

TUESDAY, 3 JUNE 2003

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

30 May 2003

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 29 May 2003:

"A Bill for an Act to provide for a community ambulance cover levy, and for other purposes"

"A Bill for an Act to amend the Major Sports Facilities Act 2001"

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

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

Governor

STATE BUDGET

Mr SPEAKER: As honourable members are aware, the state budget will be delivered by the Treasurer at 2.30 p.m. this afternoon. To expedite the distribution of budget papers, I am instructing table officers to distribute them to members' places in the House from 2.00 p.m. today. The chamber, therefore, will not be accessible from 2.00 p.m. until the ringing of the bells. The budget papers will be sealed and should not be opened until formally laid upon the table of the House by the Treasurer.

PRIVILEGE**Alleged Use of Obscenity by Government Whip**

Mr SPEAKER: I refer to the matter of privilege concerning the member for Stafford, Mr Terry Sullivan MP, raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Jeff Seeney MP, which I forwarded to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. The committee has written to me advising that it has now considered the matter.

The committee deemed the words used by the member for Stafford to be unparliamentary language. The committee also noted that the member for Stafford made a personal explanation in the House on 15 May 2003 detailing the circumstances surrounding the incident. In particular, the committee noted that Mr Sullivan apologised unreservedly to the Speaker and to all members for any offence his words may have caused. The committee also noted Mr Sullivan's assurance that he holds the parliament in the highest regard and would not intentionally bring the parliament into disrepute. Mr Sullivan also wrote in similar terms to the committee.

In the circumstances of the case, and taking into consideration the member for Stafford's full and unreserved apology to the Speaker and to the House, the committee agreed that, in this instance, it would take no further action in regard to the specific matter of the unparliamentary language used by the member. However, the committee was conscious of the potential detrimental effect that the use of unparliamentary language by members can have on the standing of the parliament in the wider community, particularly in light of the broadcasting of the parliament's proceedings on the Internet. The committee suggested that I remind members that incidents such as these do bring the parliament into disrepute. The committee advises that it will, for its part, be making amendments to the code of ethical standards to reinforce these matters to members.

PETITIONS

The following honourable member has lodged a paper petition for presentation—

Rail Services, Manly-Cleveland Stations

Mr Briskey from 16 petitioners requesting the House to duplicate the rail line between Manly and Cleveland stations so as to increase the number of services available during peak periods.

The following honourable member has sponsored an e-petition which is now closed and presented—

Tree Clearing

Ms Boyle from 400 petitioners requesting the House to stop land clearing and help our native wildlife survive and enjoy life.

PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

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

30 May 2003—

- Freedom of Information—Annual Report 2001-02
- Marine Safety Incidents—Annual Report 2002
- Response from the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities (Mr Palaszczuk) to a paper petition presented by Miss Simpson from 55 petitioners regarding the Moreton Sugar Mill—

29 May 2003

Mr Ron Clarkson
143 Lefoes Road
BLI BLI QLD 4560

Dear Mr Clarkson

I refer to your petition tabled in Parliament on 29 November 2002 by the Member for Maroochydore, requesting legislation to provide adequate notice to interested parties before closure of the Moreton Sugar Mill.

A number of meetings and deliberations have been held on this matter since the owners, Bundaberg Sugar, wrote to me on 27 June 2002 advising the events that triggered what it called "Mill Closure Proceedings" at that time. This included a decision by Bundaberg Sugar to operate for the 2003 season. However, on 10 April 2003, Bundaberg Sugar formally advised me, and subsequently advised local growers that: "The Mill will permanently stop carrying on the business of crushing cane at the completion of the 2003 crushing season, anticipated to be on or before the 31st December 2003".

Consequently, the proposal in your petition for a legislative amendment to provide adequate notice is not necessary and unfortunately, it would also not prevent the Mill from closure.

I am aware that the closure of Moreton Mill will cause economic hardship to some local cane farmers and ancillary businesses. However, I am aware that the Maryborough Sugar Factory and other cane processors are considering the opportunities to source cane from the Moreton region in future.

Thank you for bringing your petition to the Government's attention.

Yours sincerely

Henry Palaszczuk MP

Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities

- Response from the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities (Mr Palaszczuk) to paper petitions presented by Mr Mulherin from 270 petitioners, Ms Jarratt from 288 petitioners and Mr Mulherin from 202 petitioners regarding the sugar industry—

29 May 2003

Mr Paul Schrembri
Chairman
CANEGROWERS Mackay
PO Box 117
MACKAY QLD 4740

Dear Mr Schrembri

I refer to your petition tabled in Parliament on 18 September 2002 by the Members for Mackay, Whitsunday and Mirani, requesting the State and Commonwealth Governments to work with the sugar industry to assist it return to a profitable situation.

The Government is aware that the Mackay Region has had four years of minimal sugar incomes due to adverse weather and disease.

The Queensland and Commonwealth Governments acknowledged that the sugar industry is extremely important to the social and economic fabric of Queensland in its announcement of the joint Sugar Industry Reform Package and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of 25 September 2002.

The Reform Package commits the Commonwealth to provide up to \$120 million in emergency income support, exit payments for farmers who choose to leave the industry, interest rate subsidies for replanting and funding for regional initiatives to support industry change and adjustment.

The Package also commits the State Government to make available an additional \$30 million to the industry over the next four years on top of the \$55 million already committed. This \$30 million is in three programs: a Sugar Industry Innovation Grant program; a Sugar Industry Change Management program; and in Farm Consolidation loans.

The Commonwealth and State Governments also agreed in that MoU to remove any regulatory impediments to the competitiveness of the industry or to the development of a more commercial culture.

As you would be aware the Reform Package of assistance was provided on the condition that there is legislative reform of the industry.

Thank you for bringing your petition to the Government's attention.

Yours sincerely

Henry Palaszczuk MP

Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities

- Response from the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines (Mr Robertson) to an e-petition sponsored by Mr Lee from 1949 petitioners regarding land clearing in Queensland—

Mr N J Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Neil

I refer to your letter of 2 April 2003 forwarding a copy of a petition lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly, requesting the House to amend the Vegetation Management Act 2000 and the Land Act 1994 to implement a rapid phase out of land clearing in Queensland.

The Queensland and Commonwealth Governments are currently negotiating with stakeholders about a joint package to address current rates of clearing. The initiative proposes to phase out all broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation, and provide up to \$150M to assist landholders and ensure a sustainable future for Queensland.

In the meantime the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments have agreed to place a temporary halt on accepting new applications to clear remnant vegetation while the package is being finalised. The legislation to give force to the halt on receiving applications was passed by the Queensland Parliament on Thursday 30 May 2003, and is retrospective from midday 16 May 2003.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

Stephen Robertson MP

- Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Welford) to a paper petition presented by Mr Pitt from 1314 petitioners regarding minimum sentencing of offenders—

Ms F Deen
PO Box 878
GORDONVALE QLD 4865

Dear Ms Deen

Your petition, received in the Legislative Assembly on 27 November 2002 requesting the House to establish a system of minimum sentencing of offenders has been forwarded to me.

Let me emphasise that I share your concern that the sentence imposed on an offender should reflect the seriousness of the crime. However, sentencing of offenders is a complicated process. In sentencing an offender, the judge, or magistrate, must take into account all the particular circumstances of the case and balance several competing issues.

The Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 sets out the factors that a magistrate, or a judge, must consider when sentencing an offender. Factors that must be taken into account include the type of offence, the harm done to the victim, the damage caused by the offence, the offender's age and character, the prevalence of the offence and the offender's compliance with previous orders. Consideration of these factors helps promote a consistent approach to the sentencing of offenders by the judiciary.

With respect, it is very easy to criticise the judiciary for imposing lenient sentences. However, media reports of sentences that the courts hand down do not necessarily give the full story of the case. In many cases there are factors that are not reported that can lead to a reduction of sentence, such as efforts by an offender to repay stolen money or any early plea of guilty that spares witnesses the ordeal of testifying in court.

I can assure you that our law does allow, for the appropriate case, very serious penalties to be imposed. If a person is declared a "serious violent offender", special provisions apply to ensure that the offender must serve 80% of his or her sentence before being eligible for parole. The Queensland Community Corrections Board cannot abridge this time. When the facts of the crime are so serious that the judge is satisfied that the offender is a serious danger to the community then the judge can impose an indefinite sentence.

The doctrine of separation of powers means that I, as Attorney-General, cannot dictate to the judiciary how they sentence. Laws are passed by Parliament. Judges and magistrates are sworn to apply that law. Our system of democracy is dependent on judicial independence. However, if I am of the view that a particular sentence is manifestly inadequate I have a right of appeal against the sentence to the Court of Appeal.

Accordingly, I am reluctant to support the idea that there should be mandatory minimum sentences for offenders convicted of certain crimes. Even for violent crimes committed against children and the elderly there are many variations of factual circumstances that make some cases more serious than other cases. The sentencing judge is in the best position to sort through all the legal complexities, consider the wider implications and come to a just decision. A mandatory sentence regime cannot deliver this type of justice.

Mandatory sentencing regimes in the Northern Territory and Western Australia have demonstrated that mandatory sentencing, by perpetrating individual miscarriages of justice, bring the justice system into disrepute.

I do appreciate the constructive comments you have made about possible initiatives that would protect the community from offenders. Thank you for taking the time to sign a petition to the Legislative Assembly.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Rod Welford MP

- Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Welford) to a paper petition presented by Ms Bligh from 201 petitioners regarding the Summary Offences Bill and related indigenous issues—

M/- R Hart
10 Dempster Street
TOOWONG QLD 4066

Dear M/- Hart

Your petition, received in the Legislative Assembly on 4 December 2002 relating to the Summary Offences Bill and related indigenous issues has been forwarded to me.

The majority of the matters raised in your petition fall within the portfolio responsibilities of the Honourable Tony McGrady MP, Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province. I have therefore taken the liberty of forwarding your petition to Mr McGrady with a request that he respond to you directly.

At paragraph (b), your petition requests that the House establish properly funded court diversion systems for indigenous communities. You may be aware that under the Drug Rehabilitation (Court Diversion) Act 2000, a Drug Court pilot program commenced in South-East Queensland in June 2000. I have recently introduced legislation into Parliament providing for the expansion of the Drug Court pilot program to North Queensland.

On this program eligible offenders facing jail for particular offences are placed on an intensive drug rehabilitation order (IDRO) that requires them to participate in a designated treatment rehabilitation program. Although sentenced to a term of imprisonment for the offences, the offender is able to remain in the community whilst getting the benefit of drug rehabilitation. Breach of conditions of an IDRO will result in sanctioning and/or termination of the IDRO. Termination of an IDRO will result in an offender being sentenced for the original offence/s and serving an actual prison sentence.

It is envisaged that the expansion of the Drug Court to North Queensland will serve as an effective diversionary process for many indigenous offenders.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Rod Welford MP

- Response from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Welford) to a paper petition presented by Mr Johnson from 138 petitioners regarding Discrimination Law Amendment Bill 2002—

Ms Monica Bielenberg
46 Cane Street
LONGREACH QLD 4730

Dear Ms Bielenberg

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the Discrimination Law Amendment Bill 2002. I appreciate the issues you have raised in relation to religious employers.

The aim of the Bill is to ensure our state remains a fair and tolerant place to live. The changes are designed to protect the fundamental human rights of all Queenslanders, no matter who they are. It is designed to reinforce the social diversity of our vibrant, contemporary and just society.

Our Government did not decide to amend this legislation lightly, or without due regard to concerns and needs of all Queenslanders.

The Bill is not intended to endorse, condone or encourage any particular lifestyle. Nor does the Bill impact on the free practice of religion in our society.

I know that the practical implications of the Bill have caused some concern amongst religious employers, particularly religious schools.

Religious employers have in the past had a "blanket exemption" from discrimination laws. The Bill simply sought to ensure that religious employers, like other employers, can not discriminate without legitimate justification.

However, in light of the concern raised, the Premier and I met with Church leaders and religious school organisations to discuss the issues involved. We also held a public forum to canvass the various viewpoints of Queenslanders on this issue.

I am pleased to let you know that out of that process, agreement was reached on an amendment to the Bill which accommodates the desire of religious employers to preserve the religious character of their workplaces whilst ensuring employees are protected from harsh or unreasonable discriminatory action.

There will now be an exemption from discrimination laws for two types of work, namely, all work in religious educational institutions (i.e. schools) and work where employees are required to adhere to and communicate religious beliefs.

Religious employers can take action which might otherwise be discriminatory to address concerns about an employee's behaviour; however the actions employers take to deal with the behaviour must be reasonable.

This amendment is consistent with the Government's original intention behind the Bill—to protect people's human rights—whilst giving greater certainty to religious employers when enforcing appropriate codes of behaviour.

The amendment was debated and passed with the rest of the Bill on 29 November 2002. It was supported by the Liberal Party and the Independent Member for Nicklin, Mr Peter Wellington MP.

Our Government would like to thank you and other Queenslanders for your valuable input on this issue.

Yours sincerely

Rod Welford MP

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to a paper petition presented by Ms Jarratt from 1588 petitioners and an e-petition sponsored by Ms Jarratt from 27 petitioners regarding the four-laning of the Mackay to Bucasia Road—

25.03.03

Ms Jan Jarratt MP
Member for Whitsunday
PO Box 1302
Proserpine Qld 4800

Dear Ms Jarratt

Thank you for the petitions lodged by you on 26 February and 11 March 2003, with the Legislative Assembly, about the four-laning of the Mackay to Bucasia Road.

The Department of Main Roads completed the Mackay-Bucasia Road Corridor Study in April 2001. This study identified the highest priority works as upgrading of the existing intersections.

The state government committed \$10.4m to these intersection upgradings in the Roads Implementation Program (RIP) 2001-02 to 2005-06.

Main Roads has completed the construction of roundabouts at Holts and Golf Links Roads intersections at a cost of \$2.4m.

A \$6.4m project is currently underway at Rural View on Bucasia Road. These works include the construction of a roundabout at Wallmans Road, signalisation of Sologinkins Road intersection and the new Eimeo Road link. The intersection works will address the congestion issues that occur on the Mackay-Bucasia Road each morning. The new Eimeo Road Link should greatly improve safety around the Eimeo Primary School.

The department has also programmed works for the signalisation of the George Fordyce Road intersection.

Main Roads will consider the duplication of Bucasia Road to four lanes for inclusion in future RIPs, when warranted, based on statewide priorities for similar types of works.

I note that the petitions raise concerns with the section of Bucasia Road between Eimeo Road turn-off and the Golf Links-Habana Roads intersection being the only access to the northern beaches. This will remain the case even with the duplication of Bucasia Road.

Mackay City Council's Strategic Plan identifies future additional routes to Bucasia Road. These include a sub-arterial road to the west and a collector street to the east. Construction of these routes would provide a road network linking the northern beaches area to the existing Mackay Road network.

Councillor Rolls should address the road network issue through Mackay City Council.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Original signed 25.03.03

Steve Bredhauer

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads

Member for Cook

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to a paper petition presented by Miss Simpson from 251 petitioners regarding David Low Way at Pacific Paradise and to a paper petition presented by Miss Simpson from 629 petitioners regarding pedestrian refuges near Discovery Beach Hotel Resort at Marcoola—

09.01.03

Miss Fiona Simpson MP
Member for Maroochydore
Suite 1

Cnr First and Memorial Avenues
Maroochydore Qld 4558

Dear Miss Simpson

I refer to the petitions lodged by you on 29 November 2002, with the Legislative Assembly Offices, about the need to upgrade the intersection of the David Low Way with Menzies Drive and Mudjimba Beach Road at Pacific Paradise and the need for pedestrian refuges near the Discovery Beach Hotel Resort at Marcoola.

As you would recall, I wrote to you on 12 April 2002 about the Menzies Drive intersection and advised the Department of Main Roads would consider the need to upgrade the intersection in future reviews of the Roads Implementation Program.

Funding for intersection upgrading is limited and prioritised primarily on the basis of road crash history. When the program was reviewed in 2002 the intersection was a low priority because there had been only two reported crashes since traffic signals were installed in 1998. Both crashes were relatively minor. While it would be desirable to realign the intersection to improve traffic flow, there are other intersections in the North Coast-Hinterland District with higher numbers of reported crashes.

Main Roads will continue to monitor the operation of the intersection and reconsider priorities in each annual review of the program.

The department has plans to construct a pedestrian refuge on the David Low Way near Lexie Street just south of the Discovery Beach Hotel Resort at Marcoola. The refuge has been planned with Maroochy Shire Council to ensure that it is consistent with council's Communities Creating Vision Strategy 2001. Construction is programmed for early 2003.

If you need more information about either of these matters please contact Mr Dennis Tennant, the department's District Director (North Coast-Hinterland), telephone 5482 0333.

Yours sincerely

Original signed 09.01.03

Steve Bredhauer

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads

Member for Cook

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to a paper petition presented by Mrs C Sullivan from 2483 petitioners regarding Bribie Island Road through Ningi township—

Mrs Carryn Sullivan MP
Member for Pumicestone
1/43 Benabrow Avenue
Bellara Qld 4507

Dear Mrs Sullivan

Thank you for the petitions lodged by you on 25 February and 11 March 2003, with the Legislative Assembly, about the planning to upgrade Bribie Island Road to four lanes through Ningi township.

You will recall that I last wrote to you on this matter on 13 February 2003 following a deputation from Ms Peggy Graham, Mr Brian Roberts and Mr Peter Dallimore. I advised you that I have accepted the Department of Main Roads' recommendation that future upgrading of the road should be on the existing road corridor through Ningi and that I consider this to be the appropriate solution at this time.

The petitioners consider that the planning process has not achieved the best result for the whole of Caboolture Shire. However, I am convinced that the best result has now been achieved for the whole of Queensland.

I consider that the matter is now closed and I do not propose to instruct Main Roads to carry out any further investigations at this time.

Yours sincerely

Original signed 24.03.03

Steve Bredhauer

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads

Member for Cook

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to a paper petition presented by Ms Barry from 402 petitioners regarding a signalised pedestrian crossing in Albany Creek Road—

Ms Bonny Barry MP
Member for Aspley
Shop 2/1315 Gympie Rd
Aspley Qld 4034

Dear Ms Barry

I refer to a petition lodged by you on 18 September 2002 with the Legislative Assembly Offices about the installation of a signalised pedestrian crossing in Albany Creek Road.

Officers from the Department of Main Roads have recently counted the number of pedestrians using the existing pedestrian refuge between the retirement homes on Albany Creek Road and the pedestrian signals at the Hypermarket traffic lights. It was found that over a 12 hour period during the day 82 pedestrian trips were made using the existing facilities.

While this falls short of the number required for further consideration of a signalised pedestrian facility, the department is aware that there is a long history of requests for an improved pedestrian facility at this location.

I have arranged for Mr Don Steele, the department's District Director (Metropolitan), to contact your office with a view to meeting representatives from the Aspley Court Retirement Estate and Compton Gardens Retirement Village so that pedestrian issues can be discussed.

I hope this discussion will help to address the concerns of your constituents.

Yours sincerely

Original signed 16.10.02

Steve Bredhauer

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads
Member for Cook

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to a paper petition presented by Mr Briskey from 113 petitioners regarding traffic noise on Delancey, Russell and Wellington Streets in Cleveland—

Mr D Briskey MP
Member for Cleveland
PO Box 795
Cleveland Qld 4163

Dear Mr Briskey

I refer to the petition lodged in the Legislative Assembly Office on 3 September 2002 about traffic volumes and noise on Delancey, Russell and Wellington Streets in Cleveland.

These roads are not state-controlled and the Department of Main Roads has no responsibility for the issue raised.

I have forwarded a copy of your correspondence to Councillor D Seccombe, Mayor of Redland Shire Council, for consideration and reply direct.

Yours sincerely

Original signed 2.10.02

Steve Bredhauer

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads
Member for Cook

Councillor D Seccombe
Mayor
Redland Shire Council
PO Box 21
Cleveland Qld 4163

Dear Mr Seccombe

I refer to a petition lodged in the Legislative Assembly Office on 3 September 2002 about traffic volumes and noise on Delancey, Russell and Wellington Streets in Cleveland.

As this matter is council's responsibility, I have enclosed a copy of the relevant correspondence for your consideration and reply direct.

Yours sincerely

Steve Bredhauer

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads
Member for Cook

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to a paper petition presented by Ms Rose from 1052 petitioners regarding Boyd Street at Tugun—

Hon Merri Rose MP
Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading
Member for Currumbin
PO Box 581
Palm Beach Qld 4221

Dear Ms Rose

Thank you for the petition lodged by you on 25 February 2003, with the Legislative Assembly, about the unacceptability of the proposed widening of Boyd Street at Tugun and its use as a major traffic route as part of Stage 1 of the Tugun Bypass project.

As you are aware, I met with the Honourable John Anderson MP, Deputy Prime Minister and federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services, on 10 March 2003 to announce an agreement whereby the federal government would provide \$120m (capped) to match the \$120m provided by the Queensland government in its 2002 state budget.

This federal funding offer is conditional on a full bypass of Tugun being constructed from the Pacific Motorway in Queensland to the Pacific Highway in New South Wales. It therefore removes the need to construct an interim connection along Boyd Street.

I am sure this will be good news for you and residents in the Boyd Street area.

Thank you for your interest in this important project.

Yours sincerely

Original signed 11.04.03

Steve Bredhauer

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads
Member for Cook

- Response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads (Mr Bredhauer) to a paper petition presented by Mr Pitt from 332 petitioners regarding pedestrian access across the Bruce Highway at Babinda—

Mr Warren Pitt MP
Member for Mulgrave
PO Box 314
Gordonvale Qld 4865

Dear Mr Pitt

Thank you for your representations of 28 October 2002 on behalf of Mr Henry Chapman of Babinda and a petition lodged by you on 22 and 23 October 2002 with the Legislative Assembly Offices about pedestrian access across the Bruce Highway at Babinda.

I acknowledge Mr Chapman's concerns and have asked the Department of Main Roads to investigate the issue.

The federal government is responsible for funding maintenance and upgrading works on the national highway network that includes the Bruce Highway. If significant works are needed, Main Roads will need to seek federal funding to carry them out.

I will provide you with further advice once the investigation has been completed. This should be early in 2003.

Should you, Mr Chapman, or any other interested parties, need more information on this matter or on the progress of the study, please contact Mr Bruce Ollason, the department's district director in Cairns, telephone 4050 5400.

A copy of relevant correspondence has also been sent to Cairns City Council for information.

Yours sincerely

Original signed 28.11.02

Steve Bredhauer

Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads
Member for Cook

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Indy Car Grand Prix and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 94

Gold Coast Motor Racing Events Act 1990—

- Gold Coast Motor Racing Events Regulation 2003, No. 95

Forestry Act 1959, Nature Conservation Act 1992—

- Nature Conservation (Forest Reserves) and Forestry (State Forests) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 96

Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984—

- Community Services (Aborigines) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 97

Liquor Act 1992—

- Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 98 and Explanatory Notes to No. 98

Water Act 2000—

- Water Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2003, No. 99 and Explanatory Notes to No. 99

Acquisition of Land Act 1967, Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980, Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act 1988, Forsaking Act 1994, Gas Act 1965, Land Act 1994, Land Title Act 1994, Mineral Resources Act 1989, Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999, Petroleum Act 1923, Rural Lands Protection Act 1985, Surveyors Act 1977, Valuation of Land Act 1944, Valuers Registration Act 1992, Vegetation Management Act 1999, Water Act 2000—

- Natural Resources and Mines Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 100

Workplace Health and Safety and Other Acts Amendment Act 2003—

- Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 101

Electrical Safety Act 2002, Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

- Workplace Health and Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 102

Electricity Act 1994—

- Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003 and Regulatory Impact Statement for No. 103

Major Sport Facilities Act 2001—

- Major Sports Facilities Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2003, No. 104

State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971—

- State Development and Public Works Organisation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 105

Tow Truck Act 1973, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

- Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2003, No. 106

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by The Clerk—

Minister for Education (Ms Bligh)

- Response from the Minister for Education (Ms Bligh) to paper petitions presented by Mrs C Scott from 629 and 88 petitioners respectively regarding the Charters Towers School of Distance Education curriculum—

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to the petition lodged on 4 September and 23 October 2002 with the Queensland Legislative Assembly by Mrs Christine Scott MP, Member for Charters Towers, on behalf of Mrs Julie Vallis concerning Years 11 and 12 being included in the Charters Towers School of Distance Education curriculum. I sincerely apologise for the delay in replying to you.

Outlined below is the text of my response, posted to all petitioners on 13 November 2002. I apologise for omitting to table my response to this petition earlier.

The State Government is committed to delivering quality education to all Queensland students, regardless of where they live, including those who live in rural and remote areas undertaking their schooling by distance at home. Education Queensland caters for 3,795 students through the schools of distance education. Many of Education Queensland's schools of distance education have engaged in the innovative use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) through the initiative of their local communities. Indeed, the Charters Towers School of Distance Education has created online resources for students as a part of its involvement in the trial of the world-leading New Basics program. From the beginning of 2003, all primary distance education students from across the state will experience the benefits of ICT, while digitisation for secondary distance education students will progress through the year. In excess of \$1 million will be committed to this venture.

I recognise that there is an issue of students studying through distance education continuing past Year 10. The provision of options and pathways for students in Years 11 and 12, including those accessing distance education, and the improvement of information and communication technologies for schools is being considered in the context of the Education and Training Reforms for the Future initiative.

Whilst the provision of the Education and Training Reforms for the Future is being considered it is important that the delivery of Year 11 and 12 be consolidated in one centre. Consolidation, at this stage,

allows the Brisbane School of Distance Education to provide a full range of senior subjects to distance education students.

I thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and your continuing interest in distance education.

Yours sincerely

Anna Bligh MP

Minister for Education

- Response from the Minister for Education (Ms Bligh) to a paper petition presented by Mrs Reilly from 90 petitioners regarding a new school in Somerset Drive for the Bonogin/Reedy Creek families—

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to the petition lodged on 25 March 2003 with the Queensland Legislative Assembly by Ms Dianne Reilly MP, Member for Mudgeeraba, on behalf of Ms Linda Reibelt concerning the petitioners' full support of the proposal to build a new school in Somerset Drive for the Bonogin/Reedy Creek families. I sincerely apologise for the delay in replying to you.

The Mudgeeraba community will play a key role in the decisions that will create the vision for the new state primary school at Somerset Drive.

Construction of the new school, for Preschool to Year 7 students, began on February 15 this year and is on schedule to be completed for opening next year.

I am encouraged by the level of interest members of the local community have shown in the development of the new school.

I am pleased to report that more than 100 people attended the first public meeting for the school, which was held in May.

Two working groups have already started collaborating on a school name and a design and colour for the school uniform.

A second public meeting has been set for June 21 to update community members on the progress of the new school and to hear presentations from the school naming and uniform committees.

The recently appointed principal, Mr Stephen Loggie has already played a major role in the development of the school and in Term 3 will conduct a number of informal meetings with prospective parents and interested community members to develop the school vision.

The information from these meetings will inform decision-making in areas including school governance, curriculum development, facility development and policy development.

I encourage the community to take part in these meetings to have their say in the running of the new school.

The new school is expected to cost an estimated \$16.5 million, which includes the purchase of the land.

Stage 1 of the new school will include two preschool rooms, a classroom block, a music centre, a visual arts centre, administration, information services, amenities and a covered area.

The new school will open for students in all year levels from the start of 2004.

Enrolments are projected to grow to about 1000 students by 2010.

I thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and your continuing interest in education for the families of Bonogin/Reedy Creek.

Yours sincerely

Anna Bligh MP

Minister for Education

- Response from the Minister for Education (Ms Bligh) to a paper petition presented by Mr Hopper from 675 petitioners regarding the support to students with educational needs in Toowoomba and surrounding districts—

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to the petition lodged on 29 April 2003 with the Queensland Legislative Assembly by Mr Ray Hopper MP, Member for Darling Downs, on behalf of

Mrs Katrina Anderson concerning the support to students with educational needs in schools in Toowoomba and surrounding districts.

All state schools are serviced by Support Teachers (Learning Difficulties). Student needs are determined through the Appraisal process. In Toowoomba there are sixteen Support Teachers (Learning Difficulties) working in the primary area and eight teachers working with secondary students.

Education Queensland also employs Guidance Officers, Speech Language Pathologists, Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists to support children with special needs, and provide classroom support for them, their teachers and parents.

A process of ascertainment is used to determine their level of educational need and the resources that are required to meet these needs for all students with disabilities.

In Toowoomba District, there are two special schools with 24 teachers, 12 special education units with 54 teachers, and five special education classes with eight teachers. Six advisory visiting teachers provide services to students with disabilities in the schools without special education facilities. The advisory visiting teachers also provide services to students with disabilities in private schools. Student numbers and progress are constantly monitored.

School based employees, including teachers, are entitled to leave provisions under industrial awards. These include gazetted public holidays. Access to weekends for school based employees is consistent with most other working arrangements and allows students time with families. Student Free Days are utilised for professional development, planning, review of student achievement, and program development. The activities in which teachers are engaged on these five days directly benefit students. Student vacations are gazetted holidays, approved as per the Education (General Provisions) Regulation 1989.

Schools are staffed in accordance with teacher-student ratios based on class size targets. An allocative model determines teacher-student ratios: 1:25 for Years 1-3, and 1:30 for Years 4-7. A survey conducted by Education Queensland of every state school in Queensland showed that 93.5 percent of primary school classes are on or better than the class size target agreed with the Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU). For students with disabilities, ascertainment is used to provide additional teachers and teacher aides, with more resources provided for higher levels of ascertainment.

The adequate training of teacher aides is being addressed. Their contribution to classroom support for students with special needs is invaluable.

I encourage Mr Hopper or petitioners to contact Mr Paul Grealy, Manager Education Services, Toowoomba District Office on telephone (07) 4616 9150, should they wish to discuss this matter further.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Anna Bligh MP

Minister for Education

Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines (Mr Robertson)

- Response from the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines (Mr Robertson) to a paper petition presented by Mrs E Cunningham from 407 petitioners regarding the construction of a pipeline to Callide Dam—

Mr N J Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 2 May 2003 forwarding a copy of a petition lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly, requesting the House to require the management of the Gladstone Area Water Board in conjunction with the Queensland Government to plan and construct as a matter of urgency the remaining pipeline to Callide Dam to ensure no loss of water in the transfer.

The Gladstone Area Water Board supplies bulk water to the Callide Power Station. The supply source for this water is Awoonga Dam, which is owned and operated by the Gladstone Area Water Board. However, the Gladstone Area Water Board does not own or operate the current delivery infrastructure from the Dam to the Callide Power Station.

The transmission of water from Awoonga Dam to the Callide Power Station is the responsibility of SunWater. SunWater is a Government Owned Corporation. The Awoonga-Callide pipeline, owned and operated by SunWater, carries the water from Awoonga Dam to the headwaters of Stag Creek where the pipeline currently ends.

Transmission losses from the "unpiped" section from the Stag Creek outfall accounts for some 4,500 megalitres a year. This means that, annually, approximately only 16 per cent of the water piped from the Awoonga Dam is lost in transmission from the Stag Creek outfall to the Callide Dam.

The pipeline was upgraded in 2000 to assist in meeting the water demand requirements for the new Callide C power station.

I am informed that due to the severe impact of the recent drought experienced in the Gladstone Region, Callide Power Management and CS Energy have commissioned SunWater to re-evaluate whether to extend the pipeline from the Stag Creek outfall to Callide Dam. Were this project to proceed, it is likely that it would cost several millions of dollars. The decision to proceed is ultimately a commercial decision for the respective Boards of Callide Power Management and CS Energy.

I would also like to address the point raised in the petition that prior to the raising of the Awoonga Dam significant quantities of water were drained from the Dam. Prior to the raising of the Dam, a river drainage valve was tested to determine whether it would be adequate to service an increased storage capacity. This test took place over a period of half an hour and only a small amount of water was released (approximately 30 megalitres).

The water released during this test was not wasted as the Board, under normal operating conditions, has obligations to maintain releases to service downstream irrigators. Furthermore, it is understood that this test enabled the Board to establish that an upgrade to the river drainage valve was not necessary. It is estimated that this saved the Board approximately one million dollars.

It is unfortunate that the recent drought conditions that were experienced in the Gladstone region resulted in necessary water restrictions having to be introduced, both for municipal and industrial customers. However, the management of the Gladstone Area Water Board was conducted in a highly professional manner during very difficult operational circumstances.

Due to the fact that the Gladstone Area Water Board does not own or operate the Awoonga-Callide pipeline, this issue is beyond the control of the Gladstone Area Water Board. I suggest that you may like to contact Mr Drew Ellem, Executive Director, Office of Government Owned Corporations, in Queensland Treasury on 3404 3074.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

Minister for Local Government and Planning (Mrs J Cunningham)—

Pursuant to section 154 of the Local Government Act 1993—

Local Government Electoral and Boundaries Review Commission—

Final Determination—Banana Shire Council—Review of Divisional Boundaries and Composition

Final Determination—Bowen Shire Council—Review of Divisional Boundaries

Final Determination—Waggamba Shire Council—Review of Divisional Boundaries and Assignment of Councillors

Department of Local Government and Planning—

Queensland Local Government—Comparative Information—2001-02 Edition

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Italian National Day

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 a.m.): 'Felice Feste Nazionale' were the words I used last night to congratulate the Australian Italian community for the contribution they have made to this great state. Yesterday was Italian National Day. On 2 June 1946, Italians voted for a republic. The first Italians came to Queensland in the late 1800s. The 2001 census shows that 218,718 people listed Italy as their country of birth. Italian is the second most widely spoken language in Australia. They are important trading partners. Italy is Queensland's third biggest export market in the European Union. Last year, Italy imported from Queensland goods worth \$538 million. In 2001, we imported goods worth \$280 million.

On behalf of all members, I want to say a big farewell to Dr Vincenzo Ercole, the Italian Consul for Queensland. He has been here with his lovely wife and family for the last three years. They are now moving to Mexico. He goes with our best wishes. I am hopeful that, should my government be re-elected, as part of my trade responsibilities I will be able to make a trip to Italy next year. There was some pressure to do it this year—I am unable to do so. It is an important trade link.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mr W. T. D'Arcy

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 a.m.): From time to time I have had occasion to be critical of the media. Today I want to pay tribute to the way in which most radio stations, TV channels and newspapers have been balanced and accurate in their reporting of the long smear campaign against me which resulted from my tabling of the Anglican Church report on the handling of child sex abuse complaints.

John Laws and Alan Jones, for instance, were wholehearted in correcting the public record. The *Australian* has printed my letters, with one today dealing with a disgracefully spiteful piece of right-wing fiction. The *Courier-Mail* carried an excellent leading article on Friday, 30 May. The following day, Assistant Editor of the *Courier-Mail*, Tony Koch, assembled a list of facts and dates which again showed that I acted honourably in what I did.

Bearing in mind the two days of smears from the opposition last week, I seek leave to incorporate the contributions of Tony Koch, the *Courier-Mail* leader writer, John Laws and Alan Jones so that we have a permanent record in the *Hansard* of the truth and honesty of what I did.

Leave granted.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: And the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on Saturday. I am happy to accept that interjection.

The Courier-Mail

Friday, May 30, 2003

Sex-abuse smears off target.

Article: ON Wednesday Premier Peter Beattie claimed in Parliament a smear campaign had been started "at the highest level in this country" to attack him because of the position he took in relation to Dr Peter Hollingworth. His claim was later given some credence when a spokeswoman for Prime Minister John Howard refused to say whether the Prime Minister had orchestrated such a campaign but added that Mr Beattie should direct his attention to answering the allegations rather than resorting to the tactic of deflecting attention to Canberra. The suggestion that a deliberate campaign has been waged was further reinforced when Opposition Leader Lawrence Springborg admitted he had been approached by Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson.

The nature of the campaign was made obvious by a question from National Party MP Vaughan Johnson who first referred to Mr Beattie's call for the resignation of the governor-general concerning his handling of complaints concerning pedophiles and then asked whether Mr Beattie was not "just as guilty" in protecting his former pedophile colleague—a reference to former Labor MP Bill D'Arcy. In response Mr Beattie made a long, detailed and documented reply which showed that rather than protecting D'Arcy he had attempted to force him out of the Parliament as soon as heard that charges might be brought against him. He argued that if D'Arcy were protected by anyone it was by the then National Party premier, Rob Borbidge, and by the current National Party leader, Mr Springborg, both of whom attacked Mr Beattie for trying to get D'Arcy to resign rather than applying the presumption of innocence to the accusations made against him.

Mr Beattie's statement also dealt with allegations that he had failed to respond to a suggestion by former Labor MP Lorraine Bird that he had laughed when she told him in 1997 that an MP was a child molester. The fact he immediately asked Mr Borbidge to hold a royal commission, and when that was refused he sent the allegations to the Criminal Justice Commission, tend to vindicate his account of what he claimed was said by Mrs Bird at the time. Mr Beattie explained that he was able to make his statement and produce a large volume of documentary evidence to support it because he had been aware for some weeks of a campaign against him that began shortly after he tabled the Anglican Church of Australia's inquiry on its handling of past complaints of child abuse—the report that led Dr Hollingworth to resign as governor-general.

Canberra's sensitivity over the demise of Dr Hollingworth is understandable, but it should be wary of allowing false allegations to be made smearing others on the basis of their alleged inaction on pedophilia. Mr Beattie in particular seems to have an exemplary record in this area. And he has never been guilty of reacting slowly when faced with a situation where he might suffer some political damage as a result of the misconduct of a colleague.

Courier-Mail

Saturday View

Tony Koch

31/5/2003

Smear reveals flaws

STATE Opposition Leader Lawrence Springborg blundered badly in Parliament last week with his attack on Premier Peter Beattie, whom he accused of protecting former Labor MP Bill D'Arcy when child-sex allegations against him were first revealed.

Springborg tried to show Beattie acted hypocritically when he demanded Governor-General Peter Hollingworth stand down following criticism he had not responded appropriately when child sex allegations within the Anglican Church were made to him.

Springborg's assertion was that Beattie's reaction in regard to Hollingworth differed from his reaction when faced with similar charges against a Labor colleague.

But Springborg got it horribly wrong, as some basic research of news clippings and Hansard records of the time would show.

The main Opposition allegation against Beattie is that former state Labor MP Lorraine Bird warned him that a person in caucus was involved in pedophilia.

Bird's meeting with Beattie was on August 18, 1997, when he was opposition leader. At the time she was expressing public concern about reports to her of boys being involved in under-age sex in her Whitsunday

electorate. The matter was investigated thoroughly in an inquiry headed by retired judge Jack Kimmins, who found there was no foundation to the material collated by Bird and never once did she mention D'Arcy or any other MP—either publicly or to the inquiry.

Beattie says she did not mention the involvement of anybody in the Labor Party.

It would have been an act of clairvoyance for her to have done so in August 1997, because the first that anybody outside the victims knew about it was when a complaint was made by a woman to Northern Territory police on May 27, 1998.

They passed the woman's statement on to Queensland police on June 26, 1998.

On August 21, 1998, a woman rang The Courier-Mail claiming she had been sexually violated by D'Arcy when she was a young child and he was her schoolteacher.

I made inquiries about the matter and wrote that a long-serving state Labor MP was under investigation for serious child sex offences. That was published on Saturday, August 29.

Beattie did not know about D'Arcy before that time. I tried to ring him at a Brisbane function late on August 28 to see where he would be during the weekend so we could interview him when the story broke. I spoke with his then press secretary Ron Watson.

The next morning more than 40 journalists, MPs and legal people rang me at home to find out the identity of the person in the story. Beattie was one of those callers, and his alarm at the news was not feigned.

Another who called was the MP Paul Braddy, and the following day the two met D'Arcy and his legal representative, Terry O'Gorman.

That day—August 30—Beattie issued a press release that said: "In the meeting with the Member of the Legislative Assembly and his solicitor, I raised a number of issues including resignation in the interests of himself, his family and the government."

My colleague, Peter Morley, wrote the next day in The Courier-Mail that O'Gorman said he was "significantly disappointed that the Premier would ask my client to resign when he (Beattie) should be out there defending the presumption of innocence".

The next day Beattie warned that his minority government could be forced to face a fresh election if D'Arcy remained in Parliament. Opposition leader Rob Borbidge said D'Arcy should remain in Parliament but abstain from voting if he was charged, and accused Beattie of an "act of political treachery", saying he had assumed the role of "judge, jury and executioner".

On September 4, a letter from then Opposition justice spokesman Springborg was published in the Warwick Daily News. It said: "What bare-faced hypocrisy. Premier Beattie calls on his fellow members of Parliament to resign ... If Mr Beattie's own call for the MP's resignation isn't a presumption of guilt, then I don't know what is."

The day before, then National Party president David Russell QC wrote to The *Courier-Mail* saying D'Arcy was entitled to the presumption of innocence "and not be pressured into actions such as resignation from Parliament".

Both sides were speaking somewhat tongue-in-cheek. Beattie would have loved D'Arcy to resign and win the by-election, and he would then not have had to depend on the vote of Independent Peter Wellington if D'Arcy spat the dummy and crossed the floor. Borbidge wanted to maintain the instability in the hope of getting Wellington's support if there arose an opportunity to move a lack of confidence in the Beattie Government.

But the fact is that if Hollingworth had acted as Beattie did when he first heard of the admissions of pedophilia by one of his own priests, John Elliot, and sought his resignation (and reported the crime to police) he would still be governor-general, instead of His Grace in disgrace.

Before embarking on his crude attempt to compare Beattie with Hollingworth, Springborg should have ensured he got it right. He was merely dancing to the tune of the conspiracy-theory supporters of Hollingworth who were desperate to besmirch one of his main accusers: Beattie. They chose the wrong issue, and in convincing Springborg to be their puppet, exposed a flaw in his leadership abilities.

And lest it be assumed that Beattie makes a habit of phoning me for political discussions, be aware that after I wrote a column late last year questioning the wisdom of him making his 50th birthday party a public-relations stunt, he has not returned one of my calls. As recently as last Wednesday, he ignored yet another.

Transcript 4BC

John Laws 1055

Thursday 15 May 2003

re: Bill D'Arcy Case

Laws: Yes, this is a very interesting piece of correspondence I have here: 'John Laws, I note that you appear to have an obsession with Dr Hollingworth'. I don't have an obsession with Dr Hollingworth; I do have an obsession with people who protect paedophiles, however. I will go on with this fax: 'I also note that you did not carry out a similar concerted witch hunt against Peter Beattie's government and their treatment of one of their members who was a convicted paedophile, child molester of the worst type. I understand that this grub is in receipt of his full parliamentary pension. Your comments please. Regards, G Watkins of Budgewoi'.

Well thank you very much for the net note. It appears to, been a lot of people making similar claims against Peter Beattie, and we have had a bit of correspondence about that, and it's all been happening over the past few days, somehow claiming as you have claimed that he stood by a convicted child molester. And you're referring to Bill D'Arcy. Now the Queensland Premier doesn't need me to defend him. I happen to like him, but

he doesn't need me to defend him. But we do have to be a bit fair about things, particularly the cold, hard facts. And let's make sure that we give you the cold, hard facts.

The allegations surrounding D'Arcy first came to light in the Courier Mail in late 1998, August 1998. The very next day, Mr Beattie met with the then-MP and his solicitor and raised a number of issues, including his resignation. Now that was August 30. Got it? August 30, 1998. D'Arcy hadn't even been interviewed by police at this stage, and yet the Premier was already demanding his resignation. You seem to have forgotten about that.

Bill D'Arcy dug in his heels. He even managed to evoke some sympathy from the Opposition Leader, who was then Rob Borbidge, who argued that Peter Beattie had declared himself as judge, jury and executioner. But still Mr Beattie was determined to force him out of parliament. Yet even the National Party's president at that time, David Russell, he defended D'Arcy. And he defended him against the Premier's call for him to resign. So Borbidge and Russell defended him. Why aren't you, why aren't you aiming your sights there?

You know, that standoff played out for about eighteen months, with Bill D'Arcy just refusing to go. Finally, in January 2000, Bill D'Arcy left after a consistent and concerted campaign by Peter Beattie to get rid of him. Now that's the truth. On January 21st, year 2000, a Queensland magistrate committed D'Arcy to stand trial on child sex abuses. He has been jailed.

And, and just in, in relation to the superannuation, the Queensland Premier commissioned an independent report to determine whether the disgraced former MP could be stripped of his parliamentary superannuation. But the inquiry found that because the offences predated his time in parliament, nothing could be done about it.

Despite the concerted campaign against him, Peter Beattie could have done no more. Nor could he have acted any quicker than he did. And he should be commended for that. But I doubt that G Watkins of Budgewoi is going to commend him.

Yeah, and Mr Watkins, don't forget that. You know, the Labor man, Peter Beattie, was the one who was trying to get rid of him, but he was being protected by Rob Borbidge, who was the Opposition Leader at that time. He argued that Peter Beattie had declared himself as judge, jury and executioner and Mr D'Arcy shouldn't go. And so did David Russell. He was the National Party's President. So this bloke was being criticised by Labor and saved by Liberal.

Macquarie Radio

Alan Jones

20/5/03

PETER BEATTIE/BILL D'ARCY

Last week I made some comments about the continuing attack on the Governor-General, Peter Hollingworth and his handling of the Priest in Queensland, who had been charged with paedophile offences.

And I made mention of the fact that the private inquiry by the Anglican Church was tabled in the Queensland Parliament.

And I made reference to the fact that Peter Beattie seemed to be more concerned with this so-called offence than he was in the handling of a member of his own Party.

Now Mr. Beattie's office has been in touch with me to point out that my observations on that are not correct.

And I'm happy to set the record straight.

Indeed, I have a copy of the Queensland Hansard and the statement by the Premier on May 13 in which the Premier says:

"I can confirm that as soon as I learned of the allegations against Mr D'Arcy, I urged him to consider resigning ... I also confirm that I continued to encourage him to resign ... it is also true that I was prepared to go into minority government if Mr D'Arcy had refused to resign ... as soon as it was revealed that police were investigating Mr. D'Arcy's behaviour of 30 years ago, I sought his resignation from Parliament."

And he rightly points out the fact that he was vilified by Members of the Opposition at the time who accused him of "political treachery towards one of his colleagues".

The National Party President of Queensland, David Russell, defended Mr D'Arcy against calls to resign saying Mr D'Arcy was entitled not to be pressurised into actions such as resignation.

It's clear that all the comments that Mr Beattie made at the time were strong in his condemnation of Bill D'Arcy.

And that point ought to be made in the light of some of the comments that were made, directly and indirectly last week.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Suncorp Stadium; Rotary International Convention

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 a.m.):
On Sunday an elderly couple quietly approached the Deputy Premier and me and simply said, 'Thanks for giving us back our home.' This was super Sunday. They were among the 46,337 spectators on hand for the first game at our magnificent Suncorp Stadium. The best way to sum

up the reaction to the ground is to quote from the ABC's *Grandstand* team. David Morrow, the compere, said—

Good afternoon and welcome to Lang Park. We're at the home of the Brisbane Broncos, the spiritual home of State of Origin football. The re-opening of this famous ground this afternoon, and what an incredible sight it is.

...

Coming to the ground with Warren Ryan, our first sight of this completed complex was absolutely awe-inspiring. Once inside, just like the ad says about Queensland, it's even better. It is something else.

I could not have said it better. It is probably, as Andrew Johns said in an article this morning, the best Rugby League ground in the world. David Morrow went on—

It is ... it's an incredible sight, and I think am right in saying, good afternoon to Warren Ryan, I think we were gobsmacked when we saw what we saw this morning.

They were right: we were all gobsmacked!

Today I want to do a number of big thankyou's. I want to thank all involved. I want to thank the Deputy Premier and Sports Minister, Terry Mackenroth, and the Minister for Public Works, Robert Schwarten, because they have worn much pain for this redevelopment. But they, like I, were overwhelmed on Sunday with the stunning response from those present. I also want to thank former Sports Minister Bob Gibbs for his contribution. So to the designers, the builders, the workers and anyone who played a part with us in getting to that special moment when the doors opened on Sunday morning we say: thanks to you all. I also want to thank the big hotels. Those earning more than \$100,000 a month in gaming machine revenue are the ones paying for it through a levy. I want to thank in particular the likes of the Maguires, the Fitzgibbon Group, ALH, the MGW Group, Liquorland and the Weller Group. Not one cent went from education or health or family services. They are the people who paid for it and I want to thank them very much for doing so.

A Broncos win would have been the icing on the cake but, as Shane Webcke said, at least the monkey of their first loss at the stadium is now off their back. Actually, he said something else privately to me which I will not share. But in essence he—

Mr Schwarten: That certainly put the spin on it.

Mr BEATTIE: I have to tell members: I know who will spin at the first State of Origin, and they will be the people who run into Shane Webcke. I am sure, however, that a week tomorrow the Maroons will prevail. I want to thank nearby residents and particularly those local people who have demonstrated enormous patience during the construction and of course the local member and Health Minister, Wendy Edmond, and the commuters for their patience. Sunday was about a trial run. It was about as near perfect a trial as one can get. It was about a nine out of 10. But there are things that need to be improved, and they will be done.

Sunday was a massive day for this city. I want to also mention the fact that there were 16,000 Rotarians at hand at South Bank for the annual world conference at the Convention Centre. I had the honour of being part of the opening. The reception was warm and friendly and the good feel at that venue was palpable as well. It was sad that I had to dash away to make it to Suncorp in time for my pre-match commitments. I want to thank the President of Rotary International, Bhichai Rattakul, and the President Elect, Jonathon Majiyagbe, for their efforts. Jonathon Majiyagbe is the first African to be president of Rotary, and I congratulated him for that.

In fact, it was a super Sunday. I also had the pleasure of launching Ross Fitzgerald's book *The Pope's Battalions* at Milton earlier in the day. It was printed by one of our great presses, the University of Queensland Press. We had our whingers and we had our knockers about Suncorp Stadium. I will let Suncorp Stadium speak for itself.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Employment Growth

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.43 a.m.): Queensland had the strongest employment growth rate of any state in the 12 months to April 2003. Employment in Queensland increased by 3.5 per cent compared to 2.8 per cent nationally. Over the 12 months to April, Queensland created 60,900 jobs. High employment growth and competitive taxes clearly attract people. The latest ABS statistics show that Queensland's population increased by almost 83,000 over the year to the September quarter. In fact, Queensland now has the highest overseas migration in the history of the state. This is the highest annual increase in Queensland's population for almost 13 years. The rate of population growth in

Queensland over the past year was 2.3 per cent—the highest of any state. This is more than double the growth rate for the rest of Australia. The December quarter 2002 state accounts indicate that gross state product increased by 5.5 per cent over the year compared to 2.7 per cent for the rest of Australia.

Private investment is the main driver of growth. It increased by 26.1 per cent over the year compared to a national increase of 14.9 per cent. Queensland has a tradition of investing heavily in capital infrastructure. Queensland's capital works budget has averaged 2.5 per cent of GSP over the past five years—more than double the 1.1 per cent of GSP committed to capital spending in other states and the highest of any state. This is very important for business, because economic infrastructure such as roads, rail and energy are crucial to our competitiveness. Queensland is becoming a more productive, efficient and innovative economy as the Smart State strategy takes hold, and it is working. Over the period 1997-98 to 2001-02 labour productivity in Queensland increased by around three and a half per cent per annum. The comparable figure for the rest of Australia was 2.1 per cent. This is important, because it makes us more competitive and creates jobs.

Queensland taxation, as we all know, is also very competitive. Queenslanders still pay much less than the Australian average. This benefits business and it benefits families. The payroll tax rate has been reduced in recent years from five per cent to its current level of 4.75 per cent. Queensland's payroll tax rate is overall the lowest of any state. The threshold for paying payroll tax is one of the highest of any state.

Queensland, in a nutshell, is in a very strong financial position. We are the engine room of Australia. Exactly how strong our position is will today be updated by the Treasurer. Let me just say that Queensland will continue to have a massive stock of net financial assets whereas all the other states have net financial liabilities. Let me say that again: Queensland will continue to have a massive stock of net financial assets whereas all the other states have net financial liabilities. We lead Australia. Queensland's net worth per capita will be well above that for the other states. Our balance sheet will continue to be the envy of other jurisdictions, especially the federal government with its unfunded \$91.5 billion superannuation liability. This will all be achieved while still addressing priority areas of social spending.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Catalyst

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.47 a.m.): I want to highlight the latest edition of *Catalyst*, which I table for the information of the House. I have asked for copies to be distributed to all members. I do that because about 1,000 copies of *Catalyst* are in the mail and I will be taking another 700 on my US trade and investment mission this month. I am delighted to table the latest issue of *Catalyst* because it is a periodical highlight for some of the triumphs of the Smart State's men and women. The last word goes to David Henderson, the Managing Director of Uniquest, a University of Queensland company translating research breakthroughs into commercial successes. Mr Henderson told *Catalyst*—

The Smart State concept is what UniQuest is all about, trying to make great breakthroughs commercial, building new industries and creating wealth for our society.

Smart State has definitely raised our profile and it's helped UniQuest.

Five years ago Queensland was thought of as a place where you went for a holiday, or maybe you thought of quarries and mines.

Now there's a lot more recognition of the quality of our research.

I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Issue 6 has a terrific cross-section of stories.

The cover photo of Seeana the koala points to a fascinating story about research on koala cells that could lead to healthier koalas in the wild and in zoos.

A team at the University of Queensland is growing koala cells in test tubes and using them for preliminary testing of treatments for reproductive and urinary tract infections.

Catalyst also breaks a story about a Brisbane-based company winning a Warner Bros contract to produce 3-D animation for the series "Duck Dodgers"—starring Daffy Duck!

The company, Liquid Animation, began in a Brisbane lounge room in 1999.

It was the first company to graduate from the Government's technology incubator, i-lab.

Company co-founder Steve Viner endorses i-lab for providing infrastructure, business advice and contacts.

Catalyst also features articles about:

- A new "virtual gallery" website allowing art-lovers around the world to view and buy Queensland Indigenous art;
- A Department of Primary Industries breakthrough enabling the commercial development of rust-resistant sunflower varieties;
- A new Fraser Island research and education centre that will develop the world's first complete ecological footprint of an eco-tourism resort (the centre is a partnership between the University of the Sunshine Coast and Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village);
- A fibre optics world-first: a dental curing tip developed by Gold Coast company Poly Optics Australia. This company won a Premier's export award in 1999, and received a grant of about \$75,000 under our Innovation Start-Up Scheme.

The back-page story is about another Gold Coast innovator, Eduss, which has developed education software.

This is in use not only in Gold Coast schools—but also nationally, in the UK, the USA and South Africa.

