



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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Subject **FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT** Page

Thursday, 7 June 2007

PRIVILEGE	1937
Alleged Misleading of the House	1937
PRIVILEGE	1937
Speaker's Ruling—Alleged Misleading of the House	1937
SPEAKER'S RULING	1938
Procedure—Incorporation of Material	1938
PETITION	1938
TABLED PAPER	1938
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS	1938
Cape York Peninsula	1938
Young Drivers	1939
Nature Refuge Program	1940
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Copy of Premier's media release (undated) titled 'Half a million reasons to celebrate nature: Premier', and attachment	1940
South-East Asian Tsunami Relief Program	1941
Queensland Roars Against Racism	1941
Smart Awards	1942
Queensland Talents Rock MUSEXPO	1942
Forgan-Smith, Mr W	1943
Rolfe, Mr R	1943
Traveston Dam	1944
Water Grid	1945
Vehicle Confiscation Laws	1945
Young Drivers	1946
National Bowel Cancer Awareness Week	1946
National Livestock Identification System	1947
Patel, Dr J; Compensation Claims	1947
Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Water Supply Strategy	1947
Yangan, Water Pipeline	1948
Ergon Energy	1948
Koala Habitat Mapping	1949

Table of Contents — Thursday, 7 June 2007

Housing Needs	1949
Gold Coast, Marine Industry	1950
MOTION	1950
Suspension of Standing Orders	1950
CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL; APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL	1950
Remaining Stages; Cognate Debate	1950
Speaker's Ruling—Motion Not Allowable	1952
Division: Question put—That motion be agreed to	1953
Resolved in the affirmative	1953
Speaker's Ruling—Procedure for Members Wishing to Speak	1953
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	1953
Western Corridor Recycled Water Project	1953
Western Corridor Recycled Water Project	1954
Infrastructure Funding	1955
Water Assets	1955
Water Reserves	1956
Traffic Congestion	1956
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Copy of an RACQ document dated May 2007 titled '2007 Travel Time Survey'	1956
Fuel Prices	1957
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Copy of a letter dated 3 April 2007 from Hon Bligh to Hon P Costello, Commonwealth Treasurer	1957
Gold Coast Rail Line	1958
Ergon Energy, Childers Substation Upgrade	1959
Gladstone Electorate, Leukaemia	1959
Corrective Services, Water Policy	1959
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Copy of a Queensland Corrective Services document (undated) titled 'Procedure-Water Conservation'	1959
Queensland Rail	1960
Ethanol	1961
Patel, Dr J	1961
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT	1962
Unemployment Rate	1962
CAPE YORK PENINSULA HERITAGE BILL	1962
First Reading	1962
Second Reading	1962
CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL; APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL	1965
Second Reading (Cognate Debate)	1965
<i>Tabled paper:</i> A page headed 'Chart 10: Individual state net debt by sector (as at end of financial year)' from a document titled 'Fiscal developments in the States'	1970
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document dated 14 August 2006 by Albert A Bartlett titled 'A Depletion Protocol for Non-renewable Natural resources: Australia as an Example'	1988
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Background paper dated March 2007 prepared by Energy Watch Group titled 'Coal: Resources and Future Production'	1989
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document dated February 2007 by B Kavalov and S D Peteves titled 'The Future of Coal'	1989
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document, undated, titled 'List of groups for the Mt Ommaney Electorate'	1997
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Press Release, dated 17 August 2006, issued by Premier, relating to increase of beds at Bundaberg Hospital, expansion of the emergency department and upgrade of rehabilitation services	2009
SITTING DAYS AND HOURS; ORDER OF BUSINESS	2018
CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL; APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL	2018
Second Reading (Cognate Debate)	2018
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document detailing the Budget allocation for the Capalaba Electorate	2056
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Chart titled 'Ratio of Queensland Public Hospital Beds to 1000 people'	2069
SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT	2082
ADJOURNMENT	2082
Future Leaders Eco Challenge 2007	2082
Mathers, Mr I	2082
Kawana Electorate, Public Hospital Facilities	2083
National Heart Foundation, Go Red for Women Day	2083
Robina Hospital, Palliative Care	2084
Gaven Electorate, Emergency Services Demonstration Day	2084
Voluntary Carbon Credit Trading	2085
Beenleigh Cane Festival	2085
100 Years of Scouting	2086
Tidal and Storm Surge, Insurance Coverage	2087
ATTENDANCE	2087

THURSDAY, 7 JUNE 2007

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. MF Reynolds, Townsville) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 am.

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. MF Reynolds, Townsville) acknowledged the traditional owners of the land upon which this parliament is assembled and the custodians of the sacred lands of our state.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Misleading of the House

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—NPA) (9.32 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. Yesterday in the House the Premier said in a ministerial statement—

Over the past 24 hours the rainfall in the catchments at Wivenhoe and Somerset has been registered as 30 millimetres at the wall at Wivenhoe, 30 millimetres to 50 millimetres in Upper Wivenhoe, and 50 millimetres at Somerset.

Mr SPEAKER: Excuse me, I ask the member for Gympie: is this a matter of personal privilege? Then it is not a matter of privilege. There is no matter of privilege you have raised in this. If it is a matter where you have disagreed with what the Premier has indicated, that is a matter for yourself. A matter of privilege is when there is something said in the parliament which has offended you personally.

Mr GIBSON: Mr Speaker, I am alleging that the Premier has misled the parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Keep on going.

Mr GIBSON: The Premier then said—

I am also happy to report that the catchment area for the future Traveston Dam recorded falls of up to 70 millimetres. What an ideal place to build a dam!

Mr SPEAKER: This is not a matter of privilege.

Mr GIBSON: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: This is not a matter of privilege. It is a matter that you can take up with the government in debate.

Mr GIBSON: Mr Speaker, the Bureau of Meteorology figures show that for the Mary River catchment—

Mr SPEAKER: Can I just say to the member for Gympie—

Mr GIBSON: There is no 70 millimetres recorded in any of the catchment areas.

Mr SPEAKER: Can I indicate to the member for Gympie that I am quite prepared for you to write to me about this matter and I will consider it.

Mr GIBSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling—Alleged Misleading of the House

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I refer to the matter of privilege raised by the member for Burdekin yesterday morning alleging that the Minister for Natural Resources and Water had deliberately misled the House when rising to a point of order on Tuesday, 5 June 2007. I have received and considered the member's correspondence. I have also received and considered correspondence from the Minister for Natural Resources and Water on this matter. I have also considered the parliamentary record from 5 June 2007 and a media interview from 4 June 2007.

A case has not been made to me that the Minister for Natural Resources and Water has misled the House deliberately or otherwise. On the evidence before me, the minister was misquoted by the media and was attempting to point that out to the House. The transcript of the original interview of 4 June clearly confirms that the minister was misquoted. The member alleged that the minister on 5 June implied that he contacted the ABC regarding the correction prior to his point of order. I have read the parliamentary record carefully and I do not believe that such an implication can be made and certainly not in any unequivocal manner. I will not be referring the matter to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Procedure—Incorporation of Material

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, in accordance with recent practice I advise that for the debate on the appropriation bills, which is commencing today, I am willing to relax the general rules for incorporation of material. Members may incorporate a portion of their speech in the second reading debate. The following rules must, however, be followed: the member's total speech must not exceed that which would normally be allowed in a 20-minute speech—thus no speech should exceed 3,500 words; speeches should not include graphs, charts or other material; members must be able to provide Hansard their speech in electronic form; all speeches must be shown to me, as Speaker, or the Deputy Speaker prior to leave being sought for incorporation. I thank members of the opposition and members of the government for complying with my request of some days ago. If I or the Deputy Speaker have any speeches before us that can be incorporated, they will be incorporated if I or the Deputy Speaker have seen them.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek further clarification on your ruling. With regard to the proportion that you say would be acceptable, do you mean five minutes or 10 minutes? The other thing that concerns me about the ruling, given the practice that we have seen in recent times, is that this chamber is a debating chamber. When a member makes a speech in this place you can clearly see if there are imputations or points which require debate consequently by other members of this place. If a matter is incorporated in *Hansard*, that opportunity is not given to other members in this place.

