete years 11 and 12 without going away. Most of these children then attend senior at Toowoomba or Warwick. So members can see how disadvantaged our rural people are. If students do not want to leave home, they cannot complete years 11 and 12. So members can see why the new authority will have to spend a lot of time working on this problem facing our rural students and families.

I am extremely disappointed by some research findings that the gender gap between girls and boys in participation in year 12 and higher education is widening. The girls are outnumbering the boys in both areas. One finding is that some boys are now experiencing educational difficulty. There is a 10 per cent gap in retention rates between urban and rural students. I am also concerned that by forming one authority the massive responsibilities may make for too big a workload and then, for sure, the areas that will miss out will once again be our rural areas.

I might touch on this government's Cooler Schools Program. The National Party had a Cool Schools policy before the last election. The coalition had allocated \$53.4 million over four years for the Wide Bay-Warrego zone: airconditioning all new state schools and buildings at full state cost; airconditioning all state school resource centres—libraries—at full state cost; passive building cooling measures for existing state schools at full state cost; airconditioning existing state schools under the 4:1 subsidy program; electrical upgrades in state schools as required at full state cost; additional funding to supplement running costs; and assistance for non-government schools. The Cool Schools Program would have generated 35,000 person-weeks of employment.

The member for Beaudesert spoke of our northern trip recently. I too visited Richmond State School, and the school was airconditioned. I personally checked the thermometer, and it read 35 degrees inside that airconditioned school. So in finishing, I say: please look after the bush and get our kids some comfort and security in their further education.

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (6.39 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise in support of this important bill. The Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001 is a move to amalgamate the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, the Queensland School Curriculum Council and the Tertiary Education Procedures Authority. The change is long overdue and much needed.

In the education industry, the very definite degrees of separation between the three authorities has meant that there has not always been the highest levels of cooperation needed to ensure that the schooling system provides a seamless pathway for our young children. The situation beyond the high school sector and into the tertiary sector is made worse by the internal politics of the universities. How we solve that problem may be beyond any government. Certainly the current federal government would not be up to the job of major tertiary education system reform. The Howard government is flat out trying to get its story right from one day to the next, especially when it involves children.

The murky world of tertiary education politics is not helped by having three separate bureaucracies in the public sector. Therefore, a single statutory body will support all students, making allowance for the many different pathways to further study and the work force such as part-time study, TAFE and school based apprenticeships.

This bill tackles the hard questions about education in our Smart State. By offering the best and most relevant curriculum and ensuring that the structures are keeping pace with current needs, we will ensure that students have a smooth transition through the various stages of schooling and beyond. It is also good to note that the non-government sector is retaining its involvement with this process.

I have a vested interest in streamlining and improving the education system as my eldest daughter, Jordan, has just started year 1 at Caboolture State School. In my dealings with Caboolture State School over the past year, as their local member and as a parent, I have developed a good working relationship with the school's administrative team in the principal, Jan Dann, and the deputy principal, Lorraine Fry. The school has in place an excellent curriculum which supports students' learning needs and will give them a good grounding for their future scholastic and career endeavours.

Mr Briskey: Outstanding teachers there as well.

Ms MALE: Absolutely. This curriculum is taught by a band of dedicated teachers who have shown themselves to be both professional and responsive to their students' needs. I should say that the grounding they receive at Caboolture Preschool starts them on their way. Some parents, and indeed some of my schools, have expressed the desire to see preschool in state-run institutions go from half time to full time. This would enable preschool teachers to expand on and consolidate the basic skills being taught, as well as prevent the current drain of students who are enrolled at the private schools which offer full-day, full-time preschool—a situation the Caboolture school finds itself in.

Mr English: We need to maintain our market share.

Ms MALE: As the member for Redlands says, we need to retain our market share of students going through the state system.

Whilst Caboolture State School provides an excellent learning environment for all of its students, some of the facilities are in need of renovation and maintenance beyond the school's maintenance budget capabilities. This school is the original school for the area and, as such, has difficulty competing with other schools in the area which have been built in only the past decade. The Beattie Labor government has some excellent initiatives, such as the Triple R maintenance program and the Secondary Schools Renewal Program, of which Caboolture State High School has been a beneficiary. I would certainly like to see this extended to some of my older schools, such as Caboolture State School, so that they look like they are in excellent condition for all of our students.

The Elimbah State School and its P&C have been very active in lobbying for and working towards providing additional facilities. Last year I represented Education Minister Anna Bligh at the opening of the new double storey teaching block, which received funding of about \$300,000. The school has a reputation as a centre of excellence, and the facilities are all about skilling Queensland and raising education levels in the Smart State. The state government has also provided subsidy assistance of \$125,000 for the new activities building. The P&C will provide \$135,000 of its own hard-raised money for this project. There is such a high level of cooperation and goodwill, and my congratulations go to Elimbah State School for its proactive approach to children's education.