Eduss benefited from participation in programs run by the Department of State Development's Venture Capital Unit.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Public Service Numbers

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.48 a.m.): I want to deal with the issue of Public Service numbers. I am proud to announce that in the two years to 30 June 2002 my government recruited an extra 4,859 full-time staff in the key service delivery areas of education, health and police. The 4,859 new staff at education, health and police represented 80 per cent of the 6,043 new full-time staff in that period. School based staff increased by the equivalent of 3,470 full-time jobs. The number of nursing, medical and other professional health staff providing clinical service delivery increased by the equivalent of 724 full-time jobs and the number of funded police positions increased by the equivalent of 744 full-time officers.

These figures prove my government's commitment to providing better services to the people of Queensland in the areas that matter. They demonstrate how we are delivering on our election promises to make Queensland the Smart State through a better education service, to be tough on crime by strengthening our Police Service, and to support a world-class public health system. And it does not stop there.

We are also training approximately 600 new recruits each year to account for growth and attrition. In fact, the Minister for Police will be addressing an induction ceremony tomorrow for more than 100 new recruits. Queensland Health has increased by more than 660 the full-time clinical staff between June 2002 and May 2003, including 392 positions at Robina Hospital. In 2002-03 teacher numbers will have further increased by more than 800. Later today the Treasurer will be announcing measures to increase the number of teachers by a further 636 in the 2004 school year.

The Opposition Leader suggested that anyone who was not a teacher, nurse or police officer was a pen pusher. What utter rubbish! In the two years to June 2002 we put on an extra 180 fire and ambulance officers in the Department of Emergency Services. They are not pen pushers. I will stand by our ambulance officers and our fire officers. We increased the number of family services officers and residential care officers by over 150. They are not pen pushers. The coalition government could manage only 16 extra social workers in two years. We have put on 74 extra workers to look after families in distress. We responded to the threat posed by fire ants by employing what amounts to about 450 full-time staff to deal with this threat to our way of life.

Together, these departments accounted for more than the total net growth in the Queensland public service during that period. What that means is that, in aggregate, staff numbers across the rest of the public service actually declined. My government is proud of its record in delivering better services to the people of Queensland. This record will be further enhanced by the budget measures to be announced later today. We are putting staff where it matters—delivering front-line services. We are delivering.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Distance Education Subsidies

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (9.51 a.m.): All Queensland children deserve access to a quality education, whether they live in Brisbane or Biloela. Queensland has a proud history in delivering school services to isolated children. Outback students have been learning over the air, through HF radio, for decades. But now they are swapping pen and paper for mouse and monitor.

As part of our government's commitment to creating a 21st century school system, our government announced in February this year that it would subsidise the cost of computer hardware and software for students who study from home because of isolation or medical reasons. From this year eligible families are entitled to an annual grant of \$250 towards the cost of buying computer hardware as well as free software. Given that the average life expectancy of computer equipment is about five years, the annual subsidy will help families replace and upgrade equipment such as computers, printers and scanners.

This year about 840 Queensland families whose children study from home because of their remoteness or for medical reasons were eligible for the subsidy. I am pleased to inform members that 744 families, or about 89 per cent of all those eligible, have already taken up the hardware subsidy. To date, Education Queensland has distributed a total of \$186,000 to these mums and dads through its seven schools of distance education. The software offer has been taken up by a similar number of eligible families, with \$65,790 being distributed to schools of distance education for the purchasing of software licences.

In addition to the purchase of licences, a further \$18,275 has been provided to schools of distance education to purchase the relevant software media—CD-ROMs—such as Microsoft Office, on behalf of eligible families so these families do not incur a cost in accessing this important software. We expect that close to 100 per cent of families eligible will take up the subsidy scheme by next year. Already our schools of distance education are reporting very positive feedback from families who have taken up the subsidy.

This program highlights the power technology can play in bridging the geographic and digital divides and opening up new learning frontiers for outback students. The hardware and software subsidy scheme will ensure that those children who have no choice but to undertake their schooling from home have the same opportunities as students who are able to attend mainstream schools. This is just one element of a much broader strategy to expand learning opportunities for students who study through distance education.

Work on the digitisation of student assignment materials is nearly finished and the conversion of all schools of distance education from HF radio to telephone teaching is also progressing well. I am pleased to report that Cairns, Charters Towers and Capricornia Schools of Distance Education will be fully equipped for telephone teaching for the start of school next year. The remaining regional schools will be converted in 2004, including an upgrade for Charleville, which already employs telephone teaching. The Brisbane School of Distance Education will have its telephone system upgraded over two years.

Queensland is a pioneer of distance education recognised around the world. We have been at the forefront of distance learning and our government is determined to make sure we stay there.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mabo Day

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (9.54 a.m.): Today is Mabo day—a day to celebrate the victory of truth and commonsense over the falsehood and injustice of the past. But one must also note the melancholy fact that indigenous people are the most disadvantaged group in the labour market, particularly in rural areas where employment opportunities are limited. In an effort to address this inequity, in May 2001 the Beattie government introduced the indigenous employment policy, also known as 'the 20 per cent policy'. This policy represents part of this government's commitment to the reconciliation process and to improved economic and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I am pleased to inform the House that, although still in early stages, indications are that the indigenous employment policy is expanding and is starting to have a greater impact. The policy

sets minimum levels of local participation in state government funded construction in 32 indigenous communities and three shires. I thank my colleague the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing for his strong support of this program.

The policy is mandatory for all civil construction and for building contracts over \$250,000. Additionally, there is an expectation that government agencies will apply it to their smaller contracts. It demands—

that contractors recruit at least 20 per cent of their on-site labour force from the local community; and

at least half the local recruits must undertake formal apprenticeships or traineeships, or other training approved by the state government.

To date in Queensland there have been some 95 projects reported that have complied with the indigenous employment policy—the 20 per cent policy. These projects, run by the Department of Main Roads—and I thank the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads for his strong support—Q-Build and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing, have employed 237 indigenous people. Some 7,235 equivalent employment days have been provided for indigenous people in both building and civil construction projects worth more than \$25 million. In addition, 5,053 days of training have been provided to indigenous people.

This policy is about empowerment. Once, indigenous people watched as outside workers flew in and flew out of their communities, taking wages and skills with them. With the implementation of the indigenous employment policy, indigenous people will ultimately be able to work inside their communities, outside their communities and anywhere in Australia they choose to go. This government will continue to finetune the policy to see its full implementation across all sectors of government.

Queensland has taken the lead in indigenous employment strategies, and I am pleased to report that the Commonwealth government is considering introducing a similar policy at federal level. In addition, all other state and territory governments have undertaken to investigate the feasibility of adopting a similar system.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Princess Alexandra Hospital, Community Mental Health Services

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (9.58 a.m.): It was with great pleasure that I was able to open the refurbished PA Hospital South Sector Community Mental Health Services last week. I know that Minister Palaszczuk in particular is delighted with this refurbishment. At a cost of \$410,000, it forms part of the Princess Alexandra Hospital services redevelopment, which is one of the largest projects in Queensland Health's 10-year, \$2.8 billion Statewide Health Building Program. Importantly, more mental health services are being provided in communities closer to where patients live, so they can stay in touch with their families and friends.

Queensland is the leading jurisdiction in the implementation of the National Mental Health Standards and that, along with the new Mental Health Act 2000, I think clearly demonstrates the Beattie government's commitment to the care of the mentally ill. The Queensland government understands the importance of building long-term infrastructure that will deliver sustainable improvements to health service delivery. Such infrastructure supports a focus on proactive management in the health sector. This refurbished facility at Inala will provide improved specialist community mental health services offering assessment, treatment, and review of adults requiring psychiatric care.

The multidisciplinary team there will work alongside consumers using case management as a service delivery model. The facility has been designed to promote a healthy and safe environment for people accessing the service. It is consistent with best practice in contemporary mental health hospital and community services. It will also provide better facilities for staff, which meet occupational health and safety standards and allow a focus on the team environment. This south sector community mental health facility forms part of the new direction in mental health services provided by the Princess Alexandra Hospital Health Service District.

It was a lovely event which highlighted the strong community cohesion in the area. It began with a magnificent performance of traditional dance by children from the ATSI Community School at Acacia Ridge, accompanied by Nicholas Ivanvonoff on the didgeridoo, and concluded with

morning tea provided by members of the local Vietnamese community—beautiful Vietnamese food that they told me is simply unattainable commercially.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Suncorp Stadium, Public Transport

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (10.00 a.m.): I rise to report on the success of the public transport arrangements for the opening of Suncorp Stadium. Everyone in this chamber who attended the opening event on Sunday will acknowledge that it was a great success. The transport strategy for the stadium is one that is public transport focused and seeks to actively discourage reliance on private vehicle travel. The transport management plan for Suncorp Stadium was developed within the strategic context of the government's integrated regional transport plan for south-east Queensland.

Coordinating and planning the public transport arrangements to the stadium were a major strategic initiative of the state government and done in partnership with local government and other organisations. A significant advertising campaign was also undertaken by the government to encourage the public to take full advantage of the free public transport on offer and to leave their cars at home.

Officers of my department, Queensland Transport, were seconded to assist Suncorp Stadium managers, Ogden IFC, in the overall coordination of the public transport and traffic management arrangements. These arrangements were highly successful. They exceeded all expectations, with more than 85 per cent of all attendees travelling by public transport on the day.

The efforts of CityTrans personnel should also be acknowledged for their role in organising the train and bus travel on the day. Queensland Rail carried about 33,000 people on the Citytrain network, 8,200 of those from the Gold Coast and Beenleigh. On Sunday, tens of thousands of people from the Gold Coast and Beenleigh enjoyed the benefits of the investment in Suncorp Stadium. The new walkway to Milton Train Station functioned well, as did Roma Street Train Station on the day. It is estimated that 62 per cent of people caught the train on Sunday. Milton Train Station catered for about 13,000 people—a record—and Roma Street Train Station catered for about 20,000 people.

Operations at the new bus station at the stadium were also highly effective. Brisbane Transport shuttle buses transported about 20 per cent of the public to Chermide, Carindale, Eight Mile Plains, Upper Mount Gravatt, South Bank and the city. In all, about 9,000 people were carried by Brisbane Transport, with charter bus operators carrying about 2,100 people, including the busway's No. 1 ticket holder, the member for Mansfield, who tells me that it was 21 minutes from boarding the bus at Lang Park to disembarking the bus at Mount Gravatt, which is a great effort. In total, for the member for Mansfield it was 45 minutes from leaving his seat to actually getting to Garden City, which I think is a great example of what public transport can achieve.

Taxis transported a further 1,200 people after the finish of the game. Importantly, the arrangements for people with a disability were successful, with 20 people electing to drive their own vehicles to reserved parking spaces opposite the stadium. A further 25 people with disabilities and their carers were transported by either maxi taxis or the special wheelchair accessible shuttle buses organised by QR for travel between Roma Street Train Station and the stadium. Patrons using public transport were generally cleared from the stadium within 45 minutes and the majority from nearby rail stations within a further 30 minutes.

This outstanding result was achieved only through the cooperation of all involved: Queensland Rail, Brisbane Transport, the stadium managers, local businesses and local residents. It is an acknowledgment of what can be achieved through combining a first-class public transport system with the finest football stadium in Australia.

The inaugural public transport arrangements have set the benchmark for the fast approaching State of Origin matches. Can I say to those attending State of Origin matches: take public transport, and go the Maroons.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Public Housing

Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing) (10.04 a.m.): Housing solutions in remote areas of Queensland present particular

challenges for the state government. Factors such as high construction costs and a lack of resale markets often cause financing difficulties for the private sector.

The Department of Housing has recognised that the relocation of solid, good quality dwellings can be a cost-effective method of delivering affordable housing in these areas. In July 2002, the department purchased 160 solid three- and four-bedroom surplus dwellings from the Defence Housing Authority at Amberley Village to relocate to regional communities. At that time I wrote to local governments to register their interest in purchasing the homes. The department then contracted with two house relocation firms to provide management and security for the Amberley site and to provide fixed-cost relocation and reinstatement of the dwellings to regional Queensland.

To date, approximately 70 of these dwellings have been relocated to many remote towns across Queensland, including Aramac, Birdsville, Bedourie, Quilpie, Jundah, Windorah, Normanton, Yuleba, Georgetown, Ilfracombe, Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek, Muttaborra and Surat. We have also relocated 20 of these dwellings to Gladstone, with a further 10 to be moved to the city within the next month, to address the shortage of housing in Gladstone. I note that the member for Gladstone is not present in the chamber to welcome that. This represents a \$3 million investment for affordable housing in Gladstone in addition to the \$3 million worth of construction projects the Department of Housing currently has under way in Gladstone.

Next Sunday week I will be visiting Gladstone to officially hand over the first set of keys to a local community organisation that will be managing the tenancy of the property. The first group of homes have already been relocated to Toolooa and New Auckland in Gladstone. Teams from BoysTown Link Up have refitted the first batch of houses and are currently undertaking site works in preparation for the arrival of the remaining 10.

This government is addressing the affordable housing shortage in regional areas of Queensland. The department has faced and overcome challenges along the way. For example, the first houses that we relocated were to Yuleba, which is outside Roma. In the middle of the worst drought in 100 years we had five inches of rainfall. So we brought the house and the rain. There was also one instance when a house slid off the truck and onto the Cunningham Highway, which created some interesting moments for our contractors and the Police Service for a while. Overcoming these difficulties highlights the level of commitment that this state government has when it comes to providing the people of all over Queensland with access to affordable housing.

Our contractors also had enormous difficulty sourcing quality tradespeople prepared to carry out reinstatement works in these remote areas. These problems have been overcome and the houses have been completed to a very high standard, and I am told that they complement the existing housing in these towns. This project highlights the commitment of this state government to deliver real housing solutions and, may I add, creative smart housing solutions for regional communities across Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Carer Recognition Policy

Hon. J. C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Seniors) (10.08 a.m.): Today I am pleased to announce the start of consultation on the development of a carer recognition policy for Queensland. There are more than 413,000 carers in Queensland—people who offer their time to support and care for loved ones, a neighbour or friend. More than 83,000 of these people are primary carers, which means they voluntarily take on the major duties and responsibilities for the person they are caring for. This group is mostly made up of women and includes children and young people aged from 15 to people aged over 65.

These are people who give up thousands and thousands of hours of their own time to care for their family member or friend who is in need of regular help or support. Carers provide invaluable support to people who require help and assistance in their daily lives—usually people who are frail, aged, ill or have a disability. Carers give assistance across areas such as managing paperwork, shopping, preparing meals, bathing, home maintenance, accessing the community and assisting with the general health and wellbeing of the person in their care. This support is unpaid and often carers can face many hardships and challenges.

Issues that have been raised by carers include the need for formal recognition of their role, involvement in decision making, access to information about services, access to employment opportunities and economic security. The Beattie government made a commitment to recognise carers' needs and concerns as well as their role in service delivery.

It was a commitment made in recognition of the vital and important role played by carers. I am pleased to inform the House that Disability Services Queensland will begin statewide consultation on a draft carer recognition policy. The draft policy is based on what we already know about carers in Queensland through research, previous consultations and government programs. The draft policy, along with a companion document and consultation feedback booklet, will be distributed throughout Queensland from today and will go live on DSQ's web site today.

Twelve public meetings will be held across Queensland—from Mackay, to Townsville, to Longreach—and focus group sessions will be held targeting carers from indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These meetings will start on 10 June. Some of the topics to be canvassed include: what defines a carer; the effects of our ageing population on carers; carers and employment; carers and Commonwealth entitlements; young carers; carers in remote and rural Queensland; and future trends.

Feedback from the public will assist the Queensland government in identifying the key issues and appropriate responses for carers now and into the future. People have until 14 July to have their say, and I hope all members of this House will be encouraging carers in their electorates to get involved. The development of a carer recognition policy is the first major step in validating the important role carers play within their families and the broader community. This policy will go a long way towards improving the quality of life for carers in the sunshine state and, importantly, for the people they are caring for.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus; SARS

Hon. H. PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities) (10.11 a.m.): I want to update honourable members on the national response to the detection of wheat streak mosaic virus. On Friday a meeting of the national management group determined that the cost of eradicating wheat streak mosaic virus far outweighed the benefits. Therefore, the virus is no longer regarded as nationally exotic.

The virus has been detected at two sites in Queensland—at the Leslie Research Centre and Wellcamp Research Station on the Darling Downs. So far all test results from all samples collected here in Queensland have returned negative. Queensland will maintain the approach of containment within these two DPI sites.

Unfortunately it seems this virus has become well established in at least parts of Australia. Whilst these detections are regrettable, the fact that we have not seen severe damage in recent seasons indicates that the virus poses a small threat. The Queensland government has worked closely with the federal government, other states and territories and industry on the response to this virus. We agree that a full eradication campaign would not be justified. The fact is that the virus may be present in the Queensland grain belt. However, testing so far has not found the virus, but of course further surveillance is planned in spring.

It is critical that this survey work is undertaken to determine the full extent of the virus. It is not practically feasible to apply any interstate movement restrictions on grain or seed of host species. However, we will continue to work with the other governments and industry to manage this virus.

On a further biosecurity issue, I thank Dr Hume Field of the Department of Primary Industries for his work in China tracking down the source of the severe acute respiratory syndrome. Dr Field was part of a three-member team assembled by the World Health Organisation to track down the source of the disease. Following detailed examination and interviews with local health officials, the team has developed a hypothesis of a wild animal source. The analysis also showed no link to pet or farm animals. Dr Field will continue to be involved in the international response through regular teleconferences with experts from around the world. Dr Field has been asked to present his findings from the work in China to the WHO global conference on SARS to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 17 and 18 June.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rotary International Convention; Tourism

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (10.14 a.m.): Queensland is fast building a reputation as the business events capital of Australia. Queensland's tourism industry is currently receiving a welcome injection from thousands of visiting Rotarians attending the 2003 Rotary International Convention. Thousands of Rotarians from 113 countries either holidayed in the state before the convention or will take holidays here after the big event finishes tomorrow. With more than 16,000 delegates and their families, the convention is the biggest held in Queensland in more than a decade. Direct spending is estimated at around \$60 million.

Seventy per cent of Rotarians attending the convention are from overseas, with a further 20 per cent visiting from interstate, which is a wonderful boost to the state's tourism industry. Rotarians have booked more than 20,000 room nights in close to 100 hotels in Brisbane's CBD, the city fringe and the Gold Coast. Attractions on the Sunshine Coast have been high on the list of day tours for Rotarians attending the convention, spreading the benefits further afield.

On the Gold Coast, around 3,000 Rotarians and their families booked on average five-night stays in hotels and apartments along the coast from The Spit to Broadbeach. Other regions in Queensland, such as the tropical north, Fraser Island and the south-east Queensland country, will also benefit as visiting Rotarians make the most of their time in the Sunshine State.

Another major convention planned for Queensland is the Tourism Futures Conference on the Sunshine Coast next month. The industry received another boost with the news yesterday that one of Australia's largest travel agency groups, Travelscene, had chosen Cairns for a major conference in September. Up to 800 Travelscene agents will attend the conference, to be held at the Cairns Convention Centre, pumping an estimated \$4 million into the local economy.

Business events tourism attracts around one million people to Queensland each year. The industry segment is worth an estimated \$1.6 billion—and it is growing. Sports events are also big business in Queensland. Brisbane has just hosted the highly successful Golden Oldies Rugby Festival, which attracted 4,000 players. Preparations are also well under way for the Rugby World Cup. Queensland will host 12 games during this huge international event, at world-class facilities in Brisbane and Townsville. With an influx of around 50,000 international visitors, the Rugby World Cup is expected to generate \$800 million in economic activity for Australia. Queensland's share is estimated at close to \$200 million. Queensland will be on show to the world.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Indigenous Land Use Agreements

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (10.16 a.m.): The Beattie government is making steady progress in removing impediments to the processing of applications for mining and exploration tenures. We are achieving this by using a combination of the alternative state provisions under the Mineral Resources Act 1989 and indigenous land use agreements under the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993.

Seventeen native title groups have now authorised the use of the statewide model indigenous land use agreement to create 19 separate agreements across Queensland. Four of these agreements have been registered by the National Native Title Tribunal and are being used to pave the way for further mineral exploration in north Queensland. Seven agreements have been lodged for registration, including four that are expected to be registered and operational by October after a six-month checking process by the National Native Title Tribunal. Negotiations for four other agreements are in the process of being finalised.

Another government initiative resulted in the creation of an indigenous land use agreement for small opal mining operations near Winton in Queensland's central west. Approximately 70 mining leases, 30 mining claims and 40 exploration permits have been granted pursuant to the agreement since its registration in June 2002. Negotiations in four other small miners indigenous land use agreements across parts of the state are well advanced and, when finalised, will allow the grant of several hundred current applications as well as future applications.

In November 2002, the full Federal Court confirmed the validity of the government's high impact alternative state provisions. Since that point, the applications for 210 exploration permits, 104 mining claims and 134 mining leases have recommenced and are being processed in the alternative state provisions. The decision also allows the processing of applications for a further

242 exploration permits, 129 mining claims and 115 mining leases to commence. It is now up to the applicants to actively progress their negotiations with the native title parties to obtain the grant of their tenure. In addition, 237 low impact exploration permits have been granted under the alternative state provisions since 18 September 2000.

Finally, in July this year this government will begin implementing a fresh initiative to increase exploration for mining ventures. The government will be using the expedited procedure under the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 with specifically developed native title protection conditions. These have been developed in close consultation with the Queensland Mining Council and the Queensland Indigenous Working Group to create a win—win situation for all involved. Within 12 months I anticipate the 480 applications for exploration permits, which represent the balance of what has become known as the 'Borbidge backlog', will be finalised through this process and the backlog can be consigned to history.

I take this opportunity to thank both the QIWG and the QMC for their commitment, and in particular the positive spirit that they have demonstrated during the course of these discussions.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fire Service Satisfaction Survey

Hon. M. F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (10.19 a.m.): More than 97 per cent of Queenslanders have expressed satisfaction with firefighters' responses to road accidents and fires. The Queensland household survey conducted by the Office of Economic and Statistical Research also revealed that the number of homes with smoke alarms installed has continued to rise, with 140,000 more Queenslanders protected by alarms than last year.

This is great news considering the hard work the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has done in informing the public through a range of education campaigns. However, the survey also revealed that close to 750,000 Queenslanders lived in homes that did not have smoke alarms, while a further 300,000 people did not maintain alarms and were not sure if they would work when most needed.

It is imperative that the benefits of smoke alarms be taken seriously. The survey revealed that 79.3 per cent of Queenslanders surveyed lived in properties which had smoke alarms—almost double the 40 per cent recorded in 1995. Ever since smoke alarms became a feature of Australian homes there have been very few cases where people have died in homes that had properly located and operating smoke alarms. By comparison, there are countless cases where fires have been able to be contained and property and lives saved by early warning from smoke alarms. To put it simply, they are lifesavers.

The survey also revealed that 83.1 per cent of homes had a safety switch or circuit breaker, 40.7 per cent had a fire extinguisher and 22.4 per cent had a fire blanket, while 44.6 per cent of the state's families had a home evacuation plan—vital for effective evacuation during an emergency. This is very positive news, and I encourage Queenslanders to be aware of the importance of smoke alarms and other fire safety equipment. It is a small price to pay for the safety of you and your family.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Education Queensland, Enterprise Bargaining Agreement

Hon. G. R. NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.21 a.m.): I am pleased to be able to announce this morning that the government and the unions have successfully negotiated another enterprise bargaining agreement with approximately 2,600 Education Queensland cleaners. An overwhelming 95.8 per cent of balloted workers voted in favour of the government's offer of a pay rise of 3.8 per cent each 13 months over a 39-month agreement.

In the last nine months of this enterprise bargaining round more than 70,000 public sector workers have been awarded a pay rise of 3.5 per cent per annum—or equally 3.8 per cent over 13 months—including police, ambulance workers, main roads, Q-Build, health workers and, through the Federal Industrial Relations Commission's decision a fortnight ago, our nurses as well.

This government has always maintained that a pay rise of 3.5 per cent per annum or 3.8 per cent over 13 months was a fair and reasonable offer. In awarding Queensland's 18,000 nurses

the very same pay rise, the federal commission stated that the offer of 3.8 per cent over 13 months was 'fair, reasonable and fiscally responsible'.

The government is currently in negotiations over a new core Public Service agreement—just one of a further 24 agreements that fall due for renegotiation before the end of this year. As members would be aware, the government and the Queensland Teachers' Union are currently in arbitration hearings before the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to negotiate a pay rise for teachers.

At this point in time I am pleased that so many unions and their members have voted overwhelming to accept a pay offer of 3.5 per cent per annum, and I look forward to updating members on the progress of negotiations in this current round.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Sitting Hours; Order of Business

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (10.23 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing and Sessional Orders, the House will meet for the dispatch of business at 9.30 am on Friday 6 June 2003, on which day the routine of business shall be as follows—

9.30 am to 10.30 am

Prayers

Messages from the Governor

Matters of Privilege

Speakers Statements

Motions of Condolence

Petitions

Notification and tabling of papers by The Clerk

Ministerial Papers

Ministerial Notices of Motion

Ministerial Statements

Any other Government Business

Personal Explanations

Reports

Question Time

10.30 am to Adjournment of the House

Government Business followed by a 30 minute Adjournment Debate.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

State Budget

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.24 a.m.): For the last couple of weeks the government's infamous battalions of spin doctors have been working hard to put a spin on what will be a disappointing budget for Queensland. The budget that will be brought down today will have only one purpose—and that will be to hide from the people of Queensland the obvious truth that the Beattie government is going broke. It is a government that is undeniably going broke, and we have seen the evidence of that in the last six weeks.

We have seen the Treasurer mortgage the power poles, we have seen the Treasurer squeeze every dollar that he can out of government owned corporations using financial management techniques that would put Alan Bond and Christopher Skase to shame. We saw the Premier come into this House this morning and table the media clips from the weekend that were favourable to him and his government, but he did not bother to table the media clips from last week where the Treasurer and the government were roundly condemned for the financial management techniques used to squeeze money out of government owned corporations to prop up the budget that we will see today.

The Premier did not bother to table the media clips that point out the obvious fact: this type of financial management cannot continue in the long term. The financial state that the Beattie

government has run the Queensland government into can be hidden today within the glossy budgets and can be disguised by the spin that the spin doctors will inevitably put on it, but the truth cannot be hidden for much longer. The Beattie government is leading Queensland into a financial black hole for which Queenslanders will pay for generations to come.

It is undeniable that the state government is going broke. That can be seen to the people of Queensland in every measure that matters. It can be seen in the length of hospital waiting lists, it can be seen in the resources that are available to our kids and our schools, it can be seen in the cutbacks in so many government departments—

Time expired.

Beattie Government, Employment

Ms STRUTHERS (Algeester—ALP) (10.26 a.m.): If you are 45 years of age, desperately seeking work, getting the message that you are past your used-by date, who cares? Come on, members, you know the answer. The Beattie government cares! It is the Beattie government that set up the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle package, a \$600-plus million package. It is the Beattie government and the Minister for Employment and Training who set up a package Experience Pays for people over 45 years of age. These sorts of packages create real jobs for real people and give them real pride and real security.

Let me tell honourable members some more good news. Do members remember the 45 jobs in 45 weeks for over 45s on the south side of Brisbane? Well, guess what: that program is 26 weeks on and how many jobs have been created? Forty-five jobs in 26 weeks—well exceeding the target. These are people—Stephen and Christine and John and all the others in this program—who have got real jobs, real incomes and a real go-on in life because of the support offered through these sorts of programs.