Mr SPEAKER: Can I just say that that is the very reason it is shown to me. For example, this morning the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party has quite rightly shown me a speech that he may need to incorporate for a private member's bill today. That is a very important private member's bill from the member's perspective that is dealing with justice and law. I wanted to make absolutely sure that there was no interpretation of that speech that could indeed imply any suggestions against the judiciary. I have satisfied myself that that is not the case.

In terms of the appropriation bills, both the Deputy Speaker and I will be carefully looking at those speeches that members want to incorporate and indeed will be ruling—if there is an aspersion cast on a member of this chamber, for example, we may well go back to the member and say, 'That part should not be incorporated,' or indicating that. That is why they are coming to me, as the Speaker, and to Deputy Speaker. I think the ruling that I am making is a fair ruling to all members of parliament.

PETITION

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

Local Government Reform

Mr Hobbs, from 1,185 petitioners, requesting the House to oppose the forced amalgamation of Queensland Councils.

TABLED PAPER

MINISTERIAL PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism (Ms Nelson-Carr)—

- Response from the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism (Ms Nelson-Carr) to an e-petition sponsored by Mr Gibson from 1,549 petitioners regarding the proposed closure of Hook Point beach access on Fraser Island

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Cape York Peninsula

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.40 am): Later this morning I will introduce the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Bill 2007. This legislation represents one of the most significant land management initiatives in the history of Queensland. After months of negotiation between our government, the Indigenous community, conservation interests, the mining industry and the pastoral industry we have reached agreement on the resolution of outstanding land tenure and management issues on our beautiful Cape York Peninsula.

The agreement reaches common ground between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and between conservation and development interests. It is a framework for the future to undertake ecologically sustainable development in the region. For Indigenous communities it will: create a new class of protected area that will enable national parks to be created over Aboriginal land without the

need for lease-back arrangements and provide a simple, cheaper alternative to land tenure processes; designate Indigenous community use areas within Aboriginal land that are suitable for aquaculture, agriculture or grazing purposes and create, for those areas, a limited capacity for clearing under the Vegetation Management Act 1999; create the ability for land trusts with land in national parks to form subregional aggregations for the purposes of negotiating resources and management; allow the commercial use of crocodile products derived from eggs collected from the wild as part of a scientific study into the viability of this activity on western Cape York Peninsula—this initiative will be subject to review after one year of operation because we understand its sensitivity; identify resources for an Indigenous arts program and assessment of other economic development opportunities; provide for the protection of native title rights in the Wild Rivers Act 2000; and establish an Aboriginal environmental rangers program whose responsibility will include management of wild rivers.

For conservation interests it will: designate areas of international conservation significance to give initial recognition to World Heritage values and development of integrated management plans for national parks and nature refuges in these areas; remove impediments to the declaration of national parks through the establishment of joint management arrangements with Indigenous landowners; and provide a way forward to achieve the declaration of wild rivers in Cape York Peninsula.

For the pastoral industry it will: provide an ability for lessees to access rural lease terms of up to 75 years if they take action to protect World Heritage values and enter into an Indigenous land use agreement concerning use and access rights for traditional owners; require that the Minister for Natural Resources and Water consider the impact on the Cape York grazing industry of any decision to transfer a lease or to convert the lease to another tenure in the interests of ensuring that a viable grazing industry remains part of the Cape York future economy.

In implementing this legislation, the Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism will consult with an advisory committee comprising all key stakeholder interests including Aboriginal people, pastoralists, conservation interests, mining interests, tourism and local government.

This agreement helps fulfil our 2006 election commitment. I can also reaffirm our commitment to allocate \$15 million for voluntary land acquisition for the dual purposes of the protection of conservation values and the continued return of homelands to traditional owners as the basis for an economic future.

Many organisations have contributed to this historic agreement and I would like to acknowledge their efforts. I acknowledge the member for Cook, the Cape York Land Council, the Wilderness Society, the Australian Conservation Foundation, AgForce and the Queensland Resources Council, my caucus committee and, of course, my parliamentary colleagues. Through a spirit of endeavour and cooperation I believe that we have put in place a blueprint for a new future in the Cape York Peninsula. Today following question time there will be a major announcement and launch of this legislation and any member who wishes to attend is invited.

Young Drivers

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.43 am): Young drivers between 17 and 24 are Queensland's most at risk road users. They are at least 2½ times more likely to die as a result of a road crash than other motorists. Last year there were 108 fatalities as a result of crashes involving young drivers or riders—that is 32 per cent of the Queensland road toll.

Road safety remains a top priority for my government. From 1 July changes to the way young people obtain a drivers licence will come into effect, changes that we believe are vital in addressing young driver deaths on our roads. The new measures include changes to the age at which young people can get their learners, the introduction of P-plates and the banning of high-powered vehicles for new young drivers, just to name a few. Later today the minister for transport, Paul Lucas, will launch a statewide campaign to inform Queenslanders about these changes. It is being designed to inform young drivers, their parents and the community of the major changes that come into force in three weeks.

The transport minister will be joined by the police minister, Judy Spence, who will also launch a campaign to inform Queenslanders of the Queensland government's groundbreaking vehicle confiscation laws which will also come into effect on 1 July. These new laws will enable police to confiscate the vehicles of drivers who repeatedly drink drive, drive while unlicensed, unregistered or disqualified or repeatedly drive illegally modified vehicles.

My government introduced tough anti-hooning laws in 2002 to confiscate the vehicles of drivers caught for offences such as burnouts and street racing. These new laws will provide further deterrents for irresponsible behaviour on our roads and expand the range of offences for which people can lose their car. The state government cannot reduce the road toll on its own, but we are committed to working with the community to reduce deaths on our roads and these tough new laws will help us do this. I would urge parents, when their young adults are coming up to that time where they apply for their licence, to talk to their young adults as to how to behave on the road and to behave responsibly. We need their help.

Nature Refuge Program

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.46 am): Queensland's Nature Refuge Program now covers more than half a million hectares of our state's natural and cultural heritage. It is a growing network of 242 nature refuges totalling 561,000 hectares of some of the most diverse ecosystems on the planet. The environment minister, Lindy Nelson-Carr, and I will announce later today that 19 new refuges have signed up to this important statewide network and there are more on the way. We will be joined today by landowner and founder of Flight Centre, Graham Turner, who has agreed to sign up his third property to this important conservation initiative. When gazetted, Mr Turner's commitment will sign up another 2,080 hectares of land that borders the World Heritage listed Main Range National Park.

Our nature refuges protect areas of high conservation value while at the same time allow their ongoing sustainable use. This means that landholders can go on managing their enterprises while protecting their land's unique values. The landowners who sign up are playing a critical role in protecting species and ecosystems that are underrepresented in national parks. They also are making an incredible investment in our environment for which future generations will thank them.

The Queensland government's Nature Refuge Program is a truly outstanding example of cooperation and partnership at all levels. Its success is no doubt being monitored by the Commonwealth and other state governments. I congratulate Mr Turner and I thank him and all landholders who have signed up to this important initiative.

I table a news release providing further details and I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* the Queensland Nature Refuge gazettals announcement for June 2007.

Tabled paper: Copy of Premier's media release (undated) titled 'Half a million reasons to celebrate nature: Premier', and attachment.

Leave granted.

Queensland Nature Refuge gazettals announcement—June 2007

South west

Carnarvon Station (59,018 ha)

- grassy woodlands, dramatic sandstone cliffs, natural freshwater springs and great expanses of native grassland. The nature refuge also protects vulnerable animal and plant species including the barking owl and the king bluegrass

South east

Old Hidden Vale (3091 ha) Ipswich

- diverse regional ecosystems between Main Range National Park and Mistake Mountain Range habitat for rare and threatened species including the vulnerable glossy black cockatoo, the rare square-tailed kite and the koala.