I know that Conondale State School is close to the heart of the member for Redlands, as he attended there as a schoolboy and his mother, Denise English, taught there.

Mr English: Great memories.

Ms MALE: The member would have great memories, and it is a fantastic school. Conondale was named the state's top achiever in the Queensland Green and Healthy Schools competition in 2000 and in 2001 received the regional award for resource conservation and waste management. Conondale State School's commitment to resource conservation and waste management is evident through its comprehensive approach to water and energy conservation and its recycling and reuse activities. Also, the school is part of the pilot program Solar to Schools, which has seen the school powered by solar panels, with any excess energy to be fed back into the state electricity grid. This is supported by a \$17,000 grant from the state government. There are a whole range of activities undertaken by students, parents and staff at Conondale State School. It is truly a sustainable lifestyle school and everyone there should be justifiably proud of their achievements.

I have many schools in my electorate. I will not be able to talk about them all tonight, but I specifically mention Tullawong State School. The P&C there worked very hard with council and with Queensland Transport to get a full-time school crossing supervisor. It managed to achieve this. While the school was waiting for the full-time person to be appointed the P&C took on the responsibility of making sure the crossing was safe in the meantime. This is just part of the excellent work I see being done by the Tullawong State School community. The P&C is very involved with the students' needs and makes sure that it helps in every way possible.

Tullawong State School has many achievements. I am forever at the school handing out achievement awards to the students in subjects such as science—they were growing crystals last year—maths, English, drama and sport. The quality of learning outcomes at Tullawong State School is actively supported and encouraged by its principal, Jim Kearney and the entire staff at Tullawong State School.

Last year Beerwah State School was very lucky to have Education Minister Anna Bligh come out and visit. She was entertained by the band Le Hot and the Latin American Dancers. It was a nice chance for the Beerwah students to show off some of the excellent work they do in their curriculum. The minister did mention that it was probably one of the best school visits she had ever had because she got the entertainment, she got some very excellent catering by the P&C and then she got a tour of the school to see some of the work the children were doing and the types of facilities that were going to be built there.

The Education Department has committed over \$300,000 to a new special education unit at Beerwah State School. As soon as the council finishes the sewerage contracting in the area we will see it being built. It was due to be built about six months ago, but we are still waiting. We are also hoping for an upgrade of the phone system at the school so that teachers will be able to contact each other from one end of the school to another.

Mr Briskey: That will be outstanding.

Ms MALE: It will be outstanding. The principal, Eric Greentree, is among other local principals in his area in forming the coalition of hinterland schools. This means that Beerwah, Landsborough, Peachester, Glasshouse, Beerburrum and Elimbah schools are all sharing ideas and supporting each other in their quest to improve educational outcomes for their students. Indeed, they all shared the visit with the minister. The principal, Eric Greentree, invited all of the other principals to share so that they could have their chance to chat to the minister and share ideas with the wider Beerwah State School community.

I mention BADYAC. While it is not a school, it is certainly a school of distance education. The people at BADYAC—the students and the coordinators—are the ones facing all the challenges. They are dealing with a difficult time in young people's lives. The staff are making sure young people get the opportunity to finish their education in a safe and supportive environment. The School of Distance Education provides the material, but Education Queensland has kicked in with some money so that the coordinators can be paid. That means they can be there full time to support the students as they try to finish years 10, 11 and 12 and then hopefully move on to further education or into careers. I think the wonderful dedication shown by the coordinators and their volunteer executive committee really needs to be commended. We need to continue to look at ways of supporting our alternative education sites such as BADYAC and the Maleny flexi-school.

I will briefly talk about Delaney Creek State School. Delaney Creek's current principal, Kelli Edgar, has been there for just over a year. She has started an interesting new trial. She has brought about change to the curriculum and year level arrangements through the introduction of a true multi-age class system so that students can be taught at the appropriate skill level. She has combined years 2 and 3 and years 4, 5 and 6 so that children are actually grouped by their skill level rather than their age. Kelli has renamed the classes to reflect that. Kelli has a lot of support from her hardworking staff and the wider school community. I am sure that the students will have a successful year. This type of innovation in our schools is what the Smart State is all about.

This bill will support the Beattie Labor government's aims of increasing the year 12 completion rates and helping to bridge the gap between school and the workforce. With this bill the Beattie Labor government has moved to ensure that Queensland has progressive legislation that works well with our Smart State agenda. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (6.49 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001. At the outset, I want to say how very proud I

am to represent the schools in my electorate. Even though my electorate is not a large one, it contains 28 state primary schools, two state high schools and four Catholic schools. In all, across my electorate, from Rockhampton through to Mackay and out to Moranbah, there is a huge range of different sorts of schools, from single-teacher schools right through to fairly large schools such as Sarina and Walkerston. They all face a great number of different challenges in maintaining a good environment for the children to work in. They have different types of P&C committees, different ways of raising funds and different styles of operation.