Many of these people have been out of work for on average 78 weeks or more. It is this government who cares. The opposition parties when in government did not even have a dedicated ministry for employment. That is how much it cared. It is this government that has a magnificent \$600-plus million package, it is this government that has an Experience Pays program and it is this government that cares about people to give them real jobs and real opportunities.

Well done to the Quest newspapers, Ray Goodey and others. The magic of this program locally in Brisbane has been the cooperative effort at the local level from the Quest newspapers, the Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Employment and Training, and Mount Gravatt Training Centre. Many people have worked hard locally.

Time expired.

Dairy Industry

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (10.28 a.m.): After all the dairy farmers have been through—forced deregulation, drought, industry instability and the loss of many farms—yet more bad news is now facing the few remaining producers. They have recently learnt that they are to suffer a 3c per litre cut in the price they are paid for their milk. It is a bitter blow, as many of those farmers have managed to hang on despite the harsh times have had to face. They have managed to do so only on very low margins.

Deregulation has stripped away about a third of their income. Since then farmers have managed to claw at least a little of that back, but now this blow is stripping around 10 per cent more from their incomes. It is a significant blow and maybe the death knoll for many of those remaining in the industry. This is the true result of industry deregulation, of the level playing field economic rationalist rubbish trotted out ad nauseam by supposed experts, in a world where ambit claims for even higher wages are made before arbitration and industrial relations courts and tribunals.

We are slashing massive amounts off the price farmers get for the food we eat and in this case the milk we drink. The logic seems to be that it is somehow okay for farmers to suffer on the price of cheaper prices for consumers. It is callous but it is the logic at the core of this whole economic rationalist theory. The difficulty is that this theory does not deliver. Instead, it tears the heart out of rural Queensland, but it does not deliver one cent of saving to the consumers.

The economic rationalists are leading farmers and other primary producers to ruin and the rest of us up the garden path. The dairy industry, fishing industry, racing industry and tobacco industry are all proof of this. This price cut to dairy farmers is the latest in a long line which has seen their farm gate price almost halve since deregulation was forced upon them. But the supermarket price of milk has not halved. Farmers suffer while the consumers keep paying through the nose for their milk.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Goodwill Bridge

Mr SPRINGBORG (10.30 a.m.): My question is directed to the Minister for State Development. I refer to the Goodwill Bridge, which was budgeted to cost \$16 million but actually cost \$33 million. Are the same people responsible for costing this year's state budget for the minister's department?

Mr BARTON: If this is the first question from the opposition on budget day then it really is making a farce of the whole process. At the time the Goodwill Bridge was the subject of many questions and very thorough explanations on the costing. I do have to correct the Leader of the Opposition on one point. He asserts that the bridge cost \$33 million. That figure includes the GST. The cost, as properly made public and advised to this parliament, was \$30 million.

The Leader of the Opposition asks whether the same people are making the budget assessments on behalf of my department. There is a large number of people in the Department of State Development who do a great job and are still there. This department has achieved a great deal for this state in terms of major developments. I think there were some comments in the weekend press about the Goodwill Bridge that put it into proper context. It was said that there was controversy over the Goodwill Bridge at the time of construction but that the public of this state absolutely love the Goodwill Bridge, as is shown by its high usage rates.

A whole range of factors were explained at the time such as that the Goodwill Bridge design was changed after the costs were committed because we did the correct thing by making sure that disabled people had proper access. That meant that the bridge needed to be redesigned. That caused major delays and, of course, major delays cause major costs. The bridge also needed to be redesigned for safety reasons. The constructor said that they had a difficulty with the bridge.

I have just been handed a note from one of my colleagues which points out that 60,000 people a week vote with their feet and use the Goodwill Bridge. The Goodwill Bridge is exceptionally good value for money in terms of what was provided. The Leader of the Opposition is making an absolute joke of this place when he asks questions about a bridge that was completed more than 18 months ago. That is also when the costs were made public.

Ambulance Levy

Mr SPRINGBORG: My next question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. In 1998 the minister costed the free pensioner ambulance scheme at \$20 million. Ultimately, it cost \$116 million per annum and led to the introduction of the ambulance tax, which will be levied on all Queenslanders several times over. I ask the minister: are the same people responsible for framing this year's Emergency Services budget?

Mr REYNOLDS: I am delighted with that dorothy dixer from the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition contributed maybe one and a half minutes to the debate on the ambulance bill because he had other things on his mind last Wednesday night.

Mr Bredhauer: What has he got against free ambulance for pensioners anyway?

Mr REYNOLDS: Exactly. The Leader of the Opposition had other things on his mind last week—like walking out of a press conference—when it was being debated. Let me repeat the mythology that needs to be absolutely abandoned in this House today. The members opposite dislike the truth. Let me tell the truth of the proposal. The member for Toowoomba South was here when I made this point last week—and I think he even agreed with me. In 1998 the Beattie opposition committed to the free pensioner scheme for this state and we delivered in the same way that we will deliver for ambulance services this afternoon. We will deliver what we committed to.

The cost of the pensioner scheme under the Borbidge government was \$75 million. It was made up of \$55 million that was subsidised out of consolidated revenue and \$20 million that came from subscriber fees. So to say that \$75 million was coming in is a myth and, unfortunately, the members opposite believe that myth put about by the ex-Leader of the Opposition. He perpetrated this myth as well. They need to get their homework done and get up to date.

At the moment we are subsidising the pensioners, Seniors Card holders and veterans to the tune of \$116 million. This is our sixth budget, and it has gone from \$75 million under the Borbidge government to \$116 million. The \$20 million was the top-up amount required. I gave the figures to the ex-Treasurer, the member for Caloundra, Mrs Sheldon, in February. I suggest that those opposite look at the figures that were given to the member for Caloundra. It is quite obvious that those opposite do not like the free pensioner scheme. If they were in government they would not know what to do with ambulance funding.

Last Wednesday night those opposite were indicating that they would rip out more exemptions. That would have cost the people of this state not \$88 but \$110. That is the true cost. They hate the free pensioner scheme and they would take it away.

Coalition Policy

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: My question is directed to the Premier. I note that the coalition recently released a policy called 'Safer homes, safer streets'. Can the Premier advise the House whether he has seen the policy on the Nationals' web site and whether it reminds him of an old song?

Mr BEATTIE: I will come back to that in a minute. The answer is yes, I have, and yes, it does. On Friday, the day after the Liberal Party voted with the government in support of ratification of a hold on tree clearing applications, the Leader of the National Party told the ABC in western Queensland—and I do not know whether he thought no-one else was going to hear this—that the coalition was not falling apart. He was asked why and he said that it was because in government they would not be pursuing something that they disagreed on. He said, 'You wouldn't put something up where you don't have broad agreement.' This is a coalition government.

Let us think about what the members opposite do not agree on. They have a Mexican stand-off on land clearing, daylight saving, gun control, retail trading hours, anti-discrimination, One Nation and fixed four-year terms. They cannot agree on how long they want to be in government. They would be a government in neutral.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I do agree with what the Liberal Party says behind the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's back. I am with the Liberal Party on that. They say that he is a liability. I agree with the Liberal Party. The Leader of the Opposition was talking to some of his party faithful in Mackay and he said that, if they vote One Nation or Independent, they will get nothing. That is what I am told, anyway. I am happy to be corrected. That is that I am told. He said that if people vote National they will get perhaps 60 per cent of what they want. That is like a 10-ounce glass but with only six ounces in it. So with the Independents you get nothing. With the National Party you get 60 per cent if you are lucky. I reckon the great line was this. When he was up there the Opposition Leader said—

Voters are a little bit like car buyers. Voters are political tyre kickers—they are going around giving it a kick. What the National Party has to do is encourage voters to start the engine, take the Nationals for a spin and then buy.

But let me come back to the original question. I had a look—

Mr Mackenroth: Would you buy a car off him?

Mr BEATTIE: No, I would not buy a car off that man.

Let us look at this policy. It is called something to do with a coalition policy launch. I had a look at it. Do members know what the date of release was? Thursday, 1 January 1970. I know they have changed the web site since, because we told a few journos and they got tipped off. I remember that there were some great songs. It reminds me of the Skyhooks' *Living in the 70s*. I have to tell members: I went back and looked at the album, because the Skyhooks' song and album were called the same thing, *Living in the 70s*. Just look at some of the other songs on it. One was called *Smut*, and those opposite can relate to that when they think back to last week. The other one members will remember was called *Horror Movie*. I have to tell members: a coalition government would be a horror movie for Queensland.

Taxation Revenue

Mr QUINN: I refer the Treasurer to the question I directed to him on 1 May in which I referred to the government's own mid-year fiscal and economic reviews that showed that taxation revenue had grown by over 25 per cent since he had become Treasurer, and I ask: is he now in a position to confirm that he is the highest taxing Treasurer in Queensland's history?

Mr MACKENROTH: In relation to what I can confirm, all I can confirm is that I am the Treasurer who has delivered more services to Queensland than any other Treasurer in the history of this state, and of that I am very proud. Mr Quinn would be well aware that with inflation and with population growth the actual tax revenue that we receive goes up. But what we have not done is increase the actual taxation rates. Sure, we have taken more money. We take more money because of inflation and we take it because we have a higher population base. So there are more people actually paying taxes. But what I can tell him is that since the Beattie government came to power spending on social security and welfare—this is from the Grants Commission—which covers Families and Disability Services, is up by 71 per cent. Spending on public order and safety, which covers Police, Corrective Services and Justice, is up by 39 per cent. Spending on education is up by 32 per cent. Spending on health is up by 25 per cent. The member should just wait for this afternoon. From those figures I can be very proud of what I have done as the Treasurer of this state.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Burnett I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from the Mary Immaculate Primary School in the electorate of Yeerongpilly. Welcome.

Wine Industry

Mr STRONG: My question is directed to the Premier. We all know that the Premier is the No. 1 advocate for the state's burgeoning wine industry, including the likes of Bruschetto Wines at Bargara and Mango Hill at Childers in my electorate. Might the Premier detail how his promotional efforts have been progressing?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Burnett for his question and I thank you, Mr Speaker, for your support for the wine industry. I remember Bruschetto very well—so does Nita Cunningham, Minister for Local Government and member for Bundaberg—because when we were in Bundaberg for our community cabinet meeting that is what the member served at her home that evening. I remember it well. It is very good.

Mr Seeney: Where does the Parliament House wine come from?

Mr BEATTIE: The member obviously drinks too much of it. Others might be critical of Queensland wines, but I am not. Last week in South Carolina the business editor of the state newspaper, Grant Jackson, served—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mr BEATTIE: He does not care about wines. I do. Queensland wine is at the top of our list for promotion.

Last week in South Carolina the business editor of the state newspaper, Grant Jackson, served Ballandean wine at his son's wedding. Ballandean made its way to the United States by our support. Ballandean officially launched its wines in South Carolina late last year. That initially came about as a result of me serving the then governor of South Carolina, Jim Hodges, with a 1996 Ballandean Estate cabernet at a sister state signing ceremony. I also took Ballandean wines to Europe last year. As a result of the insistence of the Police Minister that Queensland wines be served, Ballandean now exports to Taiwan. Earlier this year I served Clovely wines on my trade mission to New Zealand. We only serve Queensland wines at Queensland government receptions—only Queensland wines. By such a simple Smart State policy we are opening the door for our exporters and creating more and more opportunities. Others knock; we support. We see it here every day: they whine; we go out and support it.

While talking of wines, from 13 to 15 June the Brisbane Wine Festival will again take place. I look forward to the presentation of the Premier's award for the highest points at the festival. I ask the member to think of the wine districts we have, wonderful as they are. We have Tambourine, Roma, South and North Burnett, Mount Cotton, the Gold Coast and the hinterland, the Granite

Belt, Inglewood, Toowoomba and its surrounds on the downs, the Sunshine Coast, the hinterland, St George. The list goes on—Surat, the tablelands and everywhere.

Mr Johnson: Don't forget about Emerald.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, and Emerald. We have a great wine industry. We have to do everything we can to promote it. I would urge all Queenslanders to sample Queensland wine and not let the arrogant, snobby end of the place suggest that it is not good wine. It is. I suggest this to the snobs: give Queensland wine a go. It is good for your health.

Country Racing

Mr HORAN: My question is addressed to the Premier, because if I ask it to the Racing Minister she will not come out of the barriers.

Government members interjected.

Mr HORAN: Oh, well. It is going to be a light-hearted day, isn't it?

Government members interjected.

Mr HORAN: That is true.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will continue with the question.

Government members interjected.

Mr HORAN: Look, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Toowoomba South.

Mr HORAN: Thanks, Mr Speaker. My question, as I said, is to the Premier. Country race clubs and country people have been devastated by the loss of almost 200 race meetings while his government and his minister have looked the other way. I ask: is the Premier prepared to recognise the pain and hurt this has caused and will he inject the \$10 million annually needed to boost racing in the country, the regional cities and Brisbane?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. I am only too delighted to take his questions, because I notice that he was involved in supporting the Burrandowan Race Club recently. That club was under the misapprehension—and I hope the member will correct this—that its annual event was at risk. It is not true.

Mr Horan: It is true.

Mr BEATTIE: No. The member should not come in here and tell his mistruths.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Is the member going to let me answer this or is he just going to rave on? Burrandowan has an opportunity to apply under a program that I announced, which means that it can get particular funding for—

Mr Horan: Oh, \$5,000 after the \$24,000 you took away. You took \$24,000, six races—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Toowoomba South, you have asked the question. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will now cease interjecting. This is my final warning. I call the Premier.

Mr BEATTIE: I have to say that, if the member actually wants to get an answer, I am happy to give him an answer. He is wasting time. If he wants to yell out, he is not going to get a chance. I am happy to give him an answer. I thought it might have been lonely Lawrence over there who might have asked it. It does not seem that anyone wants to talk to him about things these days—his federal counterparts. He should give them a call.

Let us talk about the designation of community race meetings. It is an important position. It has come to mean that race meetings are conducted as the centrepiece of a local social occasion rather than in support of the wider racing industry. These race meetings are not part of

the professional racing industry and have been allocated by Queensland Racing on a year-to-year basis. The board of Queensland Racing has full responsibility—

Mr HORAN: I rise to a point of order. The Premier is misleading the parliament. They are part of the professional circuit. They have stewards, professional jockeys and professional trainers, and they receive \$4,000 per race—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order. The member is debating the issue.

Mr BEATTIE: Burrandowan is a picnic race club. The member is misleading the House. That is dishonest. He knows it is. It is a picnic race club. While the board of Queensland Racing—

Mr HORAN: I rise to a point of order. The Premier does not know the difference between true picnic meetings and a meeting like that with professional jockeys and professional trainers. He should tell the truth.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is not a debate. The member will resume his seat and listen to the answer to the question.

Mr BEATTIE: I want to admit, based on what the honourable member has said I do not know the difference between a picnic and a picnic; he is quite right.

While the board of Queensland Racing has full responsibility for managing its code of racing, including the allocation of race meetings, the government recognises that some race meetings provide an important social function in their local communities, particularly in small and remote areas, and has provided funds through Queensland Events of up to \$200,000 annually for a Queensland community racing scheme. That club has an opportunity to apply. Queensland Events and Queensland Racing have announced that priority will be given to non-TAB clubs allocated two or three race days in 2003-04. The member knows that it is not a TAB club. He has an obligation to start telling people the truth about this. No-one is hoodwinked by all this nonsense.

Education Queensland, Staffing

Mrs ATTWOOD: I refer the Minister for Education to the fact that there has been significant employment growth in the Education portfolio, and I ask: can she please advise where these new staff have been employed?

Ms BLIGH: Similar to the member, I read with interest the comments from the Opposition Leader yesterday claiming that employment growth in Queensland's public sector had not gone where he believed it should, and that is to front-line service delivery. As Education Queensland is the state's largest employer, I looked at the figures that he quoted. They just did not seem right. I am pleased to advise the House of the accurate position in relation to education.

The combined increases across the Public Service as outlined in the two reports of the Public Service Commissioner's annual reports of 2000-01 and 2001-02 show that there has been a growth in public servants of 6,043. Of this, Education Queensland's share was 3,596. Of those, more than 96 per cent of full-time equivalent positions were in our schools. Some 1,960 of them were classroom teachers. The remainder, 1,510 positions, were made up of other school support staff—front-line people working in our schools, such as administrative assistants, registrars, teacher-aides, cleaners, janitors, groundspeople, speech language pathologists and others. These staff provide direct services every day to schools and to students.

When the Opposition Leader claimed that only 1,302 of the new teachers, nurses and police officers had been recruited in a two-year period, he was simply wrong, wrong, wrong. The number of classroom teachers alone—that is, 1,960—proved that the Opposition Leader cannot do his sums. As the budget for 2003 looms, analytical ability is critical. We have seen it questioned here this morning by the opposition. I wonder if the Opposition Leader will rely on the same people for his budget analysis as he has relied on for this very sorry piece of work on public servants.

The figures from the Public Service Commissioner also capture the conversion of casual staff such as administrative assistants to permanent positions. Today I am very pleased to outline to the House that 500 full-time equivalents in terms of the growth in Education Queensland staff can be attributed to the conversion of casual administrative staff in schools to permanent staff. Does that not stand in stark contrast to the attempts by the previous National-Liberal government to sack cleaners? On the other hand, we are making these people permanent, giving them job security and creating more permanent positions. Our employment record in Education is solid. At the chalkface we are delivering more teachers into Queensland classrooms and we are providing

the support staff they need to do their job—in classifications such as teacher-aides, cleaners, janitors, people at the front line working in classrooms at schools.

Public Service, Paid Maternity Leave

Mrs SHELDON: My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy. This is now the sixth Labor budget since her government promised the 120,000 women in the Public Service that it would fund 12 weeks paid maternity leave. I refer her to leaked budget information which shows that she continues to renege on that core promise made to women, and I ask: why does she continue to treat the women of Queensland in this most iniquitous manner, and is this just another broken promise from her cash-strapped government?

Mrs EDMOND: That commitment was made in an election that we did not win. It was made prior to the 1995 election and the incoming government did not deliver on it. One of the issues about elections is that the comments that you make have a reliance on you getting elected. That is why we have seen in the past Mr Horan make \$200 million of unfunded promises in the lead-up to the election in 1998 that we did win, and I inherited \$200 million worth of unfunded promises by the then Minister, Mr Horan. I am looking forward to the budget being delivered today, because it is a beauty for Health. I can share that with them, can't I, Mr Treasurer? It is going to be a beauty for Health. It will show that Health is a major priority for this government. Unlike the opposition, where we have seen Health drop down to the bottom of the ladder in terms of priorities, and also unlike the Commonwealth, which has said that it will not support—

Mrs SHELDON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I refer you to standing order 70, which speaks about the relevance of the answer to the question. I asked the minister a question as the Minister for Women's Policy.

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

Mrs EDMOND: The answer from the Commonwealth on maternity leave was that it is not interested at all. I had a meeting with Amanda Vanstone last year, which the opposition criticised me for going to, where we put the case for the fact that a vast number of women get no maternity leave. These are the women who are at the bottom of the earnings scale, the women who most need support when they are stopping work to have children. I have lobbied consistently that the first move we make to increase maternity leave should be for those people who most need it—the working-class women who cannot afford to take time off otherwise. The Commonwealth said, 'No. When we have equity for women workers, then we will look at progressing it for those who currently have maternity leave.' I think that is a fair answer. But I am concerned that the Commonwealth has said it is not interested in it, will not support it and will not go anywhere near it, even though we gave it a range of different ways that it could fund it, through Social Security, et cetera. The Prime Minister says that he wants more women to stop work and have babies. He will not give them the support that they need to do it.

I can say that we do know what the priority is from the Commonwealth on Health. It is cutting \$1 billion across Australia in health services. We heard mention before of high taxing. We have the highest taxing Commonwealth government in history, and yet it is cutting funding to service delivery.

Public Service, Staffing

Ms BARRY: I refer the Minister for Health to the fact that it has been claimed by the Leader of the Opposition that only 1,300 of the people appointed to government jobs over the past two years were actually nurses, police or teachers. Can the minister provide us with the number of doctors, nurses and allied health staff who were appointed in that period?

Mr Palaszczuk: Good question.

Mrs EDMOND: It is a good question. Like the Minister for Education, I was somewhat surprised by the comments from the Opposition Leader. Clearly, there is not a lot of knowledge shared in the coalition. I answered a question on notice, No. 180, to the member for Caloundra on 11 March this year and gave the answer then.

The following is the situation: in June 2001 Queensland Health employed 48,718 staff directly involved in service delivery. At the same time, there were 1,109 other departmental staff employed. In June 2002, Queensland Health employed 50,251 health professionals—an

increase of 1,533 on the previous year. Other departmental staff employed at this time stood at 1,269—an increase of 160. This means that we have not vastly increased the numbers of public servants in Health—far from it. I should point out that the numbers I have quoted are not full-time equivalents. Many people in the health system work in a part-time or VMO capacity. But in priority areas like mental health we have increased the number of staff directly working with patients and clients by up to 400 in recent years.

This translates into increased services where it counts. For the opposition's benefit, I point out that this is not just about counting heads; it means that we can now provide mental health services in communities throughout the state so that people can receive treatment closer to where they live—closer to their families, their loved ones and support networks. For example, we have invested \$11.4 million in new facilities, which has meant that there are now community care units at Windsor, Mountain Creek, Pine Rivers, Redcliffe and Charters Towers, which enable patients to stay in their own communities.

Queensland began the National Mental Health Strategy with the lowest per capita spending on mental health services of all the jurisdictions, but the latest national mental health report of 2002 shows that in 1999-2000, spending was 63 per cent higher than it was in 1992-93. In addition, Queensland's per capita expenditure on community based services has increased by 222 per cent since 1992-93.

The opposition's harping criticism against administrative staff also shows a complete lack of understanding about how health services are delivered. Administrative staff play a key role in the delivery of clinical services by freeing up doctors, nurses and allied health staff so that they can provide more hands-on health care. I ask members to ask those people whom they are constantly denigrating—the ward clerks, the admission clerks at the emergency departments—whether they believe that they are doing front-line health services. They play a key role. The opposition should stop knocking those hardworking members of our health services.

Tree Clearing

Mr WELLINGTON: I direct a question to the Premier. Last Thursday during the debate on the Vegetation (Application for Clearing) Bill, the Minister for Natural Resources was prevented from replying to questions that I and others asked him in relation to the compensation criteria for Queenslanders who have now lost their traditional property rights because this government guillotined debate on this bill. I ask the Premier: what are the key principles his government has set as not negotiable with the federal government so that Queenslanders who have now lost their traditional property rights will be able to access fair and reasonable compensation?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for his question. As he knows, there were seven hours of debate on this tree clearing moratorium. I want to be very clear on what the moratorium is all about. The moratorium was brought into being to enable consultation to take place with the stakeholders. The agreement that we have with the Commonwealth is that it will continue to consult, and so will the officers of both the state and the Commonwealth. In fact, last week four federal ministers sat down with the stakeholders to begin the consultation. The moratorium was put in place to enable the consultation to take place.

Mr Seeney: But how long will it go for?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question has been asked.

Mr BEATTIE: I ask for the courtesy of the House. Opposition members interject. It is not their question. The member for Nicklin is serious about this issue. I want to give him a serious answer. I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for once not to be rude and to allow another member a go.

The Prime Minister and I exchanged letters in relation to this moratorium. It was designed to ensure that we could have this period of consultation. I will not go through the letters again. I think I tabled them and had them incorporated. In these discussions that have been going on between the Commonwealth and the state it was important that consultation take place with stakeholders.

The member would be aware that the \$150 million plan requires \$75 million from the state and \$75 million from the Commonwealth. In those terms, the member would be aware that there were three key elements. I spelt those out before, but I will go through them and talk about them in more detail than I have. The \$150 million—\$75 million from the state and \$75 million from the Commonwealth—is \$130 million in financial incentives to assist with the transition or for exit assistance if necessary; \$12 million in incentives to improve the management of more valuable

remnant vegetation; and \$8 million in incentives to develop best practice farm management plans.

In essence—and I will talk generally now—if, for example, someone has remnant or endangered trees on their property and they have not been cleared, they are prevented by this agreement from being cleared. This incentive package will then help farmers to use the other part of their land. Say, for example, they wanted to build some sort of stock-supporting facility, or make some other use of that land.

Mr Palaszcuk: A feedlot.

Mr BEATTIE: A feedlot. I thank the minister. Those people would be encouraged to develop the other parts of the land that are not endangered or remnant land. They would be given incentives to do that. In other words, we are trying to encourage agriculture in the land that has been cleared where there are not endangered or remnant trees left. That is the first thing.

The second thing—and we are happy to work through some of this detail with the stakeholders, which is why consultation is going on now—is that that \$12 million would be in incentives to improve the management of the remnant vegetation that is left. We just cannot leave it; obviously, it has to be managed in some way. Also, there is that \$8 million in incentives to develop best practice management plans. That speaks for itself.

So to answer the member's question, they are the three points specifically. But there is a period of consultation going on now where stakeholders will be able to have a say about the actual use of that money. I think that is the best answer that I can give the member.

Police Resources

Mrs REILLY: I direct a question to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I ask: can the minister elaborate on what the Beattie government has done to increase the number of police officers and Corrective Services officers since 30 June 2000?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for the question. It is a very timely question, because tomorrow I will be at Chandler where we will be inducting 100 new police officers, who will then travel the length and breadth of Queensland to take up their positions as first-year constables. Since we were elected we have delivered more than 1,400 extra officers to Queensland. These increases will continue as we strive to reach the total of 9,100 police officers by 2005.

Between 30 June 2000 and 30 June 2002 alone, there was an increase of 744 funded police positions throughout our state. Queensland's police to population ratio now stands at one officer for every 458 residents, which is far better than the national average of one officer for every 463 residents. Of course, members opposite who criticise our record on delivering extra police must have short memories, because when they were last in government, as at July 1997, the police to population ratio was one police officer for every 517 residents. Indeed, the record of Mr Springborg and Mr Quinn on delivering police numbers certainly leaves a lot to be desired.

We have also increased the number of Corrective Services officers who work to ensure that our prisons are safer places. With the construction of the new Maryborough Correctional Centre we will see a total increase of 130 full-time positions within Corrective Services. By boosting Police and Corrective Services numbers all Queenslanders will benefit, whether they live in the city or in the more remote parts of Queensland.

Mr Springborg implied that civilians in the Queensland Police Service were simply pen-pushers. Let me say this: we are increasing the number of civilians. There is a lot more to come, because already we have identified between 800 and 1,200 positions that can be filled by civilians. Those 100 people who will go through the induction tomorrow will go out to do what they have been trained to do, whilst the civilians will, in fact, start doing general administrative work, front counter duties and the like.

Ambulance Levy

Mr FLYNN: I direct a question to the Minister for Emergency Services. The Premier keeps repeating that the power bill option to collect the ambulance levy is the fairest that he can develop, yet we have consistently shown a large number of inequities. Also, the research shows that a large proportion of pensioners wish to contribute towards the levy. I ask: why has the minister ignored advice from pensioner groups, or is it a vote-buying exercise? Why has the

minister consistently failed to explain many of the other inequities, including how the minister will collect from people who are not on the grid? Or will businesses have that extra impost as well?

Mr REYNOLDS: Can I say thank you very much to the member for Lockyer for the question. As the member knows, this was debated from 11.30 Tuesday night to 11.45 Wednesday night. It was a pretty big debate, and I acknowledge that the member was in the House for some part of that debate.