Thornton View (352.2 ha) Laidley

- a state significant vegetation corridor for wildlife including the vulnerable brush-tailed rock wallaby and koala, along the Scenic Rim of Mistake Mountain Range

Jilumbar (8.01 ha) Sunshine Coast

- natural wildlife corridors "of state significance" linking lowland area on the Sunshine Coast to the Blackall Range and Kondalilla National Park

Kalisha (26.3 ha) Gatton

- Gatton bushland being restored to its former glory by removing exotic species and clearing walking tracks—site for nature conservation education

Penda Scrub (7.96 ha) Sunshine Coast

- habitat for endangered wildlife such as the giant barred-frog and red goshawk, the vulnerable three-toed snake tooth skinks and spotted-tailed quoll

Dahmongah (16.19 ha) Mount Mee

- Similar vegetation to eucalyptus forest—home to rare and threatened species including endangered native jute species.

Eagle's Nest (24 ha)

- remnant and regrowth Eucalyptus and dune plants. Also protects suitable habitat for endangered hill slopes trees and threatened flora and fauna

Ukikuna (90.7 ha) Maleny

- endangered eucalyptus and other regional ecosystems

Central

Rivercal (40.9 ha) Callide

- regenerating areas of brigalow and belah open forest and eucalyptus forest supporting koalas, tree dwelling marsupials, owls and woodland birds

North

Stuart Creek (21.7 ha) Townsville

- environmental rehabilitation by Queensland Rail. Home to migratory birds including the great egret, cattle egret, white-bellied sea eagle and white-throated needletail

Rose Gums (85 ha) Atherton Tableland

- the site of an award-winning wilderness retreat at which provides habitat for the endangered southern cassowary, rare grey goshawk, blue-faced parrot-finch and tapping green-eyed frog

Maroobi Park (10.4 ha) Wet Tropics

- key wildlife landscape linkages between Lake Barrine and Lake Eacham sections of Crater Lakes National Park in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

Melsonby (Gaarraay) (3610 ha)

- Sandstone escarpments, and riverine and riparian environments including the Normanby River and Bridge Creek—complimenting the natural and cultural values of the adjacent Jack River National Park, Melsonby (Gaarraay) National Park and nearby Lakefield National Park (3610ha).

South-East Asian Tsunami Relief Program

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.47 am): It is now almost 2½ years since the Boxing Day tsunami devastated wide areas of South-East Asia and cost about 200,000 people their lives. The tragedy provoked a wave of compassion throughout the world, including here in Queensland. The Queensland government committed more than \$10 million to the South-East Asian Tsunami Relief Program including donations totalling \$1.5 million to the Australian Red Cross, World Vision, Oxfam and Care Australia. This funding is supporting projects in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand. I seek leave to incorporate further details in *Hansard* so members are aware of the stage this program has reached.

Leave granted.

Additionally, funds raised from the From the Gold Coast with Love appeal and the Sunshine Coast Rebuilding Kumari appeal, which the Queensland Government matched dollar for dollar, have also been added to the Sri Lankan relief efforts.

The Queensland Government is supporting a housing and community development program which will provide new homes and community facilities in two Sri Lankan villages.

In Indonesia, Queensland is funding a project to provide housing for displaced civil servants who in turn can then better respond to the demands of their duties as health providers, teachers, social workers, police and other service providers.

The Queensland Government is also funding two initial phases of a geothermal power plant development to provide power for people in Aceh.

In Thailand, Queensland is funding a sustainable tourism project which will create community prosperity through assisting local authorities to develop tourism with environmental sustainability.

The Queensland Government also committed \$500,000 to the victims of the Central Java earthquake that occurred in May 2005.

Since we started the aid project, \$6,466,000 of the total funding package has been spent, with all projects to be completed by June 2008.

Queensland had its own possible tsunami threat on April 2 this year, an event that has reinforced the importance of the Australian Tsunami Warning System project.

I have written to the Prime Minister urging him to take whatever steps he can to accelerate this project because we need the best possible systems and processes in place to protect people living in coastal Queensland.

Mr BEATTIE: In conclusion on this point, Queensland had its own possible tsunami threat on 2 April this year, an event that has reinforced the importance of the Australian Tsunami Warning System Project. I have written to the Prime Minister urging him to take whatever steps he can to accelerate this project because we need the best possible systems and processes in place to protect people living in coastal Queensland.

Queensland Roars Against Racism

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.49 am): On my recent trade mission to South Africa I announced an important anti racism initiative, Queensland Roars Against Racism. The minister for multiculturalism referred to this yesterday. I am delighted to advise the House today of the great support this 1 July event has received. I urge members to attend it. I seek leave to incorporate more details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Sponsors now include Channel Ten, The Courier-Mail, Buffalo Sports Queensland, and Seaworld.

On top of that, Ipswich Grammar School is providing transport for the visiting SuperSport United team from South Africa.

All of these organisations are partnering Multicultural Affairs Queensland for this socially responsible cause.

Mr Speaker, as you know, we are very fortunate here in Queensland to have a rich, multicultural outlook.

So I again extend an invitation to all Members to come along on Sunday 1 July and 'Red Card Racism'.

Smart Awards

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.49 am): Innovation and creativity are the driving forces behind the success of the Smart State. They have become such an integral part of the way business is done in Queensland that we now expect Queensland businesses to be leaders in their field. My government has worked hard to create a business climate and a business culture where innovation is prized. Tonight at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre I will host the 2007 Premier of Queensland Smart Awards presentation dinner along with Minister John Mickel. Smart Awards, now in the fifth year, continue to reward innovative Queensland based businesses for demonstrating what it takes to succeed. The awards celebrate the role of smart business in building industries that are unique, innovative and knowledge based and they will help to continue to broaden the base of the economy. I seek leave to incorporate more details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Thanks to our sponsors we're able to once again offer cash prizes of \$10,000 to each of our six category winners, with the overall winner also receiving \$10,000 worth of Qantas flights.

This year we've had close to 100 applications for the Smart Awards—so the judges have really had their work cut out for them.

There are six award categories: They are:

- Rising Star
- Food and agribusiness
- Large manufacturing and mining
- Science, innovation and technology
- Services, including creative industries, and
- Small-to-medium manufacturing and mining.

There is also an overall winner who will receive the Premier of Queensland's Smart Award of the Year.

It is always a great event and I look forward to reporting back to Parliament tomorrow on the great Queensland companies that have been honoured as this year's award recipients.

Queensland Talents Rock MUSEXPO

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 am): One of the areas where the Smart State is seeing expansion relates to the music industry. Queensland musicians and music industry representatives who have been showing off their talents at MUSEXPO in Los Angeles have been rewarded with licensing deals, movie placements for songs and interest from major labels. This year the Queensland government provided funding for Pete Murray, Tyrone Noonan and Transport to attend the expo from 29 April to 2 May.

We are now regarded as one of the hot spots in terms of the music industry around the world. I seek leave to incorporate details in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Each of the acts performed evening showcase concerts in front of some of the world's most influential music industry decision-makers.

So far we have assisted 10 acts to attend Musement since it started in 2005. And our support has been well placed.

Since 2005, Queensland's talents have notched up a number of successes through Musement.

Resin Dogs have been invited to rock the prestigious Californian Coachella Festival in 2008.

Hydrofunk Records has signed a worldwide digital agreement.

Pete Murray performed for executives at Touchstone Pictures Studios and was offered endorsement by Gibson Guitars.

He has also been invited to appear at 2008 Canadian Music Week, and drew interest from several North American labels.

Transport was signed up by LA-based agents TKO. They have recorded a live set for airplay and sale to mobile networks, cable TV, and podcasts.