I must commend all the principals, the staff, the support teachers and all the people who work with our children in the schools throughout the electorate for the great work they do. We should also recognise the volunteers, the P&C groups, the parents and all those people who make our schools great schools for our kids. We should be thankful that there are so many people within the school community who are willing and able to sacrifice time and effort to make sure that our kids reach their potential in their schooling years.

It is important for politicians to recognise that as children grow their school years give them a base for the rest of their lives. The experiences they have and the challenges they meet whilst going through their school lives equip them to handle issues that arise later in life. We can all relate different experiences from our school days—whether there was bullying and so on. We recall those sorts of things fairly clearly.

Without too much ado, I want to mention a couple of functions I attended recently at which school leaders were recognised, named and proudly wore the badge of school captains, vice captains and sports captains. I attended the ceremony at Sarina Primary School at which Sam Ball and Rebecca Savage were announced as school captains and Kristie Callahan and Nathan Gurnett announced as vice captains. It is an initiative at the Sarina State School that 22 year 7 students voluntarily give up lunch three times every week as peer mediation representatives. That is great. It really does set the school community up. I look forward to working with those students to make it a better school and give some real experiences to the children at the school. I commend the principal and staff at Sarina State School. They are doing a great job. There is a need for further maintenance and upgrading of school classrooms, and I will be making representations to the minister at a later stage in respect of that matter.

Last Monday I attended the ceremony at Koumala State School, the little town in which I live. The school captains for Koumala are Michael Hand and Casey Sleeman with vice captains Mitchell Oliver and Anna Robinson. I commend the principal and staff at Koumala State School for a great effort and all the volunteers and the parents who attended on that day. There is a little bit of family history in relation to the school captains at Koumala State School. Michael Hand is my grandson and is the current school captain, as I was when I went to school at Koumala. In fact, Michael is the fourth generation of our family to attend that school.

Attendance at schools is a marvellous thing for our children and we should all strive to make it a life experience that they enjoy. Unfortunately, from time to time things happen, and the words of the shadow minister in relation to discipline in schools should not be repeated but certainly brought to mind. There are issues within our schools that need to be addressed, and the minister is certainly well aware of that. We try to instil in our school captains qualities such as leading by example and showing qualities of leadership. It is interesting to note that at the beginning of the school year captains are rather nervous and a little reticent but they gain confidence as the school year progresses and are able to represent themselves very effectively.

I need to raise a very serious issue in my electorate relating to the Cooler Schools Program, and other members who have previously contributed to this debate have spoken at length about that program. There are 42 schools in the Capricornia region on a waiting list for round 3 of the Cooler Schools Program. Obviously the list does not include other schools that are eligible but which have not yet made it on to the list either because they have not yet applied or are not intending to apply simply because they are unable to raise the funds necessary to meet the commitment. This year the temperatures within the region have been extreme. The schools that I have visited over the last few weeks have been badly affected by heat. It is not a lot of fun to have children sitting in hot classrooms with temperatures of up to 35 degrees. A number of P&C associations of various schools in my electorate have pulled out all stops and raised very considerable amounts of money to enable airconditioning to be put into their schools. Unfortunately, the information as to when they will have airconditioning fitted into the school is not available to them.

There is another issue in relation to airconditioning. The minister needs to be aware of the fact that quotes given by Q-Build are quite often very expensive. Quotes obtained by the schools

from commercial suppliers of airconditioning units in the local towns are quite often up to 30 per cent, 40 per cent or even 50 per cent cheaper than Q-Build. As a result, instead of three classrooms being airconditioned for a certain amount of money, up to six classrooms could be airconditioned if the local contractor was able to do it. To ensure that schools are airconditioned, the Education Department should look at allowing private contractors to directly install airconditioning units. The whole issue of the Cooler Schools Program is generating a fair bit of heat, pardon the pun, in terms of ensuring that our children have a comfortable environment in which to learn. The government has created a situation in which it has made promises that it is unfortunately unable to keep and the community is becoming rather concerned about it.

The other issue I want to raise briefly relates to the Secondary Schools Renewal Program. Three high schools in the Mackay region are receiving added benefit via extra funding to upgrade those schools. The two schools in my electorate, Mirani and Sarina, are not part of that program at this stage. The schools are, dare I say it, looking very second-hand. Considerable amounts of money need to be spent on infrastructure development, painting, cleaning and those sorts of things just to make the schools look more attractive. There seems to be a lack of funding in that area. I raise the issue right here and now that funding needs to be released to enable those schools not included in the Secondary Schools Renewal Program to at least maintain decent levels of repair.