But can I say that I am absolutely delighted once again to comment on the community ambulance cover and what it will mean for the 3.7 million Queenslanders. That will be demonstrated this afternoon and today in the budget brought down by the Treasurer, because this government is a caring and compassionate government. The member has heard me say today that there is 97 per cent support for our firefighters, 98.3 per cent support—

Mr FLYNN: I rise to a point of order. The minister's answer is irrelevant to my question. I had asked him to address the inequities, not give a speech on the ambulance levy.

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

Mr REYNOLDS: There is 98.3 per cent support for our ambulance officers. Can I say that it may be irrelevant to the member for Lockyer, but not to the 3.7 million Queenslanders who are going to get the benefits out of this budget.

Can I also say that the One Nation Party has taken some pleasure in saying that they are in favour of the levy, and I acknowledge that they are in favour of the levy. The only problem that the One Nation Party has had is that it has not been able to articulate a better way of doing this than the way that the government has. In fact, if I remember rightly, at about 11.45 last Wednesday evening the member opposite voted with the opposition. Every Independent voted with the opposition, and in voting with the opposition they voted to put the ambulance levy up from \$88 dollars to \$110.

Could I remind the member that he voted with the opposition, and the opposition's intent was to put the levy up from \$88 to \$110 to bring in more exemptions. In fact, can I say to the member for Lockyer that he actually voted for a scheme that had tens of thousands more exemptions. It was full of holes. It was absolutely flawed. In the debate last Tuesday and Wednesday nights I demonstrated that, and I demonstrated it very, very clearly.

Let us be very clear. We asked the federal government, at the conference on ambulance services across Australia, to look at the Medicare levy. The sane and sensible thing to do would have been to add a bit extra on to the Medicare levy. Can I say to the member opposite that if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Jenny Macklin, had been elected as health minister rather than the people who are ripping money out of Health, we would have had that today because we would have had Labor states and territories and a Labor government federally.

So members opposite cannot sit on the fence on this. What the member for Lockyer voted for was the anomalies contained in the heavily flawed amendments of the opposition. What the member for Lockyer voted for—and what he will be reminded of—is a \$110 levy. That is the record.

Department of Families, Staffing

Ms STONE: My question is to the Minister for Families. Can the minister please inform the House how the Beattie government has boosted staff numbers in the Department of Families since coming to office?

Ms SPENCE: This government has given more resources, more commitment and more attention to the area of child protection than any government in this state's history. When the Beattie government came to office in 1998 we inherited an underresourced, understaffed, underfunded Families Department with critical shortages in front-line protection staff, and a system that had largely been ignored during decades of neglect under conservative governments. This was the system that we embarked on reforming.

We have done a lot in the last five years. We have had an inquiry into our child protection system and its institutions. We have introduced the blue card. We have new, modern legislation, and we have put record amounts of funding into the Families Department.

But let us look at what we have done with staffing numbers. In June 1998 there were approximately 1,306 staff working in the Department of Families as well as 320 staff working in youth detention centres across the state. As at April 2003, five years later, there were 2,094 staff

working within the department, an increase of 468 in five years. We have employed more front-line child protection staff every year under the Beattie government than the opposition did during its total years in the Borbidge government. We should be proud of that.

Since we started implementing the recommendations of the Forde inquiry in June 1999, an additional 250 front-line service delivery staff have been employed. On top of that, since 1999, 31 extra support staff have been employed in Queensland's regions—regional system support officers and administration workers who are vital in supporting our family services officers.

There is more! As well as the additional staff appointed in response to the Forde inquiry, another 46 new staff were appointed last year through our Future Directions initiative. We have invested well over \$1 million a year since 2001 in learning and development for service delivery staff. In the past 18 months we have increased the number of child protection workers employed in regional and area offices from 67 per cent to more than 75 per cent or three-quarters of our total staff numbers.

The Minister for Health said that this year's budget is going to be a beauty for Health. It is also going to be a beauty for the Department of Families and a beauty for child protection in this state. Last year we announced a record amount of funding for child protection of \$188 million. The second instalment of that \$188m will be delivered in 2003-04.

Aged Care Facilities, Burnett Region

Mrs PRATT: My question is to the Minister for Health and concerns the imminent closure of Farrholme aged care facility, the only public aged care facility in the rapidly growing Kingaroy district, and the subsequent relocation of public aged care to the Wondai district. At a time of life when the elderly need to be nurtured by their elderly spouse or family, and as there is no public transport existing between Kingaroy and Wondai, will the minister push the Minister for Transport to ensure that public transport is made available to these residents and families who, through lack of finances, are unable to obtain private aged care locally and are therefore virtually being evicted from their home town by this government?

Mrs EDMOND: The reason that we are rearranging aged care services in the South Burnett is the very reason that the member touched on—that many people now have to leave Wondai, Nanango and other places to go to Kingaroy. As the member is aware, we are going through an extensive consultation process with the local member, the local residents and the local service providers, and we are hoping to be able to provide services closer to people's homes.

My understanding is that Kingaroy is extremely well served by aged care facilities and that there are surplus aged care beds in Kingaroy but there are none in Nanango. So people from Nanango and the surrounding area currently have to go to Kingaroy, and we are looking at reversing that.

I will take on board the member's concerns about transport. She would be aware that, through the HACC system, we already fund transport services by way of buses and so on to serve the local community and to take people to health facilities. Those matters will be taken into consideration as part of the consultation process, which is about providing improved health service delivery closer to where people live.

Cityport North Project, Cairns

Ms BOYLE: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads. I refer the minister to last weekend's launch of the very important Cityport North project in Cairns. I ask: how will Cityport North help far-north Queensland during these difficult times in tourism?

Mr BREDHAUER: I have a confession to make. Whilst I was extolling the virtues of the public transport benefits at Suncorp Stadium on Sunday, I was not there. The reason why I was not there is that I was in my home town of Cairns celebrating the launch on the weekend of the Cityport North project, which has been undertaken by the Cairns Port Authority. This is a major investment by the state government, through the Cairns Port Authority, in developing facilities for visitors and locals alike in far-north Queensland.

I might say that, whilst there were thousands of people at the Suncorp Stadium on Sunday, there were hundreds of people at the opening of the Cityport North project on Friday night and again on Saturday. The Cityport North project will really become a place for the people of Cairns—a place for the locals—to go. If there are any honourable members who have not visited

the waterfront in Cairns, then I suggest that the next time they go to Cairns they take the opportunity to go down there and have a look. This government has changed the waterfront. We have opened up access for the people of Cairns and for visitors alike.

The new facility that was opened a couple of weeks ago by the Premier in conjunction with the new Reeflink terminal, the public boardwalk—

Mr McGrady: The police beat.

Mr BREDHAUER: And the police beat that has been undertaken is a major initiative in helping to completely rejuvenate and repackage the tourism opportunities that Cairns has to offer.

Mr McGrady: Who paid for it?

Mr BREDHAUER: The state government has paid for it through the Cairns Port Authority. Some \$54 million is being invested by the Cairns Port Authority in the Cityport initiative, and amongst that is the new Reeflink visitor terminal. The Reeflink visitor terminal will cater for 650,000 reef visitors a year, and that will be a major benefit. It is like an airline passenger terminal: people go and check in; there is a covered walkway.

The new marina has more than doubled the number of marina berths that are available for the tourism industry, in particular, but there are also significant public spaces that have been opened up. Spence Street has now been opened up to the waterfront again. There is a great vista along the boardwalk. There will be continuous access along The Esplanade into the Cityport South project when that comes on line. It is a great achievement.

I want to thank in particular the member for Cairns. She has worked very closely with me as minister, the Cairns Port Authority and others to achieve what is a great outcome for the people of Cairns. I also want to thank the Chairman of the Cairns Port Authority, Clive Skarrot, who has done more than any other person individually, other than the member for Cairns, to help bring that about. I also thank Brad Geatches, the new CEO. We had a few problems with the reef tour operators 12 months ago, but thanks to their cooperation and the work of the Cairns Port Authority we have sorted those issues out. Can I say that a number of them approached me personally on Friday night to thank me for helping to resolve that issue to the satisfaction of the reef tour operators.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Beaudesert, could I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from St Thomas More School in Toowoomba in the electorate of Toowoomba South. Could I also welcome students and teachers from Chatsworth State School in the electorate of Gympie.

Basil Stafford Centre

Mr LINGARD: My question is directed to the Minister for Families. In mid-2001 the minister gave a commitment to upgrade the Basil Stafford Centre for residents who wish to continue living at the centre. Why has she not honoured that promise?

Ms SPENCE: It is a good question. What we have been doing to Basil Stafford in the last few years is continuing to move out the long-term residents. I am happy to provide the shadow minister with details on that at a later date, but a considerable number of residents have been moved out this year. Thirteen people have suggested, or their families have suggested, that they want to remain living on the Basil Stafford site. We will be renovating those houses or building new houses on that site to incorporate and accommodate those 13 people.

A lot of work has been done on this issue in the last 12 months in consultation with the families of the 13 people who are likely to remain on the site. Because it is a huge site, we are implementing a master plan for the whole of the Basil Stafford site. We are doing that in conjunction with the Minister for Public Works, the corporate community and the community around the Basil Stafford site. What we want to see is mixed use—

Mr Lingard: This is what you promised in 2001.

Ms SPENCE: Do not be silly! I have to congratulate the shadow minister. This is the first question he has asked on disability this year. So I would think he would like to hear the answer.

Mr LINGARD: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. If the minister keeps answering like this, it is not worth while asking another question either.

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

Ms SPENCE: Not only have we not had a question on disabilities from this shadow minister; we have not had a question on the Families portfolio from this shadow minister all year. Given that the whole issue of child protection, for example, has occupied a lot of the general public's attention all year, one might have assumed I would have had a question on child protection. Anyway, I am happy to take this one on disability and I am very happy to talk about Basil Stafford.

Mr LINGARD: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My question on notice today is about child protection.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order.

Ms SPENCE: I congratulate the shadow minister on asking me a question on child protection, even though it is on notice. I know that this opposition is embarrassed to ask questions about families, child protection and disability because its record in this area is so very poor. Do not forget this is the opposition last year that voted against providing more support to the elderly, to women, to children and to people with disabilities in protecting them against domestic violence. No wonder they are embarrassed to get up and ask me questions in this House.

But back to Basil Stafford: we are doing a master plan for Basil Stafford, as I said. We are looking at some mixed use of the site and we certainly have not taken the issue of the upgrade off the agenda.

Cherry Venture, Shipwreck

Ms MOLLOY: My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment, and I ask: could he please outline to the House the latest developments in relation to the *Cherry Venture* shipwreck? I am informed that some emergency work has been carried out today on that shipwreck.

Mr WELLS: I thank the honourable member for Noosa. Indeed, the information that she has is correct. As honourable members know, the *Cherry Venture* ran aground in 1973 at Teewah Beach. On 14 February my department declared a 20-metre exclusion zone around it on the basis of the powers contained in the Nature Conservation Act. The reason for that was information to the effect that the superstructure was being significantly corroded and was threatening to become unsafe. We now have information that that superstructure is unsafe. That superstructure needs to be collapsed in order to preserve visitor safety in the area.

As from today there is a one-kilometre exclusion zone around the *Cherry Venture* and the deteriorating parts of the hulk will be collapsed. The *Cherry Venture* itself will not at this stage be removed from the site. We believe it is seen by a large number of people as a matter of tourist interest and consequently will be allowed to remain there for the time being. However, we will have from today fences, danger tape and signs to warn people of the danger and the risk in the immediate period of time post the superstructure having been collapsed.

This is being done for reasons of personnel safety, and I would ask honourable members to let their constituents know that, in respect of violation of the one-kilometre exclusion zone, fines can and will be imposed.

Insurance Reform; Jimbour State School

Mr HOPPER: My question is directed to the Treasurer. I recognise that the government has introduced two rounds of insurance reforms and has engaged the services of AON Risk Services. However, in many instances in my electorate this is simply not working. One of many examples is the Jimbour State School major fundraiser, which is a trail bike ride scheduled in a fortnight's time. They are now devastated to find out they cannot get insurance to cover the land-holders who allow their properties to be used for the fundraiser. What can the minister do to help?

Mr MACKENROTH: The government has instituted a number of reforms by the Attorney-General in relation to public liability insurance or tort law reform which we believe will enable insurance companies to offer insurance to not-for-profit organisations in Queensland.

In relation to those changes, all states and the Commonwealth have met with the Insurance Council of Australia and we have expressed our view that it is about time now that the insurance company really stepped up to the plate and started to offer the insurance. The company tells us that its problem is it cannot get reinsurance overseas. What the government offers not-for-profit

organisations through AON Risk Services is that AON will find insurance for them. If AON cannot place a not-for-profit organisation, Suncorp has said it will step in and be the insurer of last resort, providing that it can get reinsurance for that risk, and that reinsurance must come from overseas.

So there are a very small number of risks at this stage that are unable to be insured. Unless overseas reinsurers are prepared to stand behind the insurance companies, I am afraid there is nothing that we can do at all.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Australian Magnesium Corporation

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.30 a.m.), by leave: In announcements to the Australian Stock Exchange on 17 April 2003 and 26 May 2003, AMC has disclosed to the market that it has been unable to conclude a fixed price contract with Leightons; Fluor (US) has been engaged to review the project costs; it would require interim funding from its stakeholders; and in order for the project to proceed AMC would need to secure a new equity partner. I understand that AMC has been in discussions with potential new equity partners since these announcements.

AMC has today sought a trading halt. I understand that it has advised the Stock Exchange accordingly. It would be inappropriate to comment further on the state of play with the AMC project until there has been an opportunity for further discussions with the company after a public announcement by the company. I understand that that will be done later this week. The government will continue to honour its obligations to the project while, at the same time, taking steps to protect its position as a secured creditor. The government has convened a group of senior advisers to consider all options to ensure the state's interests are protected.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

State Budget

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 a.m.): There is no greater indicator of the failure of the Beattie Labor government than Queensland's current unemployment rate. There is no greater indicator of this government's failure than its lingering promise of a five per cent unemployment rate, which it has consistently failed to achieve. On 26 June this year the Beattie Labor government will mark five years in office. That is the date by which the Premier said he wanted to achieve a five per cent unemployment rate.

Budget Paper No. 2, which will be released by the Treasurer this afternoon, will contain the state government's projected unemployment rate for 2003-04. It is a safe bet that this year Queensland will still have the highest unemployment rate in mainland Australia. That will be an illustration of the failure of the Beattie Labor government. It will be an illustration of the way rhetoric has taken over from the delivery of so many promises by the Premier and this government.

This afternoon there will also be an indication of the budget situation in the third budget deficit in a row. For the last three years Treasurer Mackenroth has forecast a state budget surplus, but for the last three years he has delivered a deficit. If the Treasurer this afternoon tries to predict a surplus yet again then he can expect to be greeted with scepticism by all Queenslanders—and so he should be.

Even though the Treasurer initially predicted that the current financial year would end with a \$23 million surplus, in the mid-year budget review that prediction was revised to a \$741 million deficit. To reach that \$741 million deficit figure the Treasurer had to forecast some marked increases in revenue—increases in revenue that are unlikely to be achieved in reality.

Budget Paper No. 2 will contain the state government's projected surplus for 2003-04 as well as the actual deficit for 2002-03. It will be interesting to see. I think the House can expect the Treasurer to continue the strategy he has adopted in the previous three budgets of projecting a figure that simply cannot and will not be achieved.

We will also see this afternoon in Budget Paper No. 4 the government's budgeted figure for its Capital Works Program. Capital works are pivotal to generating employment in Queensland. Capital works expenditure is the amount to be spent on roads, hospitals, schools and public housing in the year ahead. For three budgets in a row the current Treasurer has failed to spend

what he said he would spend on capital works. Despite the promises, despite the figures that have been included in the budgets—figures which give the picture that the government will invest in those much-needed areas of service delivery—that money remains unspent at the end of the past three years.

When the Treasurer comes in here this afternoon, as he almost inevitably will, and promises another big capital works budget, the people of Queensland should treat that promise and those budget figures with due scepticism. For three years in a row that money has not been spent. For three years in a row the budget has been padded out with capital works figures that have not been realised. For three years in a row the budget has promised an injection of badly needed capital into roads, hospitals, schools and public housing, yet that injection of capital has not eventuated. That is dishonest and deceitful.

Mr Terry Sullivan interjected.

Mr SEENEY: The figures are there for the member for Stafford to see. He should have a look at the financial figures, not just the budget figures that the Treasurer brings into the House this afternoon or that he has brought in in the previous three years. He should take the budget figures and compare them with the actuals. He should compare the budget figures for the last three years with the actuals. Not once in the last three years have the budgeted figures for capital works been spent, as we have seen when the actual figures have been made available for the parliament to consider—not once.

How can this parliament or the people of Queensland expect that this year will be any different? The member for Stafford might like to have a look, before the Treasurer comes into the House this afternoon with this year's budget, at the previous three budgets that the Treasurer has brought down and look at the projected surplus figures. For three years in a row the Treasurer has projected a surplus that eventually became a deficit. The budget process has become a farce in that respect.

The picture painted every year by this government in its budget documents is never delivered in reality. It has not been delivered in reality over the last three years. There is no indication that this year will be any different. There is no indication that the budget the Treasurer will present this afternoon will be realised when the actual figures are made available later in the financial year.

The mid-year budget review is a classic case in point. The mid-year budget review revised taxation receipts expected for this financial year upwards to the tune of \$466 million—that is \$466 million extra that the Treasurer had to write into the mid-year budget review to try to achieve his budgeted surplus. On top of that we have seen hidden taxes, fees, fines and charges, including the ambulance levy that was jammed through this House last week.

On top of that we have seen the raids on government corporations that were so extensively made public in the last couple of weeks. The Treasurer said that he had been forced to raid the government owned corporations to fund a pre-election war chest. That is what he said to the *Australian Financial Review* on 30 May this year. He called them special dividends. They were created and designed to fill in the black hole in the budget. Those special dividends include \$165 million set to be extracted from government owned power corporations. The companies will bring forward dividends by 18 months. They are special dividends; they are not the normal dividends that those corporations pay in profit. They are special dividends that have been created by incurring debt that every Queenslander will have to repay. There is nowhere else that that \$165 million can come from except out of the pockets of every Queenslander.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr SEENEY: Out of the pockets of the Queenslanders that the member for Lytton represents so callously and carelessly. It is the constituents of members such as the member for Lytton who will, unknowingly in lots of cases, repay this \$165 million every time they pay their power bills for years to come.

The Ports Corporation booked a lease agreement which allowed a return to shareholding ministers of \$215 million—\$215 million! That is on top of the \$30 million from Energex, the \$20 million from Ergon, the \$10 million from Q-Fleet and \$10 million from DPI Forestry. This is the sort of stuff that Alan Bond and Christopher Skase would be proud of. This is 'Mackonomics' at its best. A new term has been coined to properly illustrate just what is going on in terms of Queensland finances—'Mackonomics'—and it is a term that Queenslanders will come to dread as they repay this debt in the years ahead.

These figures are over and above the budgeted figure for distributions that the government expects to receive this year—that is, \$869 million which was revised upwards in the mid-year review to \$908 million. Add those two figures together and it means that we are expecting the government to collect at least \$1,358 million in dividends in the 2002-03 year. We expect to see similar figures collected next financial year, and we will see that illustrated in today's budget. Thus far we know of the next installation of special dividends—\$30 million from Energex and \$20 million from Ergon—that have been projected. The Treasurer's inability to get any forecast correct is something that the people of Queensland and this parliament should be aware of when we consider the budget documents this afternoon. He expected a surplus of \$29 million in 2000-01 and delivered a deficit of \$850 million. He expected a surplus of \$24 million in 2001-02 and delivered a deficit of \$894 million. The budget figures that the Treasurer will present this afternoon cannot be taken seriously.

Time expired.

Federal Government, Families Policy

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (11.41 a.m.): The Howard government once again chose to ignore the needs of working women and their children. I receive lots of letters and calls regarding the child-care crisis in my electorate, but I am not alone. There is currently a shortage of at least 50,000 child-care places across the country. With a figure like that, one would think the federal government would have child care as a high priority. I have to inform honourable members that this is not so. In the recent federal budget there were no new family day care places, no new outside school hour places and no initiatives to encourage new child-care services in undersupplied or disadvantaged areas. A shortage of some 50,000 child-care places around the country and what does the Howard government give us? Nothing, not one extra place!

I received a letter from a constituent, which states—

As a mother of a five year old and 20 month old twins I am looking to re-enter the work force. However, I have a problem. I cannot access child care for my twins. I have been on several waiting lists for a total of 16 months. I have attempted to access all types of care including long day care centres, occasional care centres, family day care and I even investigated employing a nanny. This situation is placing more and more mothers on welfare who would like to be earning their own keep and paying taxes.

I phoned this constituent and told her the bad news. I informed her that the federal government controlled the number of child-care places and that for the past three years it has refused to allocate new places. I am pleased to say that this has only made her more determined to fight for better child-care services, and I will be right there alongside her.

The Howard government has made it quite clear that it would prefer women to leave the work force after having children. One of the first things it did when elected to government was to slash \$850 million from the child-care budget. The shortage of child-care places is having major effects on women who are finding it increasingly difficult to balance work and family responsibilities. In the end, this affects all of the family. Since 1996 the funding and support for women's peak groups have been slashed by the Howard government. In 2003 only four funded women's groups remain to represent the interests of all Australian women to the federal government.

When talking about funding for women's services, the federal government has a terrible track record. The Howard government ripped \$10 million from women's services not for child abuse prevention, not for child-care places, not for domestic and family violence prevention programs but \$10 million for a fridge magnet. That is right: the money for the terrorist fridge magnet that I have yet to see on anyone's fridge was slashed from the services that support women, children and families. Another area where the Howard government has let families down is child abuse.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Ms STONE: That is right, Minister. I have not seen a terrorist in my fridge either.

One would think that in the current climate this would be a high priority for the Howard government. Wrong! On the day the federal budget was handed down the Prime Minister stated that he would rather spend \$60 million to \$100 million on early intervention into child abuse than hold a royal commission into child abuse. I am sure that all members think that that is great news. But let us look at the federal budget and get the real picture. Last year the Howard government spent \$3.5 million on child abuse prevention. This year it has committed only \$4 million. So where are the Howard government's priorities? They certainly are not in health, as can be seen by the destruction of Medicare. They are not in education; one just has to ask any university student. Let me tell members where the priorities are. Let me tell members where \$30 million is being spent by

the Howard government—that is, on the upgrading of the VIP lounge at the Canberra airport. That is right: nearly 10 times the amount of money that is spent on child abuse prevention will be spent on the airport lounge for the Prime Minister, perhaps the Governor-General and of course the federal Treasurer. They will use it. Somehow I do not expect to see many children being cared for in that lounge.

When it comes to supporting women and families, the Howard government fails. In Queensland approximately 43 per cent of women are mothers and 13 per cent are single parents. It is well known that women have not achieved the same level of financial independence as men, and this is largely due to their role as the primary carer which of course impacts on their work force participation. Unlike the federal government, the Beattie government is committed to exploring ways to support mothers balance their work, family and lifestyle commitments. It is committed to supporting all of the family. Since 1996 how many times has the Prime Minister spoken on women's issues? The answer is zero. The Prime Minister and his government do not understand the struggles of everyday families. They are so out of touch. They are a government that is out of touch and do not understand the families in my electorate of Springwood. When it comes to supporting women and families, the Howard government gets a big F, and that F is for failure.

Sandstone Point Recreational Reserve

Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (11.46 a.m.): Today I bring to the attention of parliament a state government Community Jobs Plan under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative in the electorate of Pumicestone, which I represent, which has seen local residents volunteer to work alongside paid job seekers in an effort to identify and eradicate noxious weeds and exotics and replace them with native species on public land known as the Sandstone Point Recreational Reserve. The project is an example of a strong community spirit and began when members of the Sandstone Point Community Association Inc. applied for and received a \$24,000 grant from the federal government's Natural Heritage Trust Envirofund, which aims to restore and/or improve the natural environment.

The state government's Department of Employment and Training, while not nominating the project, is contributing just over \$124,100 to fund the wages of the Community Jobs Plan personnel for approximately 19 weeks. During that time the 10 trainees—Jeffery Althaus, John Armstrong, Shaun Flanagan, Adam Luck, Nick Pickering, Peter Vogler, Gordon Waye, Graham Hill, Felicity Walker and Brian Coffee—will all gain accredited skills to help them in their quest to find full-time employment after the completion of this project. Accredited skills include the identification and removal of noxious weeds, planting techniques, stabilising of erosion-prone areas, mulching, the use of hand-held and power tools, planning, teamwork, problem solving and negotiation skills. They will also receive Job Search training and resume and interview preparation through the Human Resources Department of the Caboolture Shire Council. The council has allocated around \$10,000 to the project in the form of materials, equipment, various indigenous plant species—some of which have caused debate among residents over their suitability—and a parks and gardens supervisor, Mr Shane Lampard, to oversee the project.

This project is a good example of how the three levels of government can work together with communities to enhance local environments and amenities. A total of 32 volunteers, mainly members of the Sandstone Point Community Association—including Mike and Mary O'Reilly, Alice Day, Sharyn and Bruce Giles, Guy and Kathy Kendall, Brian Davis, John Lowe, Martin and Heather White, Trevor Mann, Natalie Percy, Rachel and Tony Kippen, Jennifer and Ian Neville, John Naylor, Frank and Linda Bratovic, Karen Russ and Brodie Cotton, Carol Muller, John White, Bill and Jan Eberhardt, Graham Hughes, Nikki Steel, David Ferguson and Garth and Di Wiseman—are involved in the foreshore revegetation project. Spokesperson for the volunteers, Mr Bill Eberhardt, who like others feels very strongly about the preservation of the foreshore, said that the aim of the project was to restore the foreshore environment as much as humanly possible to its natural state without adversely affecting anyone's beautiful sea views. Bill invited me to view first hand the work being done by the volunteers. Mr Andrew Bradshaw from the Department of Employment and Training arranged for seven of the 10 trainees to be on site at the time. The other three were at training seminars.

Andrew and I added our congratulations to the positive partnerships formed between the trainees and volunteers and the three levels of government. The volunteer efforts have been valued at around \$18,000, which brings the total of the project to over \$175,000. This is the fourth revegetation project supervised by the council with funding from the state government's

Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Community Jobs Plan. I have been able to visit and congratulate the participants.

Revegetation projects on Woorim foreshore on Bribie Island, Platypus Creek Park in Caboolture South, and Sheep Station Creek in Burpengary have all resulted in local areas being restored under the state government's \$470 million Community Jobs Plan, which will generate more than 56,000 jobs over the next six years. I encourage other community groups to nominate other future environmental restoration projects in their local area that may be judged worthy of attracting all levels of government funding.

Dr W. Glasson

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (11.51 a.m.): I have much pleasure in drawing the attention of the House to the fact that the Australian Medical Association made a very important and proper decision over the weekend in appointing Queensland ophthalmologist Dr Bill Glasson to succeed Dr Kerry Phelps as President of the Australian Medical Association. There is nobody with better credentials than Dr Bill Glasson. This man is very kind, generous and considerate. His credentials for this position are exemplary. His background reflects this. It is clearly illustrated by his understanding of the needs of those less fortunate than himself. He has a grounding in the school of life.