They also secured licensing and representation for their album *The Inner Chimp* in Canada and have been invited to showcase at Canadian Music Week.

Intercooler landed three licensing deals, including a US Volvo ad, placement on TV show *Degrassi High*, and a song for the movie *I told you so*, due for release in the US shortly.

And Q Music's Big Sound conference has signed a partnership agreement with Canadian Music Week and has also developed business ties with LA-based A&R Worldwide.

All in all, its great news for Queenslanders with lots of musical talent and big ambitions to make it on the world stage.

Forgan-Smith, Mr W

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.50 am): This month will mark the 75th anniversary of Mr William Forgan-Smith becoming Premier of Queensland, and I would like to pay tribute to one of our state's great former leaders—

A government member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: That is right, he was member for Mackay.

A government member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, he was one of the builders of modern Queensland. Seventy-five years after William Forgan-Smith became Premier we remember him for the way he boldly led Queensland out of the Depression, for his state development and defence of state rights. He was a great leader in tough times. I seek leave to incorporate details of that tribute in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Within four years of immigrating to Mackay at the age of 24, Scottish-born Forgan Smith had joined the Australian Workers' Union, become president of the local branch of the Workers' Political Organisation, vice-president of the local Trades and Labor Council, married a farmer's daughter and been elected to this place as the member for Mackay.

His talents were soon recognised and he became minister without portfolio assisting Premier Theodore in 1920, Secretary for Public Works in 1922 and Secretary for Agriculture and Stock in 1925.

Caucus elected him Labor Parliamentary Leader and Leader of the Opposition in 1929 and his leadership helped Labor regain Government in 1932 when he became Premier and Treasurer.

Mr Speaker, Forgan Smith was instrumental in reshaping Australia's approach to recovering from the Depression and went on to finance massive public works schemes in Queensland as he worked to improve the economy and reduce unemployment.

The projects included the building of the Story Bridge, Somerset Dam and an upgrade of Mackay's harbour.

When the University of Queensland decided in 1935 to commence construction at the St Lucia site the project became one of the Forgan Smith Government's major developments of the 1930's depression years, specifically aimed at creating employment.

His involvement is commemorated in the naming of the first completed building on the site.

Three months after the 10th anniversary of his premiership, Forgan Smith chose to retire.

He became Chancellor of the University Queensland in 1944, a position he held until his death in 1953.

Rolfe, Mr R

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.51 am): I also want to pay tribute to Ross Rolfe, my director-general, who is departing. He concludes a distinguished career on 6 July this year. Ross will take leave from Friday, 29 June, effectively his last day in the role. Mr Rolfe has been a creative and hardworking public servant. He has coordinated and helped implement many key initiatives of my government. I seek leave to incorporate a tribute to him in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, I have had three Directors General since becoming Premier—Professor Glyn Davis, Dr Leo Keliher and Ross Rolfe, with Eric Bigby acting for the initial two-month period from 26 June to 28 August 1998.

Glyn Davis—from 28.8.98 to 7.1.2002 (3 years, 4 months 1 week);

(Eric Bigby acted from 26th June to 28th August 1998)

Leo Keliher—from 8.1.2002 to 9.11.2005 (3 years, 10 months) and

Ross Rolfe—from 10.11.2005 to 6.7.2007 (1 year, 8 months)

Professor Davis fleshed out my smart state vision in the early days of the establishment of my government along with my Biotech and education policies and Dr Keliher helped to implement those programs.

Mr Rolfe has been a creative and hardworking public servant. He has coordinated and helped implement many key initiatives of my government.

Mr Rolfe's public service career includes periods as Director-General of the Department of Environment and Heritage, the Department of State Development, Coordinator-General and Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

In January 2002 he became Chief Executive Officer of Stanwell Corporation.

Mr Rolfe was Coordinator-General from August 1998 to January 2002 and again from July 2005 to December 2006.

As Director-General of State Development, and Coordinator-General, Mr Rolfe was responsible for implementing my Government's strategy and policies in many areas.

This included advancing the Queensland Government's policies and plans regarding:

- the stimulation of the growth of research into life sciences and biotechnology;
- the commercialisation of scientific research and new technologies;
- the development of the aviation industry and the attraction of Virgin Airlines and Qantas Heavy Maintenance industry;
- the development of the boat building and marine industry sector; and
- the negotiation of the SEQ Forest Agreement.

He was also responsible for implementing my Government's facilitation and construction of a range of private and public sector projects including:

- the Comalco Aluminium project in Gladstone; research precincts such as the Boggo Road Science precinct; and
- a range of research centres at the University of Queensland, QUT and Griffith Universities.

He oversaw the building of the Paradise Dam and he co-ordinated the development of the first State-wide Infrastructure Plan.

Ross also worked on my Government's first energy policy in 2000.

He helped to drive my vigorous program to attract new industry to the State and deepen Queensland's penetration into new export markets.

When he was again appointed as Coordinator-General in 2005 I tasked Mr Rolfe with the responsibility of developing and successfully implementing the largest major infrastructure program of public and private sector projects being undertaken in Queensland's history.

This included not only overseeing the implementation of the SEQ Plan, but also facilitating the development of a broad range of coal-related infrastructure projects and developing the State-wide and SEQ water grids.

As Director-General of my Department he has worked closely with my Ministers and me in developing the Government's:

- Health Action Plan;
- co-ordinating the Queensland Government response to Cyclone Larry;
- designing the Northern Economic Development Strategy; and
- developing the Government's recently released policies on climate change.

Mr Rolfe has also been central to the implementation of my Government's reforms on the environment in areas such as forest policy, Cape York and Wild Rivers.

He has worked closely with me to ensure that environmental protection policies are implemented in ways that respect the need for balance between industry growth, Indigenous interests and the rights of landholders.

More recently, he has worked closely with all other Departments in implementing the Government's broad future policy agenda.

He has been a tireless and dedicated worker for the people of Queensland and one who has always conducted himself in a highly ethical way—driven by a desire to serve the Government and people of Queensland.

I thank Ross for his dedication and a job well done and wish him and his family all the best for the future.

Traveston Dam

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.51 am): Yesterday I advised the House that the catchment area for the future Traveston Dam recorded falls of up to 70 millimetres. I understand—and I have had a discussion with Peter Wellington, the member for Nicklin, who raised this issue with me—that some residents questioned this detail as it did not match their experience. I thank the member for Nicklin for raising this matter. As we all know, he is a straight shooter and he always raises matters that are of concern—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, but no-one takes the member mentioned in the interjection seriously. I am talking about the member for Nicklin. I can report today that the Bureau of Meteorology web site—

Mr GIBSON: I rise to a point of order. I take offence at the implied remarks that the Premier made about me. I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, I thought there was an interjection from this side. I do not know. I made no reference to—

Mr SPEAKER: It was the member for Lockyer who was using it behind that big arm of his.

Mr BEATTIE: My comment was in relation to the member for Lockyer, but frankly, I am quite happy to take the member's point. If he is worried about being taken seriously he should behave himself.

I can report today that the Bureau of Meteorology web site reports that Maleny, high in the catchment, received rainfall of 70 millimetres in the 72 hours prior to yesterday morning. It has since received a further 32 millimetres. In total it has now received more than 100 millimetres. Other gauging stations in the catchment such as Obi Obi lookout have received 77 millimetres in the last 48 hours.

The catchment area for this dam is very widespread, including the upper reaches of the Mary River, and rainfall patterns will vary across such a large area. I understand that not everybody would have received it. My comment was in relation to the catchment area and I stand by the Bureau of Meteorology web site. I hope I have clarified it for the member for Nicklin. I am always happy to clarify these things when he raises them with me.