I wish to talk about the day 8 enrolment policy. That policy may be suitable in a lot of the bigger schools or in the south-eastern corner where it is easy to transfer teachers from one region to the other. However, in electorates such as mine where there are a lot of smaller schools, if the enrolment on day 8 is deficient by one pupil and the school loses a teacher, it is quite often very difficult to get that teacher back when the enrolments increase. In my area our cyclic cropping seasons can result in a variation of pupils in a school of 10 per cent to 15 per cent because of the economic benefits or because a crop is being harvested. The nature of country electorates such as mine can mean that it could take quite a considerable amount of time before another teacher is added to a school's staff once the enrolments increase. I have seen this situation many times before. It is not getting any better or any easier.

The schools in the country areas in particular are the focal point of the community. Any depreciation in the amenity of the school does impact on the community, and impacts very harshly. The community is the base from which the parents and others gain strength. Any depreciation in the teaching levels within the school or any impact on the school at all creates a bad feeling amongst the community. With that in mind, I conclude my speech. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Keech, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (7.01 p.m.): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Eidsvold and Theodore Sawmills

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (7.02 p.m.): Eidsvold and Theodore are just two of the almost 20 communities in the Callide electorate which I am proud to represent. The economic future of these two communities will depend on the state government decision about the future ownership of the sawmills located in each town. Last week the state government called for expressions of interest from prospective buyers for both the Eidsvold and Theodore mills, which will be handed over to government ownership at the end of June as part of a government deal done with Boral, the mills' current owners, which made it possible for the South East Queensland Forest Agreement to be signed in September 1999.

It is critically important for the local economies of both Eidsvold and Theodore that the government ensures that both the sawmills are sold to new owners that can and will continue to operate in the local community. I have made that point in this House many times before, and I make it again tonight. It is not an exaggeration to say that the economic future of the Eidsvold and Theodore communities hangs on this decision, so the minister just has to get it right. Since the deal with Boral was announced nearly two years ago I have continually sought assurances from the government that the mills would be on-sold to new operators and not closed down. Now that the selling process has begun I am seeking an assurance from the minister that the

government will consider the towns' future and the communities' needs when it selects the successful buyer from those who express an interest in the mills.

Eidsvold sawmill is to be offered for sale with a crown allocation of about 7,800 cubic metres, which will reduce to 5,000 cubic metres in year 2. Theodore will have a similar reduction in its allocation, with the allocations from year 2 onwards to be determined by the ongoing western hardwood study. Those reduced crown timber allocations are a concern for the whole community as they threaten the sawmills' viability if they ultimately mean a reduction in throughput for the mill. The government's approach in this sale process should be to facilitate the better use of that available timber resource through new technology and value adding with new timber products rather than allowing the amalgamation of these allocations, resulting in fewer and larger mills.

There is no doubt that the crown allocation for timber is becoming very valuable and the existing timber allocation held by these mills will be attractive to larger sawmillers. The worst possible result from this sale for these communities would be for the government to accept a high bid from a large sawmill operator interested only in the crown allocations that are attached to the mills. That would almost certainly result in the allocations being transferred to the coast and the closure of the local operation, with a devastating loss of jobs in the local Eidsvold and Theodore communities.

A number of options are available to the government that will ensure that the local mills continue to operate. A local joint venture has been formed between the Eidsvold Shire Council, the Theodore co-op and a sawmilling company with the intention of acquiring and operating those mills. This is an innovative response by the communities themselves to take control of their own future and secure some control over a business that is the biggest single employer in each town. I am also aware that there are some smaller specialist sawmills interested in acquiring the mills which can make—

Time expired.

Aspley Electorate

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (7.05 p.m.): In the electorate of Aspley I am working hard and getting results. It has been 12 months since my election to the state seat of Aspley and the election of the Beattie Labor government. In my maiden speech to the parliament I said that it was vital that I work hard for the entire three years of my term in office. That is just what I am doing.

2001 was a year of hard but immensely satisfying work: setting up the electorate office; making contact with the many groups that make up the electorate of Aspley; learning the ways of parliament, the cut and thrust of debate in the House and the intricacies of being a good legislator; helping people through the maze of government departments and finding opportunities for our businesses to grow and prosper; meeting the challenges of breaking the unemployment cycle for our unemployed people; consulting with residents on changes to the Retirement Villages Act and fair trading and body corporate legislation—legislation that affects the quality of life of so many people in the Aspley electorate; getting involved with our youth; creating jobs and life opportunities for our often very able disabled persons; and acknowledging through the Aspley electorate Year of the Volunteer awards those people who quietly go about making the lives of others better in so many ways.

2001 was a big year for the state government and for the attraction to Queensland of so many major business projects such as AMC, Virgin Blue and Singapore Airlines establishing operations in our state. Many aviation industry workers live in the electorate of Aspley. These projects make us realise the true goal of being the Smart State, which is working to make sure our state is ready for the industries of the future—the industries that will give our children jobs.