Dr Bill Glasson was born on 2 January 1953 in Winton in western Queensland to humble and loving parents—Bill Glasson Snr and the late Mrs Shirley Glasson, his darling, caring mother—who instilled many of the qualities in him that stand him in the halls of honour of the medical profession that he loves and cherishes in making the lives of other people better. Bill Glasson Snr, the member for Gregory before me, must be an extremely proud man, as I can assure him that the whole of western Queensland is fiercely proud of Dr Glasson's forthright, no-nonsense approach to his professional responsibilities and his medicine, but more importantly to the specialist area of ophthalmology that he dearly loves to practise.

Dr Glasson will take a very important line when he takes up this role as Australian Medical Association president. A communique released yesterday stated—

The newly-elected national president of the ... (AMA) has commenced his tenure by criticising the Federal Government's performance on health issues.

William Glasson, an ophthalmologist from Queensland, was elected as Kerry Phelps' successor ...

Dr Glasson says the policy direction of the AMA will not change under his leadership, but he has taken a swipe at the Government, describing its handling of health as lackadaisical.

He is particularly opposed to suggested changes outlined in the Budget for the training of doctors in regional areas.

I spoke with Dr Glasson this morning. He told me that the areas he will address include the shortage of doctors in country areas, the problem of underfunded scholarships, problems in the bush and people from the bush being trained as doctors so they can go back to the bush—home-grown kids.

As I said, Dr Glasson was born in Winton in 1953. He was educated by his mother and governesses to year 7, and then he was sent to the Church of England Grammar School in Brisbane, better known as Churchie, where he completed his education. On completion of his education he attended the University of Queensland. After his completion of medicine he practised on the Darling Downs for some three years. He did a year at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane and then went off to London to study ophthalmology and further his postgraduate studies. On returning to Australia he practised at the Mater Hospital in Brisbane. He also did work with the Army. His postgraduate business now takes him to places such as Kingaroy and the central west of Queensland, where he practises his work as an ophthalmologist.

Queensland is very fortunate to have a man of his calibre to fill this position. He understands what medicine is all about in remote areas of the state and in Australia as a whole. I believe that he will address some very complex areas in medicine over the coming years. He knows what it is like to go without. He knows the hardships that country people and people from all over the nation are confronted with. As he said to me this morning, he will be out of the state for about two days a week as his duties will take him to Canberra. He intends to travel right around the nation to look first hand at ways the Australian Medical Association can make the medical profession better for the people of Australia—to give them a quality profession, regardless of whether it be doctors, dentists, pharmacists and so on. I wish this man every success. He will do Queensland proud.

Maleny

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (11.56 a.m.): This morning I rise to put on record the issues facing the township of Maleny. It is a difficult time for Maleny as it struggles to retain its rural identity and its strong sense of community. The four main issues as I see them are the water pipeline, the proposed supermarket developments, the Master Planned Community and the lack of community facilities.

At the outset I need to say that the Maleny community, and especially those taking a leading role on these issues, are not antidevelopment. The whole philosophy that community members expound is sustainable development. Further to this, they also ask that those in charge of planning for our communities think outside the square and look at opportunities to trial new methods of reducing our impact on the environment.

Originally, Caloundra council decided to build a pipeline from Landers Shute to Maleny—supposedly to ensure a water supply to the existing town residents. Some people believe it is actually to allow large-scale residential development to occur in the future, which would turn Maleny from being a community into a dormitory suburb for Brisbane and Caloundra.

The council-commissioned Brown and Root report did not look at all options and certainly did not look at sustainable measures such as raising the weir, installing water tanks or recycling water. The Maleny Water Group prepared its own report, which contrasted and in some cases contradicted the council's report, but it has been ignored and, even worse, denigrated.

The Local Government Minister asked the Maleny Water Group to demonstrate community support. In just four weeks, over 2,000 local people signed a petition asking for the government not to approve the subsidy until a comprehensive study is undertaken which identifies all water options and takes into consideration sustainability factors. The Local Government Minister then asked council to take the petitioners' views into consideration and look again at the entire water pipeline proposal. Council, at best, undertook a very cursory public consultation process, with a cynical reformation of the Citizens Advisory Group, whose requests and advice were summarily ignored. I am exceedingly disappointed with Mayor Don Aldous for his lack of leadership on this important issue and with Councillor Pauline Clayton for her total disregard of the Maleny community's wishes. Council has finally started a sustainable integrated water plan study, and I would ask that this be done prior to any further work being done on the pipeline. It may well turn out that the pipeline is required, but until all options are studied an informed decision cannot be made.

Town planning concerns, and specifically the proposal for two new supermarkets, are worrying residents. Maleny is a rural town whose main street is the hub of shopping and social life. The shops are on the whole independent, family-run small businesses and community-run cooperatives, which do their best to supply everything that we could possibly need. Rod and Narelle Thamm's drapery and menswear stores, Matthew and Denise Howard's newsagency, Rob and Sam Outridge's IGA supermarket and other businesses hire local people and are part of the community. They give their staff latitude to help out with community events and they donate goods to fundraisers. Quite frankly, I do not think there has been one community fundraiser that the IGA has not provided major prizes or sponsorship for. Anyone who thinks Coles or Woolworths would offer the same level of support should think again.

Poor planning decisions from the late 1980s are to blame, but it does not appear that any steps have been taken to rectify the problem. Maybe if the Caloundra council had actually done its IPA planning on time, things would be different. It is hard to speculate, but I encourage the council to take the opportunity to re-examine the DCP.

The master planned community is worrying a lot of people. I am not looking forward to having the council as a developer, because I am not sure that it can be trusted. What started off as a plan for a golf course has turned into a mammoth housing development with a community precinct as the carrot being dangled to allow the full-scale development of the green hills at the entrance to Maleny. The council is trying to do some community planning, but it is not addressing the issues and it is certainly not answering all the questions. That is not good enough.

Finally, Maleny is suffering from a lack of community facilities. The closing down of the scout building, which housed both the Scouts and the Maleny flexi-school, has started a process whereby the community is trying to work out a way of accommodating a number of community organisations, especially those that are directed at helping our youth. Now, the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre is at risk. This centre was officially opened by Mayor Don Aldous and me. I

have personally asked the mayor to step in and help by getting the council to take on the trusteeship of the land, but he has not been able to do so.

The local councillor has said that the council does not see that there is a need for any more community land in Maleny. She must be walking around with her eyes closed. To defend her decision, the councillor even told me that the council had a policy of not taking on any more trusteeships for land. That was simply not true. If the council wanted to, it could take it on. How much would it cost? Seventy-five dollars a year!

The neighbourhood centre is a base for so many community programs—Commonwealth, state and local government projects. It provides counselling and emergency relief, helps victims of domestic violence—all of these things. I call on the council to get in behind it and help save the neighbourhood centre.

I understand that sometimes elected representatives have to support policies or proposals that are unpalatable to parts of the community. But the overriding consideration should always be whether or not the decision is for the greater good. The community ambulance cover scheme is an example of this. However, this council, and especially the local councillor, have consistently shown their complete and utter disregard for the community's concerns and their unwillingness to meaningfully consult with the community. I call on the Caloundra council to change its approach to making decisions that impact on Maleny, to please consult, to please listen and to not let the heart of Maleny be ripped out.

Gold Coast Schoolies Committee

Mr BELL (Surfers Paradise—Ind) (12.01 p.m.): On 15 May this year, the Premier tabled in this House a list of the 12-person board of the Gold Coast schoolies committee. At that time, the Premier said that the numbers of the board might be increased by one or two. Then last Tuesday, in answer to a question from me, the Premier urged me to cooperate with and to assist that board, even though I had no input whatsoever into its personnel.

I am happy to give an undertaking to the House that I will cooperate with that schoolies board, because most certainly I want to see the best outcomes for the electorate of Surfers Paradise and the Gold Coast as a whole. But in exchange, I would say to the Premier: perhaps he should listen to the local member. Perhaps he should have appointed people who work and live or who work or live in the central Surfers Paradise area. At least some members of the board should have that particular qualification, because with the arguable exception of the representative of the Gold Coast Tourism Bureau, not one person on that 12-person board works or lives in central Surfers Paradise.

I stress that I do not seek a berth on that board. I certainly do not have the time to give that board the attention that the circumstances of the matter certainly merit. Indeed, if the local member were a member of that board, he would be the foil for all of the complaints in the Surfers Paradise area about schoolies.

But there is a flaw in the appointment of the personnel who have been appointed to this board. The people concerned, many of whom are known to me, are fine people. But they are also busy people with lots of other tasks. It is very difficult for an ordinary citizen to be able to make contact with the existing board members to give their input and their ideas.

I must rebut the Premier's statement to this House last week when he said that the schoolies festival is a citywide Gold Coast activity. The blindest person could see that 95 per cent of the schoolies activity takes place in central Surfers Paradise and 95 per cent of the accommodation provided for schoolies extends from Main Beach through Surfers Paradise to the northern half of Broadbeach, which is all within the electorate of Surfers Paradise. One pointer is that the whole of the 600 schoolies volunteers are all deployed in central Surfers Paradise.

Also in answer to the question last week, the Premier implied that I had been consulted by this Labor task force that he appointed. I looked at the Premier's wording and it was very careful. I cannot say that he is technically incorrect in what he said to the House. However, any implication that I had made a submission to the task force was totally wrong. In fact, I had made a submission earlier before the task force was ever appointed to Dr Keliher of the Premier's Department. The task force did not come anywhere near me, nor did it ask for any submissions, nor did it offer any consultation to me as the local member.

When the community cabinet was held on the Gold Coast, I spoke personally with the Premier, pointing out that I was aggrieved that I had been omitted from that task force. He was

very reassuring to me and he said that he had personally asked Minister Rose, as chairman of the task force, to consult with me as the local member. The consultation was exactly nought—zero. If that is consultation, then it leaves a great deal to be desired.

There is a lot of room for improvement. The matter could be handled very much better. The best way of starting would be right now by appointing two extra board members who live or work in the Surfers Paradise CBD.

Manufacturing Industry, Toowoomba

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (12.06 p.m.): Last Friday morning at Toowoomba Metal Technologies—formerly the Toowoomba Foundry—on behalf of the Hon. Tom Barton, the Minister for State Development, a comprehensive package was launched by me that provides a clear commitment from the Queensland government to drive the growth of the manufacturing sector in our state. Manufacturing is one of the most vital sectors of Queensland's economic landscape. Queensland's manufacturers employ over 182,000 people and contribute more than \$10 billion to the economy. In fact, manufacturing is the second largest full-time employer in the state after retail. It is also a high-performance sector of our economy, growing more rapidly than other sectors in the rest of Australia, with output amounting to almost as much as mining and agriculture combined.

Unfortunately, Queensland's manufacturers have traditionally not received the recognition that they deserve. Last Friday, in partnership with Queensland Manufacturers, the implementation of Australia's most comprehensive plan to develop the manufacturing sector was launched. The ideas behind the plan have come from manufacturers themselves, through the hard work of the members of the manufacturing leaders group. Through this group, the major private sector associations representing manufacturers, the Australian Industry Group and Commerce Queensland, also provided input alongside senior union figures and academics. Mr Paul Russell, from the Australian Industry Group, who has been a valuable member of the manufacturing leaders group from the outset, also spoke. We are calling the manufacturing development plan Making Queensland's Future. It may be a play on words, but it highlights the serious and important issue of actively planning for the future role of the manufacturing sector.

I would like to say a few words about the importance of the manufacturing sector in Toowoomba. Manufacturing is a key driver of Toowoomba's economy, contributing over \$455 million and employing over 12,000 Queenslanders. It includes a diverse mix of business activity, including machinery and equipment manufacturing, meat processing, fibre composite processing, metal product manufacturing and wine production. At the launch of the plan, we were fortunate to hear Craig Fisher, who is the engineering manager for Toowoomba Metal Technologies. He talked about the company's success in the cast iron manufacturing industry. Toowoomba Metal Technologies is a regional manufacturing success story with an annual turnover of \$38 million. The company produces a range of heavy transport products that leave the shores of Queensland at the rate of 15 containers a month to overseas markets.

Making Queensland's Future invites industry to participate in projects that highlight best practice and offer models for others to emulate. The Queensland government has committed \$121,000 to help Toowoomba agricultural equipment manufacturers to break into new markets. Local companies will be working together to develop new products for international markets, including mining, construction, waste management and transport. This will further strengthen their regional supply chains and demonstrate to other industries the benefits of collaboration. The project will also help build more competitive regional companies by identifying and developing more effective and environmentally friendly manufacturing processes.

Toowoomba is also participating in a boat building project which showcases the advantages of adopting new technologies and strengthening supply chains between manufacturers and technology and research and development organisations.

Toowoomba based company, Buchanan Advanced Composites, is one of four companies in the fibre composite design and development project. The Queensland government is backing the important project with a \$167,200 grant. The project will investigate the application of advanced technologies and structural performance testing in constructing recreational boats made from fibre composite materials.

Making Queensland's Future makes available \$26 million over the next four years to make our vision for manufacturing a reality. It comprises new initiatives as well as a refocusing and enhancement of existing programs. Certainly Making Queensland's Future is the most exciting

plan for manufacturers anywhere in this country. State development will partner with other government agencies and industry to make sure that the manufacturers will be able to access the right people and the right skills to keep them at the leading edge.

We are bringing together the stakeholder government departments, including the Department of Employment and Training, Education Queensland, the Department of Innovation and Information Economy and the Environmental Protection Agency to deliver the programs and ensure a coordinated approach. These programs include initiatives that will focus on building exports and collaboration; profiling manufacturing and focusing on skills and training; attracting investment and growing regional strength; driving innovation; doing business in a green world; and developing international competitiveness.

Making Queensland's Future details a range of practical programs that will be available to position Toowoomba manufacturers to target and secure major new contracts through initiatives that improve their understanding of supply chains, enhance their marketing skills and promote alliance contracting.

These are just some of the many initiatives that will help to elevate manufacturing performances throughout Queensland. Through making Queensland's future, we can deliver a bright, prosperous and sustainable future for our manufacturing sector.

Public Service, Paid Maternity Leave

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Lib) (12.11 p.m.): In the lead-up to the 1995 state election, the Goss government signed a deal with the Public Sector Union to introduce 12 weeks paid maternity leave for women in the Public Service. The Goss government promised to introduce this and then lost that 1995 election.

I thought it was very telling when I asked the minister for the status of women, Ms Edmond, this morning about her non-delivery of that promise over six budgets—and it is not in this one either I know; I have the information that it is not—when she replied, 'Well, we didn't become the government'.

Mr McNamara: You did.

Mrs SHELDON: Yes, and I will deal with that in just a moment, my friend.

Evidently if one does not win initially, when one then does win and becomes a government, one does not carry out the promises made. I say to the electorate: be very wary of anything that Labor promises the public before the next election because if they do not win when they get back into power it will be absolute history.

The member for Hervey Bay was quite right: the Goss government lost that election and I became the Treasurer and Minister for Women's Affairs. When I looked at this issue of paid maternity leave, because it is a concept I happen to support, I found that this deal between Labor and the union had been absolutely, totally uncoded. It was not the only thing that had been uncoded but this issue had been totally uncoded. So I then looked around to see where we could get some money to cost it and finally I funded it myself, as Treasurer, through the relevant department for six weeks at an estimated cost of between \$15 million to \$17 million a year. At the next election we would have fulfilled the 12-week promise because we had money aside to fund the next six weeks that would have made it 12 weeks.

I would just like to show how Labor ridiculed me as the minister for not introducing the 12 weeks that they had promised. The then shadow minister for women's affairs was Judy Spence, and she told the *Courier Mail* on 14 May 1996—

Women would be forced to re-enter the workforce early and to find child care facilities.

She claimed that the average woman would be out of pocket to the tune of \$3,000 for the six weeks they would not be paid. I say to the minister that nothing has changed. She also said in the *Courier Mail* on 27 March 1996, when she was the state opposition spokeswoman on women's issues, that the welfare of women was being used as a 'political football'—

This government—

which was our government—

is good on rhetoric but when it comes to improving the economic base for families by providing an environment where working women can have children, they go to water.

I just wonder what has happened to the Labor Party since it has been the government since 1998 because, by golly, it has sure gone to water on this issue.

We have a record number of Labor women in this house. I am amazed they have not been able to prevail on their female Labor minister on the status of women to deliver at least the extra six weeks. But obviously the Labor women have no clout because she has not delivered and she has very little clout either. She cannot deliver on health, and she sure cannot deliver on women's issues.

Ms Spence also went on to say—

If we want to keep our nurses and teachers and therapists in the public service, we need to ensure we keep our competitive advantage with the private sector where paid maternity leave and workplace child care are offered.

I totally support what the minister said. Why has she not delivered and why has the government not delivered?

The Leader of the House, Anna Bligh, also called on me to honour the 12 weeks deal Labor struck with the Public Service Union and lodged questions on notice asking—

When will paid maternity leave be extended to 12 weeks?

That was 11 July 1996. I say to the minister that it is now 3 June 2003, and the minister has not delivered a thing in this budget or in previous budgets on this issue.

Today the Premier, via the Treasurer, will hand down the sixth budget of this Labor government, and that sixth budget makes no provision to honour the Labor 12-week paid maternity leave commitment that ministers Bligh and Spence once seemed so passionate about. At a time when Wendy Edmond is complaining there is a nurse shortage, I say to her that now is the appropriate time to look at expanding that paid maternity leave program. Now is the appropriate time to fund it and they will attract more women back into nursing sector, back into the Public Service, back into the areas where we desperately do need women.

Time expired.

Townsville Maritime Museum

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (12.16 p.m.): I rise today to speak of things educational, particularly with respect to an innovative project conducted by a third year JCU education student in partnership with the Townsville Maritime Museum. In an age where education is paramount for all young people, we need as many innovative and positive measures as possible to keep up with the rapidly changing society.

But in speaking of all things education, and on the eve of our state budget, it galls me to listen to the claptrap being peddled by the federal members trying to sell yet another appalling whack at our essential services. How can they sleep at night knowing that once again education is to be denied to the largest contingent of Australian society, namely the working class. Even the Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee has publicly expressed concerns about last month's federal budget because low-income earners will not be protected under the sweeping reforms to education.

Students and their families will be loaded up with massive debt and the cost to full fee paying students will mean university education will be beyond the reach of all but the very wealthy. The funding offered by the Howard government comes with no guarantees for the future because there is no indexation to ensure the new payments keep pace with inflation. The scholarships on offer for disadvantaged students are not big enough and nor are there enough of them.

How can federal members, including the member for Herbert, say that thousands more young people will have the chance of a university education? It is nothing but a lie. Does he not know that Australians are paying more already to go to university than students in most OECD countries, but cannot expect anything like the earning capacity that most other graduates enjoy.

Under the Howard government the contribution students and their families make to the cost of higher education has increased 85 per cent, putting Australia just below the United States in terms of private funding for universities, and it does not end there. Expenditure on private schools is set to grow rapidly, which is worsening the position for government schools enormously. This year private schools will receive \$3.2 billion. These reforms are not only a blow to government schools, but they represent major restructuring of how private schools operate, and the relationship between the government and the private sectors.

As Roy Martin, the federal research officer from the Australian Education Union says, at first glance, the concept of basing private school funding on the socio-economic composition of a school appears, as a measure, compatible with principles of social justice. It can be sold as a 'needs based' model, and appeal to a sense of fairness. This is just a smokescreen. First, guarantees are given that no school will be worse off, so by 2003 the government will provide an additional \$340 million to non-Catholic private schools to ensure support from the private sector. The proposals are yet another way of increasing funding to private schools at the cost of government schools. At the same time the federal government continues to take money out of government schools through the inequitable enrolment benchmark adjustment.

Second, the real lie to the falseness of the claim that it is needs based is shown by the fact that wealthy schools, many of which have resource levels well above government schools, will continue to receive government largesse. There will be a basic entitlement to ensure that elitism and advantage continues to be subsidised. In fact, the wealthiest primary schools will receive an increase of over \$70 per student. What it does is create a funding model based on per student funding and ignores the needs and resources of schools and school communities.

Ms Stone: They're out of touch.

Ms NELSON-CARR: They are out of touch. I am appalled, so let me move to a positive story.

Earlier this year, as I said, a student from JCU, Natalie, and Vivienne Moran, the curator at the Townsville Maritime Museum, had to complete 50 hours of community service as a component of the Bachelor of Education. What a great idea! Participating in the community means being better informed and more involved, and it can only benefit the teaching profession. So Natalie, with the curator, Vivienne, constructed a package for the Townsville museum, and here it is. It is a CD-ROM called *Discover the Lighthouse of Learning*. This is a very flexible and innovative tool that can be used with social education and the maritime museum.

Most of us have this idea that museums are old fuddy-duddy places that do not have a place within our education sector. This particular tool goes a long way to dispelling that myth, and I believe this package will go a long way to assisting students to come to terms with what we actually have in our museums. I will be giving it to the Parliamentary Library for use in Brisbane so that other people might be able to tap into what the Townsville museum offers, as well as innovative ideas from the social education sector coming out of James Cook University. I congratulate both Natalie and Vivienne on a very worthwhile package, and I wish them both well in the future.

Parliamentary Standards

Mr FLYNN (Lockyer—ONP) (12.21 p.m.): Much was made in this parliament at the beginning of this term by the Premier, who indicated a desire for a better, cleaner parliament, and I think we have gone some way towards achieving that in comparison with the 49th Parliament. Some noise has been made by the opposition as well.

Queensland parliament's reputation is lying in the gutter, where it was recently thrown by both the government and the opposition. Regardless of any position held in connection with Dr Peter Hollingworth, using the issue in a manner of having the effect of prolonging discomfort to all involved and maximising political points is disgraceful, despicable behaviour, demonstrative of the hypocrisy of the major parties.

Over the days since the vice-regal office issue reached a crescendo, both the government and the opposition have literally wallowed in sewage, thrashing around in an orgy of political hypocrisy. In an interjection in the House last Thursday night I heard a government member call out 'positive paedophile politics'. This was an obvious aside at the Leader of the Opposition, referring to his positive politics strategy announced in parliament when he assumed his present role.

Much has been said in the House and outside by both the government and the opposition, which should be working together to combat child abuse. Most of the comments from the government appear to be doing nothing positive, being cheap references to the standards assumed by the opposition. Of course, the opposition is guilty of similar conduct. This serves only to detract from the really important issue at hand, and that is the abuse of our young children.

I do not believe that any person in this House is not serious about their disgust at the behaviour of paedophiles, but I would expect that the feelings and the welfare of abused people

would come before point scoring. If we want to have a high regard for the integrity of this institution and its members, perhaps we can lift our game and pick the parliament's reputation and integrity up out of the gutter.

Education Facilities, Sunshine Coast

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (12.23 p.m.): I rise proudly to speak to the education node which is fast becoming a happening thing on the Sunshine Coast within my electorate of Kawana. I would like to start by drawing to the attention of the House a great success story of the Mooloolaba State Primary School, which has managed to reduce its water consumption by more than 80 per cent and in so doing reduce its water charges from \$14,400 per year to \$2,400 per year—quite a saving. I know the minister is well aware of this, as I have written to her following Gary Sarburg, the manager of Maroochy Water Services, bringing to my attention what a marvellous thing the school has done. While Mooloolaba is not in my electorate—it is just outside of my electorate—there are residents within my electorate who attend this school.

I would also like to place on the public record my congratulations to the Mountain Creek State High School, as it is a school that has always valued excellence and has been committed to innovation and best practice. In the year 2000-01 it was named as one of six winners in the inaugural Showcase for Excellence Awards. Since then, it has decided to participate in trying to achieve accreditation from the European Council of International Schools program, and it was granted. So that was a great positive for the school.

Mountain Creek State High School last year continued to distinguish itself as one of Queensland's most successful secondary schools, with a current enrolment of close to 2,000 people. It is Queensland's fourth largest school. Greg Peach is the principal of that school. I know that the minister is always keen to keep an eye on him because he does such a marvellous job.

Buderim Mountain State School also last year won an award in recognition of its Helping Boys Face the Future with Confidence program. It was due to a group of interested parents who formed a boys education group at the school to implement strategies that will improve the attitude, behaviour and academic performance of male students. Their efforts complement and support the work of teachers in increasing the level of education success for boys at the Buderim Mountain State School.

Also, the Kawana Waters State High School won recognition for its international program. Kawana Waters State High School is one of the largest state providers of matriculation to international students in Queensland through a partnership with the Qi Lu Training College in China. International students are valued members of Education Queensland's learning community and, indeed, the whole Sunshine Coast community, including that of Kawana Waters. Kawana Waters' program provides an opportunity for a diverse school population and enriched learning experience for all school students. Both these programs in place at Buderim Mountain State School and Kawana Waters State High School were outstanding examples of the pursuit for teacher excellence that has underpinned the Smart State strategies.

I would also like to take this opportunity to mention the pride I have in the education node or precinct within my electorate on the Sunshine Coast. As members know, we were very privileged to host Premier Beattie and Employment Minister, Matt Foley, when they officially opened the approximately \$15 million Mountain Creek TAFE facility. At this point I must commend Wayne Bradley of the Cooloola Sunshine Coast TAFE, present chairman, Ken Hicks, former chairman, Ted Fitzgerald, and all the board members, who I know are very proud of the fine facility that has been delivered by the Beattie government.

While in my electorate the Premier also opened a new multicultural facility located at the Sunshine Coast University—a marvellous facility which all Sunshine Coast residents should be rightly proud of. I am extremely pleased with the recent announcement of the Minister for Education, Anna Bligh, who is present today in the chamber, regarding Chancellor College.

My rapidly growing area is well served by quality education facilities, and this state government complements it with a state-of-the-art facility. Right next door to both the university and the facility that I speak of is the Siena Catholic Primary School, which is very well positioned in this educational precinct. Peter Donelan is the primary school's principal. The school, whilst only in its infant years, is doing a great job.

DANGEROUS PRISONERS (SEXUAL OFFENDERS) BILL

Hon. R. J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.29 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to provide for the continued detention of particular prisoners for their control, care or treatment, or for their supervised release, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. R. J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.30 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

There has been growing concern in our community about the release from prison of convicted violent sex offenders and paedophiles who are not rehabilitated. Although these offenders may have completed the fixed term sentence imposed by the court, the real possibility of them reoffending poses a risk to the community that cannot be ignored. It is a risk that concerns not only their victims and their families, but other innocent families and children. It is a risk this government views as unacceptable.

This bill addresses these concerns. The bill will enable the Supreme Court to order the post-sentence preventative detention of sex offenders who pose a serious danger to the community. These new laws will complement the existing provisions in part 10 of the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 and section 18 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1945.

The Existing Law

The Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 allows a court to impose an indefinite sentence on an offender convicted of a violent offence punishable by life imprisonment if the court is satisfied the offender is a serious danger to the community. However, an application for an indefinite sentence as part of the sentencing process can only be made by the DPP, with the Attorney-General's consent, at the time of conviction.

The Criminal Law Amendment Act 1945 provides for the indeterminate detention of sex offenders—both at the time of sentence and during imprisonment. However, the tests are archaic and out of touch with community standards. Under section 18(4) of the 1945 act, if a court is satisfied on the evidence of two medical practitioners that a prisoner is 'incapable of exercising proper control over their sexual instincts', and 'such incapacity is capable of being cured by continued treatment', and 'it is desirable that such person be detained in an institution after the expiration of the person's sentence of imprisonment', the court may direct that the offender be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure at the expiry of their term of imprisonment.