Water Grid

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (9.54 am): Activity on the south-east Queensland water grid continues to forge ahead. In the last week and a half, the Premier and I have made a significant announcement in relation to the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project and visited the Gold Coast desalination plant. Last week we announced extra funding to deliver purified recycled water from the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project to Wivenhoe Dam in October 2008—two months sooner than originally anticipated. The funding boost will also provide up to an extra 22 million litres a day of purified recycled water to the dam.

Last week, the Premier and I also visited the Gold Coast desalination plant at Tugun to unveil the first of two 3.5-metre diameter tunnel-boring machines. Over the coming weeks this machine will be lowered into the intake shaft and will commence operations to cut the approximately 2.2 kilometre long marine intake tunnel, which will draw water into the desalination plant. This process, like the plant's overall construction, remains on schedule.

In terms of wider progress on the water grid, I am pleased to again advise the House that work continues at pace. While rain over the past days has stopped some of the physical outdoor works progressing, it has provided an opportunity for crews to undergo scheduled workplace skills and safety training instead of doing it on dry days. Indoor works are still proceeding. Many of the project components, such as the pumps, switchboards, membranes and pipes are fabricated offsite away from work fronts. The professional staff are continuing planning and design work.

The construction programs do have some rain delays built into them, so I am confident that the projects will be delivered to program. As of this week, total pipeline laid across the grid is more than 50 kilometres. This consists of more than 24 kilometres on the southern regional water pipeline and more than 26 kilometres of pipeline in the ground on the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project. In fact, the pipeline between the Swanbank Power Station and Bundamba advanced water treatment plant is now 87 per cent complete.

Work is also progressing on all of the advanced water treatment plants. At Bundamba the fourth reverse osmosis membrane unit is expected to arrive this week. Construction of the north Beaudesert balance tanks and pump stations on the southern regional water pipeline are also progressing to plan. Pre-construction activities on the northern and eastern pipeline interconnector projects are progressing, particularly design development, environmental impact assessment works and procurement of long lead time items.

I am pleased that residents of the region are taking up the fight. The latest figures released by the Queensland Water Commission indicate a further decline in water consumption across south-east Queensland. For the week ending Friday, 1 June, average per person consumption was down from 149 litres a day to 147 litres a day. It may seem a small amount, but it is a reduction that contributed to the region's aggregate saving of 49 million litres of water in just one week. It is a terrific effort by south-east Queensland households and I thank them for it.

It has also been wonderful to see the recent rainfalls, but I call on south-east Queensland residents to continue to keep their focus on water saving this week. Even though we have seen the best rain in recent times, there is no room for complacency.

Vehicle Confiscation Laws

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (9.57 am): This government takes a tough stance when it comes to drivers who have a flagrant disregard for the law and the safety and wellbeing of their fellow road users. This government introduced groundbreaking anti-hooning legislation in 2002, which has resulted in 3,531 vehicles being confiscated in Queensland. Of those 3,531 drivers who have had their vehicles confiscated for a repeat offence, only 75 people have been detected committing a hooning offence for a second time, and only four have been caught a third time. These ongoing reductions highlight the effectiveness of the laws.

We will not stop here. From 1 July, additional vehicle confiscation laws will come into effect, and I am confident they will enhance the existing laws and act as a further deterrent for those irresponsible drivers on our roads. They will target repeat drink drivers, those repeatedly caught driving unlicensed or disqualified, and those repeatedly caught driving unregistered or illegally modified vehicles. Those caught committing these types of offences on more than one occasion will have their vehicles confiscated for 48 hours. If they are caught a third time, they will lose their car for three months and a fourth offence could see them lose their vehicle permanently. Queenslanders will not foot the bill for these hoons. Anyone who loses their car will have to pay for its towing and storage on top of any fine or other penalty they may receive from the courts.

These new laws will be piloted in the north coast and southern police regions and will then be rolled out across the state with the aim to help reduce the number of lives ruined by death and injuries on our roads. These regions have been selected for the pilot as they recorded some of the worst road fatalities in 2006 and again this year.

An extensive newspaper advertising campaign will be launched by the Queensland Police Service in coming weeks warning drivers who repeatedly break the law that their dangerous and irresponsible behaviour can result in the loss of their vehicle. Queensland drivers need to know that this government is determined to tackle the serious problems of drink driving, unlicensed and disqualified driving and the driving of unregistered vehicles. We make no apologies for confiscating the vehicles of those who refuse to obey the law. Any inconvenience caused to drivers who lose their cars is nothing compared to the number of lives these laws could save.

Young Drivers

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.00 am): Queensland's new young driver laws come into effect on 1 July. As the Premier mentioned earlier, today I will launch the advertising campaign for these important measures. Tragically, last year we lost 108 lives from crashes involving young drivers: 55 of those killed were young drivers, 25 were their passengers and 28 were other road users. That loss of life is not on. That is why the state government has rewritten the rule book for young driver training and is backing it up with a widespread campaign designed to reach teenagers, their parents and other road users.

From 1 July, young drivers will need to get 100 hours of on-road driving experience recorded in a logbook before they can go for a licence. They will be able to get their learner's from 16 but will need to hold it for a minimum of 12 months. We are also introducing a two-phased provisional licence system. P1 licence holders will display a red P-plate for one year and P2 licence holders will display a green P-plate for two years.

Peer passenger restrictions will apply for P1 drivers allowing them to carry only one passenger under 21, excluding immediate family, between 11 pm and 5 am. Vehicle power restrictions will apply for P1 and P2 licence holders to ensure they have greater driving experience before they get behind the wheel of a high-powered vehicle. Mobile phones will be banned for learners and P1 drivers, including the use of loudspeaker functions by supervisors and passengers. This will significantly reduce in-car distractions.

Today's campaign launch is an important next step in implementing the new rules. As well as a dedicated television ad, we will also be hitting the airwaves with a number of radio advertisements: one for learners, one for provisional drivers and one for general motorists asking them to give young drivers the space to learn. We have also recently mailed a brochure to all learners, schools and other organisations to make sure they are equipped with information about the changes. We are backing the new laws with longer opening hours and extra staff in our customer service centres, and Queensland Transport has begun visiting schools to provide lunchtime information sessions about the new rules and evidence of identity requirements.

I would like to put on record the state government's particular thanks to the RACQ, which has not only supported the introduction of these measures but also worked with us to help get details of the changes out to all drivers. I specifically thank Gary Fites from RACQ because he has done a wonderful job. I thank all of the staff for the work they have done. I encourage all Queenslanders to take the time to understand these new laws. It is not just up to young drivers or their parents. It is not just up to politicians and police. It is up to everyone in Queensland to work together to improve safety on our roads.

National Bowel Cancer Awareness Week

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Health) (10.02 am): National Bowel Cancer Awareness Week presents Queenslanders with the opportunity to learn how to minimise their risk of contracting this disease. Bowel cancer is the most common cancer in Australia to affect both men and women and our second biggest cancer killer after lung cancer. Some 12,800 new cases are diagnosed each year, including 2,500 in Queensland. On average, 4,700 Australians die of bowel cancer each year, including about 860 Queenslanders. The saddest fact of all is that bowel cancer is one of our most curable cancers if detected early. That is why all Queenslanders over 50 should keep watch for the early signs of bowel cancer.

The Beattie government is doing its bit to help screen Queenslanders and reduce their risk. We were the first state to participate in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program and we are investing \$10.4 million over two years to roll it out across the state. We have also funded specialist gastroenterology nurse coordinators at hospitals to arrange follow-up colonoscopies for patients who return a positive result to the tests. Under the program, Queensland men and women turning either 55 or 65 between 1 May 2006 and 30 June 2008 are being sent a kit to test for the signs of bowel cancer. It is a simple test that people can undertake in the privacy of their own home. People who return a positive test result will be advised to see a GP for referral for further investigations, such as a colonoscopy.