In the Aspley electorate our children and their schools have embraced innovation and information economies as their future. They have received funding through our multimillion-dollar Secondary Schools Renewal Program, which sees Pine Rivers State High School and Aspley State High School rebuilding and renewing to meet the new multimedia and technology needs of their students. The additional school computers program enables Aspley's schools to give more students in primary schools access to this new technology. In all, over \$1.4 million has been committed to the Aspley schools in the last 12 months. I work hard with my schools and their P&Cs to ensure that our children's needs are met.

We have also had success for small business, achieving contract success and employing local people. The year saw us hold successful businesswomen's breakfasts in conjunction with the Department of State Development and the Brisbane North Chamber of Commerce. These events set the pace for what I hope is a close working relationship with local business.

2001 held many achievements, but we did have some disappointments. We lost a bank in suburban Aspley, but not without a fight by the community. We managed to hold on to the post office at Strathpine, again with amazing public support. Another example of people power at work is our Neighbourhood Watch groups. 2002 will again see me put effort into encouraging their growth and our appreciation of their efforts.

I am a member of the Police Minister's graffiti task force. I spoke often in the parliament—29 times in my first 10 months. I worked hard on the parliamentary Scrutiny of Legislation Committee and I also hold the position of chairperson of the ALP parliamentary caucus.

The first 12 months have been hard work, but the outcome of that work is to get results that make the lives of the people of Aspley better. I say thankyou to everyone who has been part of the success of our community this past year. I say thankyou to those people who know what challenges lie ahead and have given the commitment to work with me to get the job done. 2002 will be about working hard and getting results for the people of the Aspley electorate.

Time expired.

Kenmore Police Station

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Lib) (7.08 p.m.): On 27 December the ANZ bank at Kenmore was robbed yet again. The ANZ bank, unlike the Westpac bank, which was robbed last year, is actually across the road from the unmanned Kenmore Police Station rather than next door, like the Westpac bank. Let me quote from an account from someone who was there at the time. He reported to me the following—

I was shopping with my Mother in Kenmore Shopping Village on December 27 when a lady came rushing in and screamed that the ANZ bank was being robbed. I immediately, perhaps foolishly, rushed outside to see what was going on. I joined 2 fellows with mobile phones who were watching the bank. They had immediately contacted the police.

Now I can remember as a primary school boy attending the official opening of the Kenmore police station. Unfortunately, the two fellows with the mobile phones were not in contact with the Kenmore police station. Also, it appeared that the bank robbers were fully aware that the police station was not operating because they were certainly taking their time.

After what appeared like an age, the robbers emerged from the bank with their firearms and hopped into their car. These guys appeared to be the most relaxed robbers imaginable. They were not expecting to be interrupted or intercepted by the police. For a split second you wonder whether or not you should intervene because it is extraordinarily frustrating seeing these guys get away with it. Anyway, cooler heads prevailed and we stood there watching the robbers slowly drive out of the shopping centre car park politely giving way to other shoppers. When the police did eventually arrive, they were polite, efficient and effective. But the horse had well and truly bolted.

That is an account from an eye witness. If a person cannot frustrate a bank robbery, when two members of the public on mobile phones are giving a blow-by-blow description to the police, then there must be something seriously wrong. When robbers are acting with the sort of nonchalance that one would expect at a Sunday school picnic, then there is something terribly wrong. People have a right to expect more for their taxpayers' dollars than they are getting from this government.

According to the minutes of a recently held Kenmore police divisional community consultative council meeting, the newly appointed officer in charge at Indooroopilly, Inspector Davis, is intending to reopen the Kenmore Police Station. I just hope for the sake of the constituents of Moggill that Inspector Davis receives more support from the Commissioner in this endeavour than Davis's predecessor did. I urge both the Commissioner and the Police Minister to do their bit this time and reopen the Kenmore Police Station.

Banyo-Nudgee Community

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (7.11 p.m.): The Smart State agenda is not just about scientists in white dustcoats hovering over test tubes in a laboratory; it is just as much about communities making smart decisions to create opportunities for its older and younger citizens. The Banyo-Nudgee community fits admirably into this category.

The local secondary school, Banyo State High School, was in need of rejuvenation. An unsuccessful application under the government's Secondary Schools Renewal Program spawned

an exciting new proposal that would propel the area to the forefront of smart educational opportunities within south-east Queensland. A proposal to develop an integrated preschool to year 12 campus on the grounds of the Banyo State High School received overwhelming public support. The proposal was a difficult one for the local community, as it required the sale of the existing Nudgee Primary School, situated just across the road.

The Queensland government supported the potential of this proposal by committing \$8.8 million to complete the project. Plans are now well under way to have the school built in three significant stages. The Banyo P-12 college, which is yet to be formally named, will comprise three subschools between preschool and year 12: a junior school, catering for preschool to year 5; a middle school, catering for years 6 to 9; and a senior school, catering for years 10 to 12. The first stage, due for completion in time for the commencement of the 2003 school year, involves the construction and refurbishment of the middle school. Education Queensland has already appointed Mr Greg McKittrick as the new principal of the P-12 college. Therefore, 2003 will herald the formal establishment of the college.