This test does not accord with current medical understanding of paedophilia or, for that matter, violent sexual offenders. Furthermore, these provisions may not assist in protecting the public if the prisoner is, in medical terms, considered capable of controlling his or her sexual urge but chooses not to or even if not able to control that urge is considered incapable of being 'cured' or rehabilitated. For this reason, section 18(4) has rarely been used.

The Scheme of the Bill

This bill introduces a more contemporary and effective scheme for protection of the community. The detention of individuals in custody, depriving them of their liberty to that extent, must never be authorised lightly, without reasonable cause based on legitimate grounds. However, the law has never regarded detention as legitimately authorised only for the purpose of punishment for proven criminal offending. Even the sentencing process contemplates the factors of rehabilitation and protection of the public be considered in deciding whether to impose a custodial sentence.

The scheme of this bill is however not part of the sentencing process but a separate process for detaining persons who are seriously dangerous, convicted, violent sex offenders and whose risk of reoffending demands that the community be protected. It is akin to the detention authorised under mental health laws, except that the protection provided to the public by this new

law is founded not on the mental illness of a person but on a different though equally sound principle of public policy. That principle is the priority that must be given to protecting the public, our families and children from the serious danger that a person, having already been convicted and imprisoned for committing offences of a violent sexual nature, poses to the community because of their propensity for committing such an offence again.

Under these new laws, if there is cogent evidence indicating that a serious sex offender poses a real risk of reoffending if released from prison the Attorney-General can apply to the Supreme Court for orders requiring the prisoner to submit to psychiatric assessment and based inter alia on that assessment be detained in prison. When the Attorney first makes an application, the court can order that the prisoner undergo a 'risk assessment' by two appropriately qualified psychiatrists, who must prepare a report for the court on the level of risk posed by the prisoner. The court is required to assess the prisoner's risk of reoffending. It can impose either a continuing detention order or a supervision order containing strict supervision conditions upon release.

If, on the Attorney-General's application, the court is satisfied that a prisoner serving a term of imprisonment for a serious sexual offence would, if released, pose a serious danger to the community, the court is empowered to order the prisoner's continuing detention or ongoing supervision. This is of course the same test that this parliament has authorised the court to apply in determining whether to make an indefinite sentence under part X of the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992; namely the test of whether a person is a serious danger to the community. In making its decision, the court can take into consideration the medical evidence, the person's criminal history and any other evidence that indicates they may pose an ongoing risk.

In determining which order to make, the paramount consideration is the need to protect the community. The new law will apply to any person in prison from the time the law comes into effect, regardless of when their offence was committed.

Protections for the Individual

However, there are a number of important protections to ensure no person is unfairly or inappropriately incarcerated. Applications for orders of the kind proposed by this bill can only be made in respect of offenders in custody serving a term of imprisonment upon conviction for a serious sexual offence. 'Serious sexual offences' are defined as sexual offences involving violence or sexual offences against children. The Attorney-General may only bring an application within six months of the prisoner's sentence expiry date. This is to ensure that the prisoner is able to take full advantage of any opportunities for rehabilitation offered during the term of imprisonment and orders are not applied for prematurely.

Before considering the evidence of the risk that the prisoner will commit serious sexual offences if released, the court must obtain two independent psychiatric reports on the prisoner. The prisoner must also be given notice of the application to enable him or her to obtain separate reports and present any evidence in rebuttal of the claim that they are a serious danger to the community. Only the Supreme Court may make orders and only if the court is satisfied to a high degree of probability that the prisoner would pose a serious danger to the community if an order was not made. The bill also contains provision for appeals to the Court of Appeal against the decision of the Supreme Court on the principal application.

If a continuing detention order is made, it must be fully reviewed by the Supreme Court at least every 12 months. The order can only be continued if the same test as that satisfied at the previous hearing is again satisfied—that is, that the court considers the prisoner would if released or released without supervision represent a serious danger to the community. The scheme of the law ensures that the independence of the court's discretion is respected. As an alternative to custodial detention, the court may make a supervision order. This will allow the court to impose conditions such as reporting to and/or receiving visits from Corrective Services officers, taking part in rehabilitation programs and staying within Queensland unless authorised to travel elsewhere.

A supervision order can be amended by the court if there is a change in the released prisoner's circumstances. If a prisoner breaches a supervision order, a police officer or Corrective Services officer has the power to apply to the Magistrate's Court for a summons or warrant that the prisoner be arrested and brought back before the Supreme Court to be dealt with.

This bill is yet another measure this government has taken to address legitimate public concern about the danger to which the community is exposed by seriously violent sex offenders who are unwilling or unable to be rehabilitated. Our government will not shirk from the responsibility to ensure that in society's management of proved sex offenders the community is protected from repeated serious sexual violence.

We owe that much to the tragic victims of such abhorrent violations and those among us, including our children, who could become victims in the future. The need to protect the community is paramount. This bill, constrained by sound public policy and within strict checks and balances, gives measured effect to that principle. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

ARTS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (12.39 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Libraries Act 1988, Queensland Art Gallery Act 1987, Queensland Museum Act 1970, Queensland Performing Arts Trust Act 1977 and Royal Queensland Theatre Company Act 1970, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (12.40 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The contemporary Queensland Aboriginal poet Samuel Wagan Watson put it succinctly—

Queensland's arts and cultural community is diverse and unique,

Like droplets of a humid summer rain

Bound for the corrugated roof of a homestead

Entities of vibrancy,

Making their own sound heard,

Each varying in brevity and impact.

The diversity and uniqueness of Queensland's cultural life are nurtured by the work of its five cultural statutory authorities—the Queensland Museum, the Queensland Art Gallery, the State Library, the Queensland Performing Arts Trust and the Queensland Theatre Company. Like all institutions, these bodies must continue to reinvent themselves in 'making their own sound heard' to each generation. This bill is an attempt by the parliament to help in that process by giving clear guiding principles to the five great cultural statutory authorities of Queensland in the following terms:

- We should affirm respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures;
- There should be responsiveness to the needs of communities in regional and outer-metropolitan areas;
- Children and young people should be supported in their contribution to and appreciation of art and culture;
- Diverse audiences should be developed, not just the 'usual suspects';
- Opportunities should be developed for international collaboration and for cultural exports, especially in the Asia-Pacific region;
- Content relevant to Queensland should be promoted and presented; and
- Capabilities for lifelong learning should be developed.

At the heart of Queensland's cultural identity lies its place in a cultural history of 40 or 50 millennia in this land and its waters. Too often in the past this has been denied. The amendments make clear the duty to affirm respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It is fitting that this provision should be introduced into the parliament on Mabo Day, commemorating the recognition by the High Court of communal native title. As for legal institutions, so for cultural institutions.

It must be understood, moreover, that cultural resources are not meant solely for the winter palaces of the capital city. Regional Queensland is the source of Queensland's great geographic

and cultural diversity. This should be celebrated. The world looks different in Wujal Wujal from the way it looks in Woolloongabba. The Gladstone born poet Val Vallis expressed it thus in his *Songs of the East Coast*—

I am of the east coast country;
Not from the great cities that play Faust
With flats for sounds, but where the Queensland hills
Bite the blue sky with their emerald teeth,
And where the sun sets witches' fires on the waterline.
Here I was born.

It should be acknowledged that outer metropolitan areas can sometimes be profoundly disadvantaged in their access to art and cultural opportunities and our cultural statutory authorities should pay heed.

Children and young people have a special place in cultural life. The Out of the Box Children's Arts Festival administered by the Queensland Performing Arts Trust and the new children's art gallery planned for the Gallery of Modern Art highlight Queensland as a world leader in art by and for children. Diverse audiences should be actively developed, lest the cultural institutions become narrow and moribund. The Queensland Museum's exhibition of Body Art, for example, drew new audiences. Similarly, the Kids' APT (Asia-Pacific Triennial) Summer Spectacular at the Queensland Art Gallery brought a host of families to the gallery, including many from the outer metropolitan area.

Queensland is a net importer of books, music and other cultural products. This should be turned around. Cultural export is a vital part of the future in an economy that is increasingly based on information and knowledge rather than commodities. In the first instance, this may be easier in the visual arts than in the language based arts such as theatre, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, but examples such as the Queensland Theatre Company's performance of *Back Seat Driver* at the Seoul Arts Festival show what can be achieved.

In an information economy hungry for content, it is essential that content relevant to Queensland should be promoted and presented. The State Library's support for Queensland writers and the Queensland Museum's expertise in local natural history and science help to consolidate Queensland as a centre of excellence in scholarship. Lifelong learning is no longer optional. It is a necessity. This is not merely an issue for TAFE colleges and universities. Bodies such as the State Library have a vital role to play through web based resources and by encouraging local government libraries to provide more opportunities through the extensive funding provided by the State Library to local council libraries.

The objective of the Arts Legislation Amendment Bill 2003 is to implement the recommendations of a review of five separate acts. These acts provide for the administration of Queensland's five cultural statutory authorities. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

They are the Queensland Art Gallery Act 1987, the Libraries Act 1988, the Queensland Museum Act 1970, the Queensland Performing Arts Trust Act 1977 and the Royal Queensland Theatre Company Act 1970.

Arts Queensland recently undertook a review of these acts in consultation with each cultural statutory authority and its board.

There was also consultation with relevant departments.

The review occurred within the context of Creative Queensland, the whole-of government Queensland Government Cultural Policy 2002, which followed extensive community consultation.

This policy, released in October 2002, outlined the Beattie Government's commitment to, and investment in, people, places, collections, traditions and cultural enterprise.

The policy builds on the groundbreaking work done by Arts Minister Wayne Goss in the 1991 report "Queensland: a State for the Arts" which introduced major reforms such as peer assessment, major funding to individual artists and the Regional Arts Development Fund.

It also continues the themes of the 1995 policy statement by Arts Minister Dean Wells "Building Local, Going Global".

The major amendments contained in the amendment bill and the reasons for these changes are as follows:

First, there is an Object Statement and Guiding Principles inserted in each act to clearly articulate the ongoing and strategic purpose of each authority and its board, as I have already outlined.

In the second major amendment, the maximum term of appointment of board members is reduced from five to three years.

This will ensure boards remain dynamic and relevant in a changing business and operational context.

Should the government so desire, it will continue to have the power to reappoint board members for consecutive terms.

The third major amendment changes the deadline for submitting draft strategic and operational plans.

The bill amends each act to require draft strategic and operational plans to be submitted no later than two months before the start of each financial year.

The current deadline is four months before the start of each financial year.

The new deadline will enable each authority to prepare its plans considerably closer to the start of the financial year and in so doing improve the relevance and accuracy of those plans.

The fourth major amendment requires consultation with the Minister during the development of draft plans.

The revised deadline for submitting draft strategic and operational plans is intended to improve the planning outcomes of these authorities.

However, without further amendment to the legislation, the opportunity for the responsible Minister and Arts Queensland to make a strategic contribution to these plans would be limited.

Accordingly, the bill also requires each authority to canvass the responsible Minister's views as input to developing the draft plans, rather than this input occurring only after the draft plans have been submitted.

The fifth major amendment aims to clarify the meaning of financial year for the Queensland Theatre Company.

The bill amends the Royal Queensland Theatre Company Act to remove any doubt that the financial year for the company is 1 January to 31 December.

The nature of the company's season of performing arts presentations lends itself, in a fiscal and artistic sense, to planning and reporting its financial performance on a calendar-year basis.

In 1989, the act was amended to specify that the thirty-first day of December was the last day of the company's financial year.

The company has reported its financial results on a calendar year basis since 1989 and continues to do so.

Similar interstate companies operate on a calendar-year basis.

However, as a result of subsequent amendments to the act, there now exists some uncertainty as to the company's financial year for planning and reporting purposes.

The bill will remove this doubt.

This bill also amends the title of the Queensland Theatre Company through the removal of the "Royal" appellation. Her Majesty the Queen has consented to this change.

The change ensures that the widely known and used name for the company is reflected in its governing act.

The sixth major amendment is to the Queensland Performing Arts Trust Act 1977.

While the Queensland Performing Arts Centre has, for some years, been generally referred to as the "Centre", the Queensland Performing Arts Trust Act 1977 uses the term "Complex".

The bill updates the terminology by replacing "Complex" with "Centre" where it appears throughout the Act.

The last of the amendments is to the Queensland Museum Act 1970.

The bill amends the functions of the board under the Queensland Museum Act 1970.

These amendments expand the description of the museum by replacing "a museum of general science" with "a museum of science, environment and human achievement", aligning it with the museum's vision and strategic direction.

The bill ensures that the museum has a legislative basis for undertaking original research by inserting "generation and" immediately before "promotion of scientific and historical research".

Finally, the bill deletes any reference to the aerodrome at Coomera, due to the imminent sale of the property.

The five cultural statutory bodies have been consulted on the bill and support its intent and direction.

This legislation is based on the proposition that arts and culture are not a sideshow. They are part of the core business of government because they are part of the core business of life, or as the poet Judith Wright put it, "part of my blood's country".

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (12.45 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend acts administered by the Minister for Health and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (12.46 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to bring this bill to the House. The bill amends 11 health portfolio acts to provide greater protection for health service consumers and greater certainty to registered providers. I will deal firstly with the amendments to health practitioner registration acts. Members of this House will recall the series of reforms made to health practitioner legislation, culminating in the passage of the 13 health practitioner registration acts in 2001. Queensland now has an integrated approach to consumer protection through health practitioner registration, regulation of professional conduct and impairment of health practitioners under the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999 and consumer complaint processes under the Health Rights Commission Act 1991.

During the review of the health practitioner registration legislation, it was identified that some of the restrictions on professional practice that existed in the previous legislation were potentially anticompetitive. In accordance with national competition policy, the review of restricted core practices was established to examine statutory practice restrictions. Pending completion of the review, the new health practitioner registration acts retained the statutory practice restrictions from the old legislation. The bill I bring to the House today contains amendments to implement the recommendations of the review of restricted core practices. The review recommended removing the broad statutory definitions restricting practices to particular professions and replacing these with restrictions on practices which pose a high risk of harm to patients. Before I describe the amended practice restrictions, I want to briefly explain the range of consumer protections contained in the existing legislation.

Firstly, the requirement for certain health professionals to be registered provides a highly effective means of protecting the interests of the public, addressing information available to consumers and ensuring that practitioners uphold professional standards. Applicants for registration must hold appropriate qualifications and must be fit to practise. Registered health practitioners whose conduct is unsatisfactory or unprofessional may be subject to disciplinary action by their registration board, a professional conduct review panel or the Health Practitioners Tribunal.

The health practitioner registration acts also contain key offence provisions designed to protect the public by providing consumers with a means of distinguishing between registered and non-registered practitioners. Title restrictions prevent a non-registrant from using a professional title. For example, only a registered medical practitioner may use the title 'medical practitioner'. Similar restrictions apply for each of the 13 health practitioner registration acts so that, for example, only a registered physiotherapist may use the title 'physiotherapist' and only a registered dental technician may use the title 'dental technician'.

Under these provisions of the legislation I introduced in 2001, it is an offence for a non-registrant to use any name or symbol that could be reasonably understood to indicate that the person is a registrant or qualified to practise the profession. Even if a non-registrant avoids committing an offence against the title restrictions, consumers are provided the additional protection of holding-out offences. The holding-out offences prevent a non-registrant from knowingly misrepresenting themselves as a registered health practitioner or as eligible for registration. Once again, significant penalties of up to \$75 000 apply to such offences.

This government is committed to ensuring health care is provided at the highest possible standard. In addition to the significant consumer protections which already exist under health practitioner registration legislation, the bill will insert restrictions on particular practices which may pose a high risk of harm to patients. These will replace the current broad practice definitions which are used to prohibit non-registrants from practising chiropractic, osteopathy, optometry, physiotherapy and podiatry. Honourable members should note that practice definitions and restrictions do not currently apply to medicine, occupational therapy, psychology and speech pathology.

Spinal manipulation is to be restricted to registered chiropractors, medical practitioners, osteopaths and physiotherapists. In general terms, spinal manipulation is a form of treatment that uses body leverage and a physical thrust to a joint, or a group of related joints, to restore joint and related tissue function. Clearly, this is a form of treatment that is potentially harmful to patients if carried out by a person who is not highly trained and suitably qualified. The amendments made

by this bill will ensure that only registered professionals with the necessary training and qualifications will be able to lawfully engage in spinal manipulation.

The bill will also restrict the prescription of optical appliances for the correction or relief of visual defects to registered optometrists and medical practitioners. Once again, these practices would clearly represent a risk of harm to a patient if carried out by a person who is not suitably trained and qualified. The bill will ensure that consumers continue to be protected, without unnecessarily limiting the practice of health providers.

The Review of Restricted Core Practices also recommended amendments to the Pharmacists Registration Act. However, no amendments are being made at this stage, pending further consideration of the outcomes of the national Wilkinson review of pharmacy.

The bill also implements recommendations of the national competition policy review of restrictions on the practice of dentistry. The amendments to the Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001 and the Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Registration Act 2001 will ensure that Queensland's obligations under the national competition policy are met without compromising patient care. Similar to the Review of Restricted Core Practices, the approach adopted for dentistry was to identify those procedures that pose a high risk of harm to patients. Those high-risk dental procedures are restricted to qualified practitioners in order to protect consumers. These restricted practices include the diagnosis of conditions of the mouth, the fitting or intraoral adjustment of artificial teeth or corrective or restorative dental appliances, and irreversible and exposure-prone procedures. Exposure-prone procedures are those which place both the patient and the health care worker at risk of exposure to an infectious disease, for example, when cutting tissue. Irreversible procedures are those that cause permanent change to tissue. Due to the time and the importance of today, I move that the remainder of my second reading speech be incorporated in *Hansard*.

The bill restricts who may perform these restricted practices, namely registered dentists, dental specialists and medical practitioners and, to the extent that their duties fall within the definition of dentistry, registered dental prosthetists, dental hygienists and dental therapists. Unregistered or unauthorised persons who seek to perform a restricted practice will commit an offence.

Dental therapists and dental hygienists have long been an integral part of the dental team. They provide valuable services to the Queensland public. I am pleased to announce that the bill provides for registration of dental auxiliaries under the Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001. Dental auxiliaries—dental therapists and dental hygienists—will be brought within the scope of the general requirements of the act. To be registered, dental auxiliaries will be required to be qualified, and be fit to practise. They will be subject to the disciplinary and impairment provisions of the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999. Specific titles will be restricted to dental auxiliaries, as they are for other registered health practitioners. It will therefore be unlawful for a person who is not a registered dental auxiliary to use the restricted titles 'dental therapist' and 'dental hygienist'.

The amendments also provide for the appointment of a dental therapist and a dental hygienist to the Dental Board, and provide for dental auxiliary representation on professional panels convened to determine a disciplinary or health assessment matter involving another dental auxiliary.

The bill removes the restriction which limits dental therapists to employment in the public sector. It also removes the requirement for dental hygienists to work in a one-to-one ratio with a dentist. The bill recognises the potential for future developments in the roles and skill levels of dental auxiliaries by providing for regulations to prescribe other categories of dental auxiliary, and additional functions that may be performed by appropriately trained or qualified auxiliaries.

Additionally, following passage of the bill, I will direct the Dental Board to prepare a Code of Practice that will provide guidance to registrants about the duties and levels of supervision for dental auxiliaries. In developing that Code of Practice, the Dental Board will be required to undertake consultation with, for example, community groups and professional associations. The Code of Practice will have no force or effect until I approve it by gazette notice. As well as providing guidance to registrants, a Code of Practice may be used to provide evidence in disciplinary proceedings of appropriate professional conduct or practice for a profession.

In summary, the amendments will provide for the maintenance of professional standards and consumer protection in dental services.

The bill also provides for a simplified definition of dental prosthetic work and restricts the provision of dental prosthetic services to dental prosthetists, dentists and medical practitioners. It will retain the current restriction on the provision of partial dentures by dental prosthetists.

The amendments will also remove the restrictions on the performance of dental technical work by dental technicians. The removal of this restriction will enable dentists, dental prosthetists and dental technicians to employ staff who are not necessarily fully trained dental technicians to undertake unskilled technical work. This may present significant savings to the industry.

Despite the removal of the restriction on the performance of dental technical work, consumers will continue to be protected from harm as the primary purchasers of dental technical work are dentists and dental prosthetists. Dentists and dental prosthetists have sufficient knowledge to ensure that they are purchasing quality dental technical products. A person not registered as a dental technician is prohibited from taking or using a restricted

title, such as 'dental technician', under the Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Registration Act 2001. This will assist consumers in identifying qualified technicians from unqualified persons.

The introduction of the legislative scheme consisting of the health practitioner registration acts and the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act broke new ground in the regulation of health practitioners. This scheme—including the amendments provided for by this bill—reflects contemporary expectations about the regulation of practitioners providing professional services to health consumers. I am therefore pleased to advise that the bill will provide for greater consistency between the regulation of nurses and the regulation of other health practitioners.

The bill amends the Nursing Act to provide the Queensland Nursing Council with the capacity to access information about the criminal history of an applicant for registration, enrolment or an authorisation to practise midwifery. As is the case for other registered health practitioners, the amendments will enable information about all convictions and charges to be obtained by the council, regardless of when they occurred. This information will provide a more complete picture of an applicant's criminal history and may, for example, indicate a pattern of behaviour that could compromise an applicant's ability to safely and competently practise nursing.

The protection of health consumers is a key objective of the Nursing Act. I am sure that all members of the House would therefore agree that the council must be able to equip itself with the necessary information to determine whether an applicant should be prevented from practising, or whether limitations should be placed on an applicant's ability to practice, if their past actions indicate that they are not competent or fit to practise nursing.

In order to increase the degree of public protection afforded by the Nursing Act, nurses and midwives will also have a duty to advise the Queensland Nursing Council of certain events. For example, they will be required to inform the council if they are convicted of an indictable or practice related offence; or if they are the subject of disciplinary or other action by a regulatory body in another jurisdiction; or a party to a judgment or settlement of proceedings involving negligence. A similar duty is imposed on other registered health practitioners by the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999.

The grounds for disciplinary action under the Nursing Act are narrow when compared with the grounds which apply to other registered health practitioners in Queensland and nurses in other jurisdictions. Accordingly, the bill amends the grounds for disciplinary action, and the processes for making a complaint, to reflect the requirements of the Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999. Disciplinary action will be able to be taken in relation to a nurse or midwife whose behaviour may constitute unsatisfactory professional conduct. Unsatisfactory professional conduct is to be defined to include professional conduct that is of a lesser standard than that which might reasonably be expected by the public or professional peers.

Disciplinary action will also be able to be taken in relation to a nurse or midwife whose ability to practise as a nurse or midwife is impaired due to alcohol or drug dependence. In addition, disciplinary action may be taken if a nurse or midwife has contravened the Nursing Act (for example, by failing to comply with conditions imposed on registration); or no longer meets the requirements to be a nurse or midwife; or has been convicted of an indictable offence.

The Nursing Act is also to be amended to ensure that the information available to the Health Rights Commissioner about nurses is consistent with the information provided about other registered health practitioners. The Queensland Nursing Council will be required to provide the Health Rights Commissioner with copies of all concerns raised regarding the health of a nurse, midwife or person authorised to practise nursing as well as the action taken by the council in respect of such matters. The council will also be required to advise the commissioner when the immediate suspension powers under the Nursing Act are used.

I would like to highlight that the amendments to the Nursing Act not only provide for greater consumer protection but greater certainty for nurses and midwives. For example, it will be an offence for a person to aid, abet, counsel, procure or induce nurses, midwives or other persons authorised to practise nursing to engage in conduct that may be the basis for disciplinary action. A similar offence applies to all other registered health practitioners.

In addition, the bill provides for the Queensland Nursing Council to develop or adopt codes of practice to provide guidance to nurses, midwives and other persons authorised to practise nursing as to appropriate professional conduct or nursing practice. I believe that the council will be able to face the challenges associated with the development of such codes in light of the work this body has already undertaken to produce documents such as the Queensland Scope of Nursing Practice Decision Making Framework—a document which, I might add, has gained national recognition, as noted in the final report of the National Review of Nursing Education 2002: Our duty of care.

Before moving to outline other aspects of the bill, I would like to acknowledge the Queensland Nursing Council, the Queensland Nurses Union and other stakeholders such as the Australian and New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses, the Australian College of Midwives, the Royal College of Nursing Australia and the Directors of Nursing Association. These organisations have been consulted on the amendments and have provided useful comments.

The bill makes minor amendments to the Health Rights Commission Act 1991 to clarify the commissioner's powers and to improve the efficiency of the Health Rights Commission in dealing with health service complaints. The Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999 is amended by the bill to clarify when a decision of the Health Practitioners Tribunal, on a disciplinary matter involving a registrant, takes effect.

A minor amendment is made to the Health Act 1937 to empower the Chief Executive of Health to appoint medical inspectors and other officers, rather than the Governor in Council. This will streamline the appointment of these officers and bring them into line with similar appointments under the Act.

Additionally, the bill makes a minor amendment to the Health Services Act 1991 to provide more flexible membership requirements for district health councils to accommodate periodic vacancies, and to ensure that the functions of a district health council are not affected merely because of a vacancy.

Lastly, the acts listed in the bill's schedule are to be amended to update cross-references to reflect the amendments contained in the bill.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (12.54 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (12.55 p.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill amends the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 and makes a minor amendment to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. The majority of the amendments relate to rail safety and the role of Queensland Transport as the independent rail safety regulator. This role is clarified and strengthened. The amendments are considered necessary and come out of recommendations made as a result of the inquiry into the New South Wales Glenbrook rail accident in 1999 and out of the Queensland Competition Authority's consideration of QR's Access Undertaking which sets out the terms on which access will be granted to third party train operators wishing to use QR's track.

In approving the Access Undertaking, the Queensland Competition Authority noted the need for statutory change, clarifying and strengthening the role of the safety regulator and highlighted the need for the rail safety regulator to be involved in disputes regarding safety under the access regime. Amendments are also included to provide certainty about passenger train priority and to ensure passenger services do not incur a premium charge for access to the rail network.

The Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 provides for a system of safety accreditation for railway managers and operators in Queensland. This bill amends the act to broaden the scope for placing conditions on a railway manager or railway operator's accreditation to any condition the chief executive considers reasonably appropriate to enhance safety. The amendments in the bill also allow for Queensland Transport to impose a new condition of accreditation on a number of accredited railway managers and operators by regulation. This provides for the situation where a new safety initiative can be applied across the rail industry in Queensland generally.

Although a safety management system is a standard condition of accreditation under the current accreditation system, the amendments now create a clear obligation for an accredited railway manager or operator to comply with the system, certify to having reviewed the system annually and seek approval of any amendments made to the system. This is an important change to the current legislation which elevates the importance of a current and effective safety management system and maximum penalties are significant for non-compliance.

The amendments require an accredited railway manager to have the financial capacity or public risk insurance in place at all times to meet reasonable accident liabilities and Queensland Transport may ask for evidence of meeting this requirement at any time. Non-compliance with this requirement is grounds for immediate suspension of accreditation. Previously this matter was dealt with as a condition of accreditation. A new provision in the act will allow Queensland Transport to assist parties negotiating an access agreement relating to rail transport infrastructure where the parties are unable to agree about a rail safety matter. An access agreement may relate to both an accredited railway operator that requires access to another railway manager's track or to a non-accredited railway—for example, a mining railway, which is connected to an accredited railway manager's track by agreement under section 151 of the current act. In view of the time, I

seek leave to table the balance of my second reading speech and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Chief Executive of Queensland Transport may also help in a dispute under an existing access agreement when notified of the dispute. Where a party has given notice to another party of a dispute relating to rail safety under an access agreement, a notice may also be given to the Chief Executive within 14 days. After looking into the dispute, Queensland Transport, if asked, or if it is considered necessary, may give a safety direction to one or both accredited parties which must be complied with. Prior to giving the direction, each party to the dispute will have 14 days to make written submissions about the direction.