The National Bowel Cancer Screening Program Register based in Tasmania is responsible for processing all data forms returned to the register and is the first point of contact nationally for the program. The register reports that as at 30 April 2007 over 102,000 FOBT kits had been completed and

returned, giving a national participation rate of just over 30 per cent. The Queensland participation rate reflects the national rate and I am concerned that only one in three Queenslanders receiving the test kit appear to be responding.

I stress again that bowel cancer is very curable if detected early. That is why I am urging all Queenslanders who receive a testing kit to take it seriously and participate in this very important screening program.

National Livestock Identification System

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries) (10.05 am): The National Livestock Identification System has been a genuine success story for this government and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries. It has played an absolutely crucial role in ensuring this state's enviable reputation for clean, green products.

One of the few hiccups since the phase-in of NLIS began in July 2005 has been some criticism with the price of tags. Today I can say, as I foreshadowed, that tag prices are set to fall as a result of innovation grants totalling \$2.55 million being awarded to five tag and bolus manufacturers. The innovation grants were a major factor in bringing new players, new efficiencies and new technologies into the manufacturing sector producing NLIS devices. One manufacturer has been assisted to enter the market as a result of the innovation grant scheme, while other companies are developing new systems that will enhance production efficiencies and result in tag price reductions in the coming months. One company already has reduced the price of NLIS tags by 10c and another has indicated it will be announcing a 60c drop in the price of their tags in the very near future. It is anticipated that the price of tags will move closer to the vicinity of \$3.

Development of NLIS tags with read-write capability will allow producers to further integrate NLIS into their routine on-farm management practices. These NLIS devices include the benefit of being a management tag that allows visual identification and they are also capable of storing data that could include information on things such as vaccinations, worm drench history, supplements fed and genetic history.

The innovation grants are part of a \$6.79 million funding plan developed by the Queensland NLIS Implementation Committee and the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries. The funding plan also covers producer rebates for NLIS readers, saleyard infrastructure rebates and livestock agent rebates which have already been released. This funding was made possible through joint arrangements with the Queensland government, Meat and Livestock Australia and the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The NLIS innovation grant will be the catalyst to provide long-term benefits and cost savings to primary producers in the years to come.

Patel, Dr J; Compensation Claims

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (10.07 am): The special process was developed by the government to provide fair and reasonable compensation for the former Patel patients. In all, 385 claims have been lodged to date under the special process. I am advised a further 15 claims were settled last week. Further claims are to be mediated next week. The total number of claims settled is now 225. A further 66 claims are considered to be not eligible for compensation. These are not eligible because they are regarded as either being not Patel patients or involving no adverse outcomes from their treatment.

However, every opportunity is given to claimants to substantiate their eligibility. I urge any of those claimants to bring forward any additional information they may have and that additional information will be considered. This means three-quarters of all special process claims to date have been dealt with. As Attorney-General, I am committed to ensure the special process is fair. I am also committed to accept claims from former Patel patients who develop medical problems in the future as a result of Patel procedures. I refer honourable members to recent comments by Ian Hanger QC about the special process. Mr Hanger has had extensive experience in the special process. He said—

Under this mediation process, the government is paying all their costs, all their medical reports, giving them more than they would get from the court and undertaking to continue treatment for them. If the treatment arises out of anything Patel did ...

Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Water Supply Strategy

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Water and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (10.09 am): Today I am pleased to announce the start of the Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Water Supply Strategy. I know it is a day that will be warmly welcomed by the member for Hervey Bay who has taken a keen interest in the strategy. This landmark study will look at the region's needs for the next 50 years. It is the longest water study ever attempted in the region.

The future growth and prosperity of the Wide Bay-Burnett region will depend on its having a secure water supply. We will look at issues such as desalination, greater recycling of waste water, use of underground water and assistance to small communities facing water shortages. The regional water supply strategy will also look at the impact of climate change.

The strategy area covers an area bounded by Miriam Vale shire in the north, Monto to Chinchilla shires in the west and Nanango to Cooloola shires in the south. A draft strategy is expected to be prepared by mid-2008 with the strategy completed in early 2009. The Wide Bay-Burnett strategy will consider: desalination plants, temporary or permanent, to provide emergency backup water supplies; waste water recycling for industry and rural use; and the water supply of small communities, which will be an early priority for the study, looking at the use of groundwater, pipelines and rainwater tanks.

The strategy also will look at: optimising the use of water from dams and weirs; taking the pressure off groundwater in the Bundaberg area; and promoting the greater use of rainwater tanks, greywater systems, more efficient washing machines and shower roses. I am also pleased to announce that a regionally based strategy management committee has been established to help direct the strategy at a local level. A stakeholder reference panel will be formed to give Wide Bay-Burnett stakeholders a voice in the development of the strategy.

This morning SunWater has provided an update on some regional storages after the rain. Rainfall in the south-west region has resulted in some flows being generated in tributary streams of the Condamine, particularly around Chinchilla. Water has made its way to both the Warra Weir and the Chinchilla Weir. Chinchilla's Charley's Creek Weir has filled. At Kingaory there are some flows in local creeks but no change will be noticed in the Gordonbrook Dam until the next few days. I am pleased to inform the House that at Killarney the weir overflowed on Tuesday night. I am informed there is a good inflow.

Yangan, Water Pipeline

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport) (10.11 am): In November last year I approved the Warwick Shire Council's application for assistance to construct a pipeline to the township of Yangan. Warwick Shire Council put a case that more funding support was required. As a result, I asked for the original assessment to be reviewed. The original subsidy offer was thereafter increased by \$249,000 to a total of some three quarters of a million dollars. That is 60 per cent of the total cost of \$1.248 million for the project. In any terms, it is a substantial contribution.

Six months down the track each resident of this town, which has a population of just over 200, is asking, not unreasonably, why the pipeline has still not been commenced by the Warwick Shire Council. The people of Yangan are angry and have every right to be. They draw their water supply from four bores in the district but this water is of dubious quality. In fact, it is mostly red in colour and suitable only for flushing, according to many local residents.

So why has the pipeline not been built? The simple answer is that the Warwick Shire Council is dithering on delivering this important project. The project would pump water to Yangan from the Warwick water treatment plant which draws its supply from the Leslie Dam. The state government has made a significant financial contribution towards the pipeline—more than half the cost.

This is an exasperating time for the people of Yangan who are trapped in a peculiar uncertainty. They have indicated that they are willing to pay an annual fee to council of some \$333 to access the water in the pipeline. In return, council has again surveyed the residents giving them until tomorrow to indicate whether they would support an annual fee of now \$480. This situation needs to reach a conclusion.

Today I will meet with a delegation of Yangan residents, along with the member for Southern Downs, to hear their concerns about this project firsthand. I again take the opportunity to implore the council to do the right thing. The reason I approved funding for this pipeline is that the Warwick Shire Council put in an application for a subsidy for the pipeline. The Warwick Shire Council thought the pipeline was a good idea when it put in the application and it remains a good idea today. I approved a subsidy that amounts to more than half the cost and the Warwick Shire Council should get on with the job.

Ergon Energy

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (10.13 am): A record demand for power is a major driver in Ergon Energy's electricity infrastructure plans for regional Queensland. Today, I can announce that a record amount—almost \$800 million—will be spent by Ergon Energy in capital expenditure this financial year. The company will target capital works in their budget as part of a long-term strategic plan to provide a secure and reliable power supply for regional Queensland. Its biggest immediate challenge is to meet the high demand for connections and network extensions.

The big winners in Ergon Energy's budget are domestic and commercial customers. Ergon Energy's works program will focus on a number of major infrastructure projects. It is a substantial investment in the regions and will focus on where the need is greatest, in those growth areas.