Initially, the middle and senior schools will co-locate in the grounds of Banyo State High School, with the junior school remaining on the current Nudgee State School site until construction of the new preschool to year 5 buildings are complete. The new junior school is planned to open at the commencement of the 2004 school year. The senior school refurbishment, which includes a performing arts complex, is planned to be completed at the commencement of 2005.

The opportunity to create this smart educational precinct for Banyo and Nudgee is all the more spectacular given the decision of the Australian Catholic University to relocate its entire operations to the Banyo Seminary site in January 2003. The Queensland government has committed \$6 million towards this \$20 million project. ACU is an open university that offers a broad range of study areas, including business, information technology, nursing and teaching.

The completion of the Banyo P-12 college and the Australian Catholic University campus will create a unique educational precinct in Banyo and Nudgee. A child will be able to go from kindergarten to university all within walking distance of their home. The educational renewal unfolding in Banyo and Nudgee is just another practical example of the Smart State agenda, on this occasion driven by local citizens, not scientists in white dustcoats.

Western and Northern Darling Downs

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (7.14 p.m.): Tonight I would like to inform members of the House of the serious situation that is facing people on the western and northern Darling Downs. For a long time now, those areas have not received rain of any consequence. Just recently, the Leader of the National Party, Mike Horan, the member for Darling Downs and I met with a number of farmers and other members of the community on a property at Chinchilla on the eastern side of that area. That area is good farming country, and they are good farmers. Some of them have won landcare awards for being innovative and practical. They are very sensible farmers. They have good equipment, but they just cannot grow a crop.

It is really quite extraordinary that, with all of those elements, those farmers just cannot grow a crop. Obviously something needs to be done. The present exceptional circumstances arrangement that encompasses that area is not good enough. It does not provide the assistance that is needed to get this area on the road to recovery.

A steering committee has been formed to look at two strategies. One relates to short-term assistance that will help the community—those people want to help themselves, but obviously they need government assistance to help them get over the line—and the other relates to long-term strategies for the region. As I said, the area that we visited is good farming country. I ask members to pause for a minute to think of what happens to those farmers who are on lesser country. Obviously, they are in big trouble.

This steering committee has met, and it plans to hold a further meeting on 5 March in Chinchilla, where they are hoping to get a lot of the community together to try to nail down some good strategies that will be of assistance to them in the future. Those people can be assisted in a number of ways. In the first instance, exceptional circumstances assistance or natural disaster assistance has to be boosted. We also have to put in place a strategy not unlike the south-west strategy and the desert uplands strategy to coordinate a group of people to provide the assistance that is needed to build up the farms in that area.

Time expired.

Dr Hilda des Arts

Mr LIVINGSTONE (Ipswich West—ALP) (7.17 p.m.): On Sunday, 17 February 2002, the Ipswich community lost one of its most loved and respected senior citizens who was truly Ipswich's greatest ever ambassador. After coping with physical difficulties for some years, Dr Hilda des Arts finally lost her ongoing battle with ill health at the age of 86. It was my privilege to be able to call her my friend, and her loss will be deeply felt by the many organisations to which Hilda devoted all her time and energy and by the Ipswich community as a whole.

In her own true spirit, I feel this is a time to reflect on the many positive aspects of her life and to acknowledge the tremendous contribution that she made to the people of Ipswich. Hilda came to Australia in 1977 at the age of 62. The following year she joined Lifeline and devoted the next 12 years of her life as a trainer, counsellor and director of that organisation. Her last two years there were spent as a corporate trainer with AUSTRAIN, where she conducted workshops in conflict resolution, coping with change, management skills and strategic planning. At an age when most people tend to slow down, Hilda's boundless energy saw her take a leading role in countless community organisations—far too many to comment on in three minutes this evening.

Hilda's colourful life has not been without its tragedies. The loss of her daughter to cancer prompted her to create Ipswich Hospice Care, a service that would provide palliative care in the home to ease the last days of people suffering from a terminal illness. Ipswich Hospice Care started out as an unfunded volunteer service and it subsequently sought and was granted ongoing funding from the area health authority. Following the success of this venture, Ipswich Hospice Care then undertook the establishment of a community hospice centre, which commenced in 1994 and met an integral need within the community to accept and acknowledge the many physical and spiritual aspects of dying and the long-term effects of such events on family and friends.

Hilda received many achievement awards, including Ipswich Citizen of the Year in 1984, Queensland Premier's Award in 1995, Rotary Paul Harris Fellowship in 1996, Australian Senior of the Year in 1997, Olympic Torch Bearer, Ipswich in 2000 and Silver Medallion International Year of the Volunteer in 2001. Hilda has also been nominated for the Order of Australia. It is significant that all of these awards were achieved in the last 18 years of her life, supporting her unflinching belief that age is just a state of mind and, as long as the mind is agile and alert, the rest of the body will just have to try to keep up. This is exactly how Hilda lived her life, right up until the last.