The amendments also make it an offence not to advise Queensland Transport if an access agreement between an accredited railway operator and an accredited railway manager is cancelled or suspended. This will ensure that Queensland Transport is kept informed of all operators on the rail network at all times.

New provisions to be inserted into the act will allow rail safety officers appointed by Queensland Transport to be able to give safety directions to accredited persons to maintain an adequate level of safety in managing or operating a railway or to prevent an unsafe situation. The direction can be given in writing or verbally if followed up in writing within 5 days. This is an important power to be able to address urgent safety concerns.

The proposed amendments also establish the relationship with the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 in that it is a defence against non-compliance with a safety direction, if the accredited person's non-compliance was to the extent necessary to comply with the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995. However, the non-compliance with the safety direction must be minimised and reasonable care must be taken and proper diligence exercised by the accredited person.

The bill will establish the power to audit railway managers and operators and require the Chief Executive to prepare an annual audit program. An audit program may target particular railway managers or operators or a particular safety aspect. An audit of all accredited persons or a particular accredited person may be carried out if there is a specific safety concern or there are concerns about non-compliance with relevant sections of the act. For the purposes of the audit there is the power to request information or documents.

Disciplinary action including cancellation, suspension or varying an accreditation or amendment of a safety management system may be taken against an accredited person as a result of an audit, or inspection or a report of a serious incident or investigation of an incident. Grounds for disciplinary action relate to contravention of the act or failure to comply with a condition of accreditation. The amendments establish a show cause process for a disciplinary action. However, an accreditation may be immediately suspended to ensure public safety, prevent damage to a railway or where the accredited person does not have the required financial capacity or public risk insurance.

The bill also provides for Queensland Transport to publish safety bulletins containing information from reports about safety incidents, information arising out of inspections and other safety information that comes to hand including from outside Queensland. To protect an accredited person's interests there is a requirement to consult before publication if there is the likelihood that an accredited person would be identified in the publication or their proprietary interests affected. This is an important initiative to promote safety awareness and inform accredited persons.

As stated earlier, one of the objectives of the bill is to strengthen the role of the independent rail safety regulator. In addition to the amendments already outlined, rail safety officers will be appointed under the act by Queensland Transport but only if they have the necessary skills and experience. Appropriate officers from Queensland Transport will be appointed to undertake the majority of this important role, however officers from another department or outside the government can be appointed.

The role of the rail safety officer will be similar to the current authorised persons for railways some of whom have authority to deal with rail safety matters. Police officers will automatically be rail safety officers and, in the case of accident investigation and reporting, suitable persons may be appointed from within a railway manager or operator's own staff.

A rail safety officer's appointment may be subject to conditions or limited to specific provisions of the act by either the instrument of appointment or a signed notice or by regulation. Rail safety officers will be issued with identity cards and required to produce them in undertaking their activities. This will ensure that a tight rein can be kept on the use of the powers available to a rail safety officer under the act.

In recognition of the need to be able to address rail safety concerns quickly and thoroughly, rail safety officers will have the power to enter places, search premises and rollingstock, and collect evidence relevant to their investigation. The power to stop and enter rollingstock will be provided but, in the interests of safety, the train controller must be consulted and disruption to the operation of other services minimised. There is also the ability to seize evidence which may include rollingstock. The normal powers to request name and address, and provide information when an offence is believed to have been committed, are included. This information may be critical to rail safety as it could relate directly to a person's safety management system.

To ensure that a rail safety officer can carry out their duties without the threat of legal action, the bill removes any civil liability attaching to the officer for acts or omissions done honestly and without negligence.

I will now outline a significant new provision that is not directly related to rail safety but is important in terms of ensuring the public are not disadvantaged in an environment of competing transport priorities. The bill requires a railway manager where possible to bring a delayed passenger service back to scheduled running time. In bringing the delayed service back onto schedule, the schedules for all passenger services including suburban, interurban and long distance passenger services are to be taken into account. However, other matters may also be taken into account including the consequence of delaying livestock services where animal welfare is an issue.

Certainty about passenger train priority is also important in planning for new passenger train services. Queensland Transport may ask a railway manager for information about the current capacity of the manager's track and notify the railway manager of the requirements for passenger services. Subsequently, when allocating any available train paths requested by Queensland Transport, the railway manager will be required to provide priority to passenger services. This is, in practical terms, relevant to peak commuter terms. In addition, a railway manager must not apply a premium access charge for passenger trains in peak time or set a premium charge compared with other services.

In summary, the bill makes some very important amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 to ensure priority for passenger services and preserve rail safety in Queensland. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12.58 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

BUDGET DOCUMENTS

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.30 p.m.): Mr Speaker, I lay upon the table of the House the following documents—

Budget Speech

Budget Strategy and Outlook

Capital Statement

Budget Highlights

Appropriation Bills

Smart State: Creating Opportunities for the Future

Smart State: Improving Our Lives

Ministerial portfolio statements including the Speaker's portfolio statements for the Legislative Assembly

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.31 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the House will, at its present sitting, grant leave to bring in a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for the Legislative Assembly and parliamentary service for the financial years starting 1 July 2003 and 1 July 2004.

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the governor recommending the necessary appropriation.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.31 p.m.): I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

I rise to introduce the Appropriation Bill for the Legislative Assembly and the parliamentary service for 2003-04. The Government remains committed to the independence of the Legislative Assembly and this extends to the means by which public moneys are appropriated to ensure its continued functioning. We are therefore adhering to the recent convention that the Legislative Assembly's appropriation be contained in a Bill separate from the Appropriation Bill for the other activities of government.

The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill will provide the necessary funds to ensure the continued operations of the Legislative Assembly and the parliamentary service. These include advisory and information services to assist the Parliament, its committees and Members to fulfil their constitutional and parliamentary responsibilities, the services provided by the Parliamentary Library, Committee Office, Parliamentary Reporting Service and Chamber and Security Services

as well as the provision of accommodation, hospitality and Members' entitlements. Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Springborg, adjourned.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.34 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the House will, at its present sitting, grant leave to bring in a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2003 and 1 July 2004.

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending the necessary appropriation.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (2.35 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

INTRODUCTION

The Beattie Government has a clear vision for Queensland and a clear set of priorities.

We are giving Queensland a strong identity as Australia's Smart State by improving the lives of all Queenslanders and creating sustainable opportunities for everyone.

We are acting on our priorities to deliver our vision for Queensland.

The Beattie Government has:

- generated average annual economic growth of over 5%;
- maintained a strong fiscal position despite turbulent world events;
- reduced the unemployment rate to levels not seen for 13 years;
- invested \$24 billion in improved infrastructure;
- enhanced and improved key services; and
- taken action to protect the environment.

Our Government has fully funded all our election commitments and we continue to deliver more for Queensland.

This Budget builds on our vision through further investment in health and disability services as well as increased investment to foster innovation which is at the heart of our Smart State vision.

This Budget provides:

- an increase in the Health Budget of \$300 million or almost 7% as part of a cumulative four-year increase in spending on health of over \$2.6 billion;
- \$290.5 million in increased State funding over four years to Disability Services including \$200 million in new funding; and
- \$100 million over four years to build upon the investment in our Smart State Strategy.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The State Government's economic strategy is aimed at maximising Queensland's economic performance and providing a better quality of life for all Queenslanders.

Our strategy focuses on the main drivers of productivity growth—improving economic fundamentals, fostering innovation and investing in human capital.

The Queensland economy has continued to outperform the rest of Australia and indeed most of the rest of the world in terms of economic growth in 2002-03. In year-average terms, estimated growth in gross state product will be 4.75% this year, 2 percentage points faster than growth in the rest of Australia.

This has occurred despite drought and a hostile external environment—terrorist attacks in Bali, war with Iraq, weak overseas equity markets, declining world growth and, more recently, SARS.

The resilience of the Queensland economy, however, is again clear.

Despite major international and national impacts in recent years State economic growth has been underpinned by the strength of domestic demand, particularly dwelling and business investment.

The Beattie Government has again delivered on its promise of jobs. Employment growth in Queensland has exceeded our expectations this year, growing by an estimated 3.25%, 1 percentage point faster than growth in the rest of Australia.

This means we have created an additional 55,000 jobs in 2002-03, some 12,000 more than our Budget forecast.

Since this Government came to power in June 1998, an additional 200,000 jobs have been created in Queensland.

Unemployment has continued to fall during the year, even with our strong population growth, to the lowest levels since 1990.

This growth was fuelled by Queensland's thriving economy. We attracted large numbers of people to the state from interstate and from overseas. A net inflow of 36,500 interstate migrants moved to Queensland over the 12 months to December 2002, the highest level recorded in over six years. Overseas migration to Queensland also reached a historical high over the same 12 month period, with a net balance of almost 26,000 international migrants settling in Queensland.

Turning to the year ahead, the Queensland economy is forecast to continue to grow solidly in 2003-04, with forecast growth of 4%. This is 1 percentage point faster than forecast growth in the rest of Australia.

While the Commonwealth's national forecast growth of 3.25% relies on an exchange rate of around US60c, our forecast incorporates the more recent appreciation of the Australian dollar, with a year-average exchange rate assumption for 2003-04 around current levels.

Business investment will continue to be a major driver of growth in 2003-04, with ongoing activity supported by low interest rates, improved profitability and strengthening equity markets. Business investment is forecast to increase by around 9.5%, following extraordinary growth this year. Dwelling investment is forecast to ease slightly but remain at a high level.

Household consumption will also contribute strongly to growth, with rapid population growth, solid labour market conditions, continued growth in real earnings and low interest rates all driving growth of around 4.75% in this sector.

Labour market conditions will remain strong in the State, with employment forecast to increase by 2.25%. This translates to the creation of around 38,000 jobs in year-average terms for 2003-04.

Continuing strong population growth is forecast to result in labour force growth of 2.25%, matching employment growth and keeping the unemployment rate remaining broadly unchanged in year-average terms.

MORE JOBS FOR QUEENSLAND—SKILLS AND INNOVATION—THE SMART STATE

Our economic strategy recognises that fostering innovation and investing in the skills and capabilities of Queenslanders are critical to the future growth of the Queensland economy.

With initiatives in this Budget, spending on education by 2006-07 will have increased by 55% or more than \$1.6 billion since 1997-98.

The 2003-04 Budget in the area of education includes:

- \$300 million for capital outlays;
- \$155 million for continuing literacy and numeracy initiatives;
- \$6.8 million to extend the trialling of a preparatory year of schooling to an additional 25 schools including 20 State schools; and
- \$67 million for information and communication technologies in schools.

We are on target to achieve a student to computer ratio of 5:1 for Years 3-12 by 2005.

In aggregate, the Budget provides for 636 additional classroom teachers to meet enrolment growth, support students with disabilities, reform initiatives and enhancements. This will bring the total number of new teachers appointed since 1998 to around 3,000.

Mr Speaker, a centre-piece of our commitment to jobs for Queenslanders is our Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. This initiative provides a range of programs to create jobs and training opportunities for those at risk of long-term unemployment.

I am pleased to announce this Budget provides an additional \$85 million per annum commencing in 2004-05 to continue this initiative to 2006-07.

An additional \$19 million is allocated over four years for the employment of 300 public sector apprentices in targeted skill shortage areas.

Mr Speaker, innovation is a primary driver of productivity growth, improved living standards and better job opportunities.

The Beattie Government's vision for the development of Smart State industries and jobs is backed up by our investment in research and development.

Our Government's focus of building on the State's traditional strengths and fostering new innovative industries has delivered consistently higher rates of economic growth than the rest of Australia.

We have been a strong investor in molecular bioscience research, cancer research and biotechnology. Our \$100 million Smart State Research Facilities Fund is supporting initiatives such as the Australian Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology.

Mr Speaker, the Government will shortly release a document, Queensland—Smart State—Investing in Science, Research and Innovation, which will include a \$100 million four-year package of initiatives across a number of sectors of the knowledge economy to underpin Queensland's delivery of the Smart State vision. Areas of investment will include medical and bio-discovery research, tropical marine science and clean coal technology.

The strategy will generate smart, sustainable jobs and investment opportunities and ensure that Queensland remains at the forefront of science and technology innovation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

Queenslanders enjoy a quality of life that is among the highest in the world.

The Beattie Government is committed to engaging the community in decision making processes to further improve our quality of life. We achieve this through Regional Community Forums, Community Cabinet meetings and our first regional sitting of Parliament.

Access to high quality health care is fundamental to quality of life and a clear priority for the Beattie Government.

Compared to the 2002-03 Health Budget, the next four years will see a cumulative increase in health spending of over \$2.6 billion for wage increases, operating cost increases and for increased and enhanced services for a growing and ageing population. This comprises around \$1.6 billion in State funding and around \$1 billion in Commonwealth funding.

By 2006-07 the Health Budget will grow to around \$5.4 billion, that is over \$1 billion or around 25% higher than the 2002-03 Health Budget.

In 2003-04 the Health Budget will increase by \$300 million or almost 7% over last year's Budget, providing:

- increased funding of \$40 million to manage demand pressures for oncology and cancer care, renal dialysis services, intensive care, cardiac services and emergency services;
- an additional \$10 million to continue the Elective Surgery Enhancement initiative beyond our \$20 million two year election commitment;
- an additional \$8.4 million for mental health services including funding for 40 additional community mental health staff;
- an increase in State funding for the Home and Community Care program of \$7.5 million;
- an additional \$5 million to manage the increasing demand for dental care including improved access and better management of waiting lists; and

- \$2 million in 2003-04 rising to \$8 million in a full year for additional medical services at the Logan and Caboolture Hospitals to relieve pressure on accident and emergency departments.

Over 10 years from 1994, \$2.8 billion will have been invested in rebuilding, modernising and re-equipping hospitals and community health facilities. This investment continues in 2003-04 with ongoing redevelopment including hospitals at Ayr and Gympie as part of a health capital program of over \$280 million.

In contrast to the Commonwealth Government, the Beattie Government is strongly committed to the principles of Medicare and providing Queenslanders with access to affordable, quality health care.

The lack of commitment by the Commonwealth is plain for all to see.

Their new Health Care Agreement funding offer to the states is, by their own admission, \$1 billion less than they factored into their forward estimates to continue the current five year agreement.

The Howard Government is making it more expensive for the average Australian to see a doctor. If your family earns more than \$32,000 you won't qualify for bulk billing.

As more families are denied access to free GP services they will increasingly turn to our emergency departments at hospitals for treatment increasing pressure on our public hospital system.

The Howard Government's lack of commitment to our public hospitals and to Medicare should rightly anger all Australians.

Queenslanders can be assured that the Beattie Government is committed to the retention of Medicare and the provision of accessible, affordable and high quality health care for all Queenslanders.

Mr Speaker, people with disabilities require support and assistance to enable them to actively participate in society.

In some cases specialised services are needed but it is important to recognise and support informal networks, families, carers and friends to ensure people with disabilities have the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of everyday life.

This Budget delivers on the Beattie Government's commitment to providing a better quality of life for Queenslanders with a disability.

Last year, our Government initiated the Funding Reform Project—one of the most progressive and significant pieces of work in the history of disability services in Queensland. The results of extensive consultation with stakeholders showed the need for reform and provided a strong direction for the way we deliver disability services.

Our agenda for change is to deliver a better deal to people with disabilities and their families.

This Budget delivers \$200 million in new funding over four years including \$35 million in 2003-04 for a range of initiatives that will provide better outcomes for people with a disability, their families, carers and disability services providers. The details of these initiatives are set out in a new policy statement released by Minister Spence—Future Directions for Disability Services.

Together with funding for grant indexation, enterprise bargaining and other factors, an additional \$290.5 million in State funding will have been injected into the provision of disability services and support by 2006-07.

This increased funding will see the budget for Disability Services Queensland grow to \$385 million in 2003-04, an increase of 16.3% on last year's Budget.

Over the next four years State funding will grow by 43% compared to Commonwealth funding growth of 16%.

This again shows the stark contrast between the priorities of the Howard Government and those of the Beattie Government.

With the new four-year funding provided for in this Budget, the level of State funding for disability services will have increased from around \$125 million in 1997-98—the year before the Beattie Government came to office—to \$330 million in 2006-07.

The Beattie Government recognises that safe, secure and affordable housing is an essential component of individual, family and community wellbeing.

This Budget allocates \$528 million for housing assistance programs for 2003-04 representing an increase of 11% on last year's allocation. This includes:

- over \$170 million for public rental housing allowing for the commencement of 300 dwellings, the completion of 239 dwellings and for upgrades to improve existing accommodation; and
- an additional 60 dwellings will be provided for transitional housing to improve options for homeless people in crisis. This is part of a \$15.5 million allocation for homelessness initiatives.

As part of the Beattie Government's strong commitment to enhancement of public transport, \$21.4 million is provided in 2003-04 to progress the introduction of an integrated ticketing system in South East Queensland together with \$42 million for the construction of the Inner Northern Busway.

The arts, culture and recreation are key elements of quality of life and essential components of a strong and vibrant Queensland society.

The Budget provides \$92.6 million for ongoing capital works for the Millennium Arts project, including \$3.8 million for the Musgrave Park Indigenous Cultural Centre. Additional funding of \$3.2 million is provided over four years for arts and cultural organisations and major performing arts companies.

SAFER AND MORE SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

Last year's Budget provided additional funding of \$188 million over four years to strengthen this Government's capacity to assist Queensland families, youth and children in need.

This increased investment saw 92 additional staffing positions created in the Department of Families in 2002-03 together with the establishment of trials of innovative approaches to prevention and early intervention which will be completed in 2003-04.

The trials will be carefully evaluated and a selection of successful approaches will be piloted with a view to implementation.

A key element of ensuring our communities are safe and secure is strong policing and effective crime prevention. This Budget maintains the Beattie Government's commitment to this priority with initiatives including:

- 300 additional police as part of our plan to have 9,100 officers by 2005;
- an additional \$30 million over two years to continue the upgrade and improvement of the Queensland Police Service's information technology systems; and
- an additional \$5.3 million over the next two years for the South East Queensland Drug Trial.

Mr Speaker, road safety is important to Queenslanders and our Government.

We are committed to implementing the National Road Safety Strategy which targets a 40% reduction in road deaths per 100,000 population by 2010 and additional funding of \$16.1 million is provided in 2003-04 to implement the Government's Road Safety Initiative Package.

As previously announced the Budget provides for the introduction of a Community Ambulance Cover to give the Queensland Ambulance Service a predictable, long-term funding source to maintain a world-class ambulance service.

Consistent with this objective the Budget provides an additional \$6.27 million for the Queensland Ambulance Service to support the employment of an additional 110 officers and additional capital investment.

The overall Queensland Ambulance Service capital program provides for the commencement or completion of 17 replacement ambulance stations and four new stations.

VALUING THE ENVIRONMENT

Protecting the environment and biodiversity while allowing the ecologically sustainable development of our natural resources is a key priority for our Government.

We are addressing the areas of major challenge including land clearing, water resource management and salinity.

This Budget commits an additional \$75 million in State funding over five years as part of the recently announced \$150 million Commonwealth-State tree clearing reduction package.

The adjustment assistance package will involve \$130 million in financial incentives to assist landholders with transition or for exit assistance if necessary, \$12 million in incentives to improve

the management of more valuable remnant vegetation and \$8 million to develop best practice farm management plans.

The Budget provides \$11 million as part of our \$81 million seven year funding commitment to the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

Ensuring compliance with our natural resource legislation will be enhanced with an additional \$8 million over four years to support the necessary assessment, monitoring and enforcement of existing legislation concerning vegetation, water, land and pests.

An additional \$1.78 million is allocated in 2003-04 for the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability initiative to support more bore capping, rehabilitation and drain replacement projects.

This Budget also commits an additional \$3.5 million over four years to introduce and implement new cultural heritage legislation. This legislation seeks to effectively recognise and protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and to establish practical and workable processes for managing cultural heritage impacts.

Queensland's National Parks and protected areas represent an invaluable asset for all current and future generations of Queenslanders.

As promised we have delivered on our election commitment to employ 140 additional rangers as part of our Enhanced Park Maintenance initiative.

The 2003-04 Budget also provides \$3.2 million for the continued development of our Great Walks of Queensland initiative and \$1.3 million for the continuing acquisition of land for the State's protected estates and forests.

BUILDING QUEENSLAND'S REGIONS

The Beattie Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to building Queensland's regions through the growth of regional economies, regional infrastructure and improving the liveability of cities, towns, regions and remote communities.

We have been a strong investor in infrastructure.

Our capital program for 2003-04 is almost \$5.3 billion with over 62% on projects outside the Brisbane statistical division.

Regional infrastructure projects funded in this Budget include:

- \$26.9 million to continue construction of the Douglas Arterial in Townsville;
- \$25 million towards planning and construction of the \$240 million Tugun Bypass;
- \$60.5 million for the Burnett Water Infrastructure Development; and
- \$49.8 million for the Rockhampton-Townsville-Cairns Rail Track Upgrade project.

Our Regional Centres program has supported the development of a range of infrastructure and community facilities across the State. This Budget provides \$50 million over four years to extend this successful program to 2006-07. This extension will support projects such as the Riverway project in Thuringowa, the Warwick Streetscape project, the Mount Isa Outdoor Events Park, and the Cairns Botanic Gardens and Tanks Precinct Redevelopment.

Mr Speaker, our primary industries form an essential part of Queensland's economic, social and environmental foundations.

The Beattie Government is committed to supporting and assisting our primary producers in meeting the challenges they face.

The Budget includes \$25 million for drought assistance and related activities, including farm financial counselling, climate modelling and research into drought resistant plants.

We will make available an additional \$30 million to the sugar industry over four years, on top of the \$55 million already committed, subject to the Commonwealth Government's continued commitment to the Memorandum of Understanding on the sugar industry. This additional \$30 million package includes a \$10 million Sugar Industry Innovation fund, a \$10 million Sugar Industry Change Management program and a \$10 million Farm Consolidation Loan program.

We are continuing to invest in the risk management of biosecurity threats such as foot and mouth disease and \$39 million is allocated to market assurance services, animal and plant health risk containment, surveillance and emergency response capability.

GOVERNMENT FINANCES

Mr Speaker, the capacity for our Government to continue to improve the quality and range of services and infrastructure to the Queensland community is underpinned by our commitment to strong fiscal management.

This Budget provides for a net operating surplus of \$153 million with growing surpluses over the forward estimates period.

Our balance sheet is strong with total State net worth forecast to grow to more than \$60 billion in 2003-04.

All the major ratings agencies recognise the strength of our fiscal position by confirming our AAA credit rating.

In our Mid Year Fiscal and Economic Review we indicated that the continuing volatility in equity markets would impact on the 2002-03 operating result and a deficit of \$741 million was forecast on the basis of investment returns of zero.

Despite the fact that equity markets have continued to under-perform and a consequent revision to our investment return expectations to negative 3%, the forecast deficit for 2002-03 has improved to \$350 million. This reflects improvements in other revenues and reduced expenses.

Our policy of fully funding superannuation liabilities means that while we have stronger finances than any other State by a considerable margin, it does create volatility in annual budget results. This volatility is manageable given our very strong balance sheet and does not impact on our capacity to maintain and improve services.

This is highlighted by the fact that if Queensland's superannuation arrangements were structured on the same basis as other jurisdictions, the General Government sector underlying operating result for 2002-03 would be a surplus of \$587 million.

In aggregate terms, General Government expenses will grow by 5.3% on last year's Budget to \$21.2 billion. Importantly we are giving a clear priority to key service delivery areas.

The Health budget is growing by almost 7%, the Disability Services budget is growing by over 16% and housing assistance programs by 11%.

REVENUES

The Beattie Government has a clear commitment to maintaining a competitive tax regime.

The Budget forecasts that in 2003-04 Queenslanders will pay \$1,480 per capita in State taxes compared with \$1,892 per capita for the average of the other states.

This means that taxpayers in other states pay 28% more than Queenslanders.

Mr Speaker, Queensland's land tax regime is not onerous compared to the other States. According to the Commonwealth Grants Commission, Queensland's land tax effort in 2001-02 was the lowest in the nation at about 28% less than the national average.

Nevertheless, the Government recognises that rising land values will have a significant community impact with some 11,000 new taxpayers expected in 2003-04 under existing land tax provisions.

In order to provide a measure of land tax relief, particularly to those with lower land holdings, I am pleased to announce that with effect from 1 July 2003:

- the statutory deduction for residents will be increased from \$200,000 to \$220,000;
- the minimum tax payable by resident taxpayers will be increased from \$100 to \$350. In other words taxpayers with a tax liability of less than \$350 will not be liable for land tax; and
- the exemption threshold for companies, trustees and absentees will be increased from \$150,000 to \$170,000 with a consequential extension of the phasing-in rebate.

The combination of the statutory deduction increase and the increase in the minimum tax level will mean that residents with landholdings (excluding their principal place of residence) of less than \$275,997 will not be liable for land tax. Without these changes residents with landholdings of \$221,665 or more would have had to pay land tax.

This reduces the number of resident taxpayers in 2003-04 by around 11,400 relative to the number of taxpayers in the absence of these changes. In fact, there will be around 3,050 fewer resident taxpayers compared to 2002-03.

Further, all resident land taxpayers will benefit from the \$20,000 increase in the statutory deduction.

The \$20,000 increase in the threshold for companies, trustees and absentees will constrain the increase in the number of taxpayers to around 450. Without the threshold increase the number of company, trustee and absentee taxpayers would have grown by around 2,750.

In addition, companies, trustees and absentees with land holdings between \$170,000 and \$235,000 will benefit from an increased phasing-in rebate.

The Government will forgo revenue of \$11.6 million as a result of these concessions.

ACCOUNTABILITY LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

Mr Speaker, in delivering on our social and fiscal objectives, the Beattie Government will continue to demonstrate high standards of accountability, leadership and innovation.

We are committed to delivering cost effective services to the community and to finding smarter ways to operate and deliver services.

This Budget provides \$4 million over two years to expand services available to the public through our single access point, Smart Service Queensland.

We are also investing in new information technology systems with an additional allocation of \$64 million over the next three years for an integrated justice information strategy, a single integrated revenue system for the Office of State Revenue, major upgrades to police information and communication technology systems and disability services information systems.

To provide high-quality and cost-effective corporate support services we are implementing a shared services initiative from 1 July this year. This initiative will consolidate corporate service functions such as finance and pay-roll into five large-scale and two smaller-scale shared service providers and a technology centre of skill.

The Beattie Government is also seeking to incorporate private sector innovation to achieve better value for money in the delivery of public infrastructure. The Government is currently considering a range of projects for private sector involvement and has recently sought expressions of interest for the delivery of the infrastructure and non-core services required for the Southbank Education and Training Precinct.

CONCLUSION

Mr Speaker, I am very proud to have delivered the third Budget of the second Beattie Government.

The Budgets I have presented have:

- delivered on fully funding all the Government's commitments;
- delivered on education and training reforms for the future;
- delivered on funding for family services and particularly child protection;
- delivered improved health services;
- delivered a better deal to people with disabilities; and
- delivered a better quality of life for all Queenslanders.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Springborg, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.14 p.m.): I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.14 p.m.