The backbone of work scheduled for the new financial year will be carried out in 13 major Queensland centres. This is good news for members who represent the people of Cairns, Townsville, Airlie Beach, Mackay, Rockhampton, the Capricorn Coast, Bundaberg, Agnes Water, Maryborough, Hervey Bay, Toowoomba, Warwick and Dalby. They will be the big winners. Demand management will continue to be an important part of Ergon Energy's network strategy. Our strong economic growth, rapidly growing population and the increasing popularity of air conditioners are the main drivers of this demand. More than \$80 million has been earmarked for vegetation management. Some \$10 million has also been set aside for cyclone prone communities through Ergon Energy's CARE program.

When disaster strikes, Ergon Energy swings into action. It has the capacity to move hundreds of people around the state to help deal with whatever nature throws at the electricity network. This is timely given dire weather bureau predictions of more severe storms on the horizon. When the next one strikes, I ask members of this House to spare a thought for the Ergon Energy workers who will be out in that bad weather restoring damaged powerlines, instead of relaxing at home with their families. It is not a nine to five job—it can be hazardous—and for that we owe them our thanks.

Koala Habitat Mapping

Hon. LH NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (10.15 am): Four local governments in south-east Queensland have received EPA funding to map koala habitat in their areas. This is a key step to conserving this species that is vulnerable in the state's south-east. The EPA has allocated a total of \$126,832 for koala habitat mapping to Caloundra City Council and to a syndicate comprising Caboolture Shire Council, Pine Rivers Shire Council and Redcliffe City Council.

Koala habitat mapping is a key commitment under the koala plan that the state government put in place last year and will identify previously unmapped habitat areas within south-east Queensland so additional protective measures can be put in place where needed. Over four years the EPA will offer local governments in south-east Queensland the chance to apply for funding to undertake koala habitat mapping on a dollar-for-dollar basis. This is the first of four funding rounds and I would like to congratulate the successful applicants.

These four councils have now engaged consultants to work with their officers to estimate koala distribution and abundance. This mapping data, due to be completed by June 2009, will allow koala habitat areas to be protected from inappropriate development. These koala population surveys will assist local governments to undertake planning actions to protect koala numbers in their shires. They will also allow the EPA to expand its work with councils to assess proposed development against koala conservation criteria. The mapping, which will use scientifically accepted methods, will be undertaken by people with expertise in conducting fauna, flora or ecological assessments of a site and skills in koala detection and eucalypt identification.

The 2007-08 funding round has opened for applications. South-east Queensland local governments have been advised that they have until 31 August 2007 to apply for the second round of koala habitat mapping funding. I congratulate local councils for working closely with the state government and helping protect this vulnerable species.

Housing Needs

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works, Housing and Information and Communication Technology) (10.18 am): It is a well-known fact that Australia's population is ageing and this presents a challenge for government, business and the community at large. In the next 20 years, the number of people in Queensland aged over 65 is expected to more than double, to 1.1 million. As people get older, their housing needs change. The stairs to the front door become harder to negotiate and climbing into the shower is not as easy as it used to be. The home we live in can have a dramatic effect on our safety, our independence and our quality of life.

The Department of Housing is a leader in responding to this changing housing need and offers a number of programs designed to assist. It offers financial assistance to eligible homeowners to help them modify their home and increase their safety and independence. There is Home Assist Secure and home modifications programs that help people remain in their home by, for example, assisting with minor home modifications. In partnership with the Department of Public Works, the Department of Housing is working to influence the design of new homes with easy access features through the Smart Housing initiative.

As more and more people from all walks of life look for homes with easier access, it is an ideal time to start to identify and promote these properties. Tonight I will officially launch a new Department of Housing initiative aimed at improving information about the accessibility features of properties for rent and for sale. The Home Access Information program, which will be trialled in partnership with the REIQ, the Real Estate Institute of Queensland, will see realtors assessing various aspects of properties including, but not limited to, the number and location of stairs, ramp access, the inclusion of wider doorways and the presence of supportive handrails in bathrooms. This information will then be used when marketing the property so people with special needs can accurately choose a property that is right for them. The trial I will launch tonight will take place in the Brisbane region and will continue until 2008, after which time the department will assess the program to see if it could be used statewide.

Gold Coast, Marine Industry

Hon. RJ MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations) (10.20 am): Last month I visited the highly successful Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show. Many of the craft on display were built in Queensland. In fact, Queensland is now responsible for 80 per cent of Australia's boat exports and the marine industry generates annual revenue in excess of \$2.6 billion and employs some 11,000 people. The Gold Coast marine precinct on the Coomera River has quickly established itself as the hub of the marine industry in south-east Queensland. It generates about half a billion dollars a year to the Gold Coast and Northern Rivers and its workforce of some 4,500 people accounts for about 40 per cent of the state's marine industry workforce. Its rapid growth has helped position the Gold Coast as the nation's leading recreational boat exporter.

But there are a number of challenges facing the industry, and I am proud to say that the Department of State Development and stakeholders are working on strategies to face the challenges head on and to create new opportunities. The precinct's rapid growth has led to an increasing need for multiskilled staff. To meet this challenge, the Department of State Development has partnered with the Department of Education, Training and the Arts to formulate the Boat Building Skills Formation Strategy. A number of leading companies on the Gold Coast have come together under this strategy to form the Marine Industry Skills and Training Forum. They are currently working together to address the industry's skills problem. My department is also involved in ongoing discussions with industry to establish a Marine Development Centre which will help increase cost-effectiveness, productivity and facilitate commercialisation and incubation opportunities.

Earlier this year I launched the Marine Industry Supply Chain Project, which brings together three levels of government and the private sector from both sides of the Queensland-New South Wales border. The project will focus on improving supply chains to build a more competitive local marine industry. The Queensland government will continue to work with local industry and regional stakeholders to ensure that we continue to lead the nation in this buoyant and growing sector.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Orders

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.22 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That notwithstanding standing order 128(8) the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill may be brought on for debate today, Thursday, 7 June 2007.

Motion agreed to.

CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

Remaining Stages; Cognate Debate

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.22 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That—

- (1) in accordance with Standing Order 129, the remainder of the second reading stage of the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill only be cognate with the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill; and
- (2) notwithstanding anything contained in Standing and Sessional Orders, that any member who has already spoken in the second reading debate of the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill may speak in the cognate debate.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.23 am): The motion that the Leader of the House has just moved is clearly ridiculous—clearly ridiculous—and it will not be supported by this side of the House. The motion that the Leader of the House has just moved stems from his mismanagement of this place. It stems from his own incompetence. He seeks to make a mockery of the traditional debates in this House because he is so incompetent that he cannot run the parliament properly. The member for Rockhampton has a great record in this place of cute one-liners. There is one that I remember that he should apply to himself now. As Leader of the House he could not lead a choko vine over an outhouse.

The other piece of advice that I would give to the member for Rockhampton—and it pertains to the entire government—is that if you cannot run this parliament then you cannot run the state. If you cannot run this parliament, then you cannot run this state. It is quite clear from the motion that has been moved today that the government cannot run this parliament. It cannot respect the parliament. It cannot have enough respect for probably the primary debate of the year—the budget debate—to properly schedule the budget debate so every member of this House can have their due. It is an indication of the extent to which this government has failed in everything that it has done.

It raises a whole series of questions about the practicalities of the debate that the Leader of the House is proposing. He is suggesting that we are somehow going to combine a debate that has already started with a debate that we have not yet begun and that we are then going to conclude one debate and presumably decide the fate of one bill and send the other bills on for consideration in detail through the estimates committee process. It is a nonsense! It is an absolute nonsense and it makes a mockery of what this parliament is about. It is simply brought before the House today because the member for Rockhampton does not have the wit to organise the proceedings in this place to an extent that allows the proper consideration of the bills.

The procedures for budget week are clearly set out. They happen year after year. There is nothing new. It is not rocket science, old mate! All you have to do is follow what has happened in previous years. It is very easy to organise the business of this House so that we can debate the budget bill in its proper context and we can consider the other legislation in its proper context. I believe every member of the government should be embarrassed by the motion that has been moved by the member for Rockhampton here today. I have said before in this place that when I first came here the member for Rockhampton was considered to be something of a hard man in this place, something of a mover and a shaker. He has become a joke! He has become a joke, and the motion that he has moved today indicates the extent to which he has become a joke.