I was able to speak with Hilda for a little time recently. Despite her failing physical condition, her wish was that she would have enough time to finish off a couple of projects dear to her heart, and to attend a national conference in Western Australia where she had been invited as the keynote speaker. She looked forward to this event as being the highlight of her life. Unfortunately, time ran out and she was unable to complete this final goal. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

It was my privilege to be able to go into bat for Hilda on many occasions. She never hesitated to express her gratitude at every opportunity for whatever help or assistance she was given, always with a beaming smile, a sparkling wit and a friendly word for everyone. I take this opportunity to honour the life and the dedication of this courageous lady, to present her many achievements to members for their commendation, to offer my condolences to her family and friends and the people of Ipswich, and to mourn the loss of a wonderful friend who was truly Ipswich's greatest ever ambassador.

Nambour Sugar Mill

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (7.20 p.m.): I rise to report to parliament on the most recent developments in relation to the future of the Nambour Sugar Mill and call on the Ministers for State Development, Local Government and Main Roads to do everything within their power to retain the sugar industry on the Sunshine Coast, which is worth millions of dollars to the region.

On 31 January this year I held a meeting with senior management representatives from Bundaberg Sugar and representatives of local canegrowers. At this meeting it was confirmed that the most critical issue for the ongoing viability of the mill was that significant changes needed to be made immediately to the method of cane delivery. At present, all sugar cane is delivered to the mill, which is in the heart of the Nambour central business district, via a cane train. I understand that advice has already been received by mill management that its preferred new method of cane delivery, by large trucks rather than the trains, will trigger the application of the Integrated Planning Act. I have no doubt that this change from trains to trucks will cause a lot of

controversy in our community. In this regard, I ask all ministers to help in all ways possible to resolve this matter.

At that meeting I was told that unless these changes of sugarcane delivery to the mill occur the mill has no future. On 8 February I received written confirmation from the Belgian mill owners that the future of the mill was uncertain. They also told me that they were negotiating with local authorities and canegrowers and that drastic changes were necessary to ensure the survival of the industry in the area. I understand that an additional 1,000 hectares of land has been offered for sugarcane growing in an attempt to help the viability of the mill, but to date this offer has not been taken up because of uncertainty about the mill's future. In fact, canegrowers on the Sunshine Coast cannot plan for the future when the mill owners will give no guarantee that they will be there to crush the cane after this year.

I understand that the State government has recently helped Flight West to stay flying. Accordingly, I ask all government ministers to do everything possible in order for us to retain this important industry on the Sunshine Coast.

Glass House Electorate

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (7.23 p.m.): I rise tonight to speak about the achievements of the electorate of Glass House over the past year. One of the most amazing achievements that has suddenly come to pass is the creation of the northern bypass at Caboolture, which has been on the agenda for about 15 years. Certainly the corridor has already been put there. In 1996 it was all ready to go, the funding was available and then the Borbidge-Sheldon coalition government came in, cancelled the entire project and funnelled the money off elsewhere. Goodness only knows where it went.

It is finally back on the agenda. Last week the Transport Minister, Steve Bredhauer, visited the area, along with the member for Pumicestone, Carryn Sullivan, and me, to turn the first sod on stage 1, a \$33 million part of the project. That will lead to stage 2 and hopefully to stage 3 and get rid of those big trucks coming out of the centre of Caboolture. That was a despicable act by the Borbidge-Sheldon government and it impacted very badly on the lives of Caboolture residents and those using the CBD area. It certainly added to the decline of the area. I am pleased to say that that project is under way; the first stage should be finished in the next 14 months. We are all really keen to see it finally finished.

On the topic of roads, as a result of the community cabinet process when the cabinet came to Maleny in October 2000, there was a lot of campaigning about the icebox section of the Landsborough to Maleny road. This week we announced that the consultants are on site and that they will look at the seven kilometre section to see how it can be realigned, to see what guard rails can be put in and to see exactly what needs to be done to ensure the safety of the Maleny residents and the many tourists visiting that beautiful part of our state.

Mr Reeves: I drove up there at Christmas and it is not a great road.

Ms MALE: It is not a great road, but the final destination, Maleny, is certainly a perfect place to be.

Mr Reeves: A beautiful place.

Ms MALE: I thank the member for that. So, there are two wonderful road stories from my electorate. However, there is so much more being done in the electorate of Glass House and, indeed, across the entire state of Queensland.

I will talk about school nurses for just a moment. We have a fantastic school nurse in Jenni Morris, who works at the Beerwah High School and the Maleny High School. She has made an enormous contribution over the past year to the overall health and wellbeing of our students. She provides confidential information, support and advice on issues such as drugs, eating disorders, mental health and sexual health. She is out there talking to our young people and helping them get through the difficulties of everyday life.

I could speak for hours and hours about the work that is being done in the electorate of Glass House, but one thing I want to finally touch on is my mobile offices. They have been an enormous success over the past year and we have certainly programmed in the next six months worth. I am looking forward to meeting as many Glass House residents as I can. It is quite difficult for some people to get to my electorate office, which is based in Caboolture, so I like to get out and about as much as I can. We have started the door-knocking again so that we can talk to people on their doorstep and see what the issues are. It has certainly been well received. It is

interesting to note that the federal member copied my mobile office idea, but only in the two months leading up to the election. We have not seen him since.

Public Health Care, Ingham

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (7.26 p.m.): I have stated in previous sittings of parliament that there are a number of issues relating to public health that need to be addressed in Ingham. In the past, I have expressed the concern that the Ingham Hospital needs to be rebuilt. Even though refurbishments were carried out in the early nineties, it has not been sufficient to ensure a good standard of health care. It is reaching the point where, no matter what building works are completed, it is sending good money after bad. I feel it is realistic to say that the refurbishments only have a limited life-span.

It is essential that the Ingham Hospital functions well, as it is the centre for most health care in Ingham, as well as being strategically located between Townsville, 100 kilometres to the south, and Tully, 100 kilometres to the north. A huge effort is being made to obtain additional equipment to enable the hospital to perform extra services. The building itself needs to be equipped to deal with increased demands. Technology is moving at a rapid rate and the old hospital is inadequately equipped to cope with the changes that are now occurring.

I am encouraged by the advice that I received from the Townsville District Health Service stating that consultants are to be engaged during March of this year to undertake a major health service planning exercise in Ingham. I understand that this exercise is to assess the future needs of the community. I also understand that there will be a consultative process behind the planning exercise, allowing interested members of the community to provide background for the health plans. I commend this initiative.

I am aware that the Ingham Hospital is attracting a number of specialists from Townsville to carry out minor medical procedures and it is interesting to note that a number of out-of-town patients are now having their procedures carried out at the hospital. A dedicated group of medical practitioners, along with unswerving efforts by the Ingham Hospital's equipment fundraising committee and the Ingham community, have all contributed to the money raised in recent times to ensure the presence of a sound health care facility which is utilised by both local and remote clients.

The 99 per cent patient satisfaction rate from Queensland Health's recent patient satisfaction survey is testimony to that fact. I am sure that once the hospital is redeveloped, client satisfaction can only increase to a level that is fitting for all Queenslanders when it comes to matters of their health. This is a great initiative. I am sure that if the government is prepared to provide the essential funding the Ingham district will have an excellent facility which the community should be proud of.

Elgin Marbles

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove—ALP) (7.29 p.m.): In 1801, agents of Lord Elgin began the task of removing about half of the Parthenon marbles and these are now housed in the British Museum. The Greek government is building a new 55 million pound Acropolis Museum which is to be completed in time for the 2004 Athens Olympics. The marbles celebrate the Panathenaic games held BC. What a splendid gesture it would be if Britain returned the Elgin marbles so that all of the sculptures connected with the Parthenon were again reunited in Greece, the home of both the ancient and modern Olympics.

There is nothing so unique as the relationship of the Parthenon to Athens and the marbles to the Parthenon. Greece has continued to call for their return since 1829, when it won independence from Turkey. The campaign for the return of the Parthenon marbles is gaining worldwide momentum. British politicians, academics and celebrities, Bill Clinton and the majority of the members of the European Parliament are part of a worldwide movement urging the British Museum to do the right thing.

Lord Elgin had no authority to remove the marbles. There is a strong legal argument for their return. Gough Whitlam is on the public record as saying they were stolen. Former Prime Ministers Whitlam and Fraser have lifted the profile of the Australian campaign for the return of the marbles to Athens. John Howard has not supported Greece's claim by making representations to the British government. However, John Howard has indicated a preparedness

to raise this issue with Tony Blair at next month's CHOGM. But the issue has not made the CHOGM agenda.

During CHOGM I will be joining other members of Brisbane's Greek community in a protest to bring this matter to the attention of British Prime Minister Blair. Earlier this year, Blair ruled out any possibility of the marbles—the striking stone friezes that in 1801 decorated the sides of the Parthenon. British public opinion polls taken in 1998 and 1999 have indicated overwhelming support for the return of the marbles. Earlier this year, a leading London museum director urged the British Museum to change its intransigent position.

At CHOGM I will be holding a placard urging Tony Blair to show some understanding of the emotional and historic significance of the return of the Parthenon marbles prior to the 2004 Athens Olympics to their true home, the resurrected Parthenon at the Acropolis Museum. We should not be looking backwards at whether Lord Elgin was a saint or a sinner. It is time for a truly historic gesture.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.32 p.m.