This parliament deserves better. This parliament deserves better, and the debates that we have in this place deserve greater respect than the suggestion that the member for Rockhampton has put before the House this morning. Every member of this parliament should insist that the traditions that surround the debating of the government's budget are maintained and that those traditions are maintained in this House not just this year but every year and they are not imperilled by the government's inability to organise the basic functions of this parliament. We will oppose this motion.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.27 am): What an unprecedented mess that the government has so little confidence in its budget that it has to morph it in and combine it with another bill! This is extraordinary! It is also impractical. We have a situation where we have a bill that is already in progress. In fact, I have the call currently to speak to the coal bill and apparently we are about to have a cognate debate because the government has so little confidence in its budget that it wants to combine it with a coal bill and I have the call on that bill. In reality, if we are going to have the importance of the budget debated the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Treasurer should have the right to speak first in reply to this bill. It should be their right to be the first ones on behalf of the opposition to respond to the budget. But this government has so badly organised its business that it is embarrassing this parliament by this stunt today where it has tried to have a cognate debate between two unrelated issues.

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.28 am): They say mimicry is the best form of flattery, so thanks very much for repeating badly that great one-liner that I said which very much applies to you, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the House, we need a seconder.

Ms BLIGH: I second the motion.

Mr SCHWARTEN: If ever I have heard an attack on the opposition whips, then I have heard it now. One of the reasons we are in this position is the incompetent activities of the opposition whips who supplied the wrong speaking list for the debate yesterday afternoon on the revenue bill. That is what happened. That then tied up business.

Quite frankly, the reason we are cognating the debate for these bills is to afford the honourable member the opportunity to make his speech in reply at the appropriate time today without interrupting the passage of the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill which, I might add, is a very significant revenue bill in itself. It is entirely appropriate to cognate it with the appropriation bills.

The fact of the matter is that, by doing this, no member of this parliament is disadvantaged in any way. Members will note that the second part of the motion says that those who have already spoken can speak again. So no-one has had their voice taken away from them whatsoever. Every single member of this parliament can speak to both of those bills if they so desire. For the life of me I cannot understand what the problem is.

Mr Speaker, there is one thing that I know the honourable members opposite lack, and that is absolutely any respect for those people who are employed under your provisions and the Clerk's provisions. We know that on one occasion certain members of the opposition came to me because they wanted to go to a private function downtown. On that occasion I obliged them to enable them to do that. I am not going to name names, but I do my best to try to oblige the people here.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, what is your ruling about 10.30?

Mr SPEAKER: My ruling is quite obvious. I am taking the division—and I will be asking the Leader of the House to wrap up shortly—and then going into question time.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. Surely a member is not allowed to speak when the standing orders say that questions without notice should be at 10.30.

Mr SPEAKER: By the very fact that my clock says 10.31, the Leader of the House will wrap up shortly and then we will have a division.

An honourable member: Are we going to have a debate?

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the House is having his right of reply.

Ms BLIGH: I rise to a point of order. I seek leave to move a procedural motion that the standing orders be suspended to allow the Leader of the House to complete his contribution to this debate.

Speaker's Ruling—Motion Not Allowable

Mr SPEAKER: I indicate to the Treasurer that that motion is not allowable. I ask the Leader of the House to finish the debate so that we can go on to the division and then have question time.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I find myself pushed into the position of going into question time by the actions of those opposite. The reality is that I took advice from the Clerk of the Parliament on this matter last evening so that everybody could get a fair go at both of these bills. The advice that I received from the Clerk was that it was appropriate that this occur and, indeed, that is the case.

As I said, I have tried to institute reasonable sitting hours here out of respect for the people who work here and who have registered with you, Mr Speaker, and you, Mr Clerk, on a number of occasions the issue of the lack of family friendly hours here. This does not in any way take away the rights of any member of this parliament to say what they wish about the bill. It is not a guillotine, it is not a gag motion; it is just a simple common-sense approach to allowing—

Dr Flegg: Give them all an extra 20 minutes.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I did not interrupt the member when he spoke, and if I had it would have been more intelligent. The reality is that this is a lot of stuff and nonsense about nothing. As I say, it does not take away or trammel over the rights of any member of this parliament. I know what the Tories are going to do, but I ask the Independents to please ignore this action as I regard it as not taking away any of their rights to speak at any time they wish.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I ask you for a ruling. Does this technically conclude the debate, because opportunities have not been provided to other members of this place who might wish to make a contribution.

Mr SPEAKER: I say to the member for Southern Downs that he had the opportunity to jump. You did not jump and I gave the Leader of the House the right of reply. There is no point of order.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I rise to a point of order. One member jumped and this member jumped and I was about to jump. A lot of other members in this place—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have given my ruling.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. There were members on this side of the House on their feet.

Mr SPEAKER: There were not. There is no point of order.

Division: Question put—That motion be agreed to.

AYES, 54—Attwood, Barry, Beattie, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Fenlon, Finn, Fraser, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Lawlor, Lee, Lucas, McNamara, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Male, Nolan

NOES, 29—Copeland, Cripps, Cunningham, Elmes, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, Lee Long, Lingard, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Pratt, Rickuss, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Elmes, Dickson

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Speaker's Ruling—Procedure for Members Wishing to Speak

Mr SPEAKER: I inform honourable members that it is the obligation of honourable members if they wish to speak when a motion is being debated to hop on their feet and to seek the attention of the chair at that particular time. I ask that of all of you. If I cannot see you on your feet or if you are not actually saying to me that you would like to speak, naturally I will go to the speaker whom I can see. I also indicate that question time will conclude at 11.30 am.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Western Corridor Recycled Water Project

Mr SEENEY (10.42 am): My first question without notice is to the Minister for Infrastructure. The panicky approach to the construction of the western corridor pipeline has apparently coined some new terms in Queensland's construction industry. Contractors are now talking about a 'tender by invoice pricing system' and a 'do and charge construction rate'. I ask the minister: what does a 'tender by invoice pricing system' mean, what are 'do and charge construction rates' and how are they going to affect the cost of the pipeline project?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for his question. I think it might be one of the rare questions he has ever asked about this very important piece of infrastructure. In relation specifically to his question, I would not have a clue. I have never heard either of the terms.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms BLIGH: What I can tell the House is that this government uses whatever procurement method is appropriate to individual pieces of infrastructure. Where it is appropriate to use a public-private partnership, such as Airport Link, we will do so. Where it is appropriate to use an alliance contracting arrangement, then we will do that. What we are building with the western corridor pipeline is a piece of infrastructure that the people in this parliament and the people of this state can and should feel very proud of. We know that people on that side of the House have never supported the project. They voted against it.

Mr HOBBS: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister is misleading the House. I was one of the first persons to actually approve funding for that. We do support it. You are telling fibs.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. Please take your seat.

Ms BLIGH: I hope you get preselected again, Howard. I really do.

Mr Hobbs: It should have been built 10 years ago.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gregory!

Mr Johnson: I never said a thing. Fair go! I might be vulnerable but I never said a thing. Somebody throw the Deputy Premier a lifeline. She needs one.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, sometimes the voices that come from that area between you and the member for Warrego are confusing. Indeed, I should have said the member for Warrego. We have had a good laugh. Thank you very much.

Ms BLIGH: What we have with the western corridor recycled water project is an engineering feat for us all to be proud of. This government is getting on with the job and delivering water to our power stations, delivering water for the drinking needs of south-east Queensland. The project that the member for Warrego referred to was a project looking at water for Lockyer Valley irrigators. The decision we made last week to rescope this project and expand its capacity gives the Lockyer Valley irrigators the best chance they have ever had of getting water, and the person sitting next to you knows that. He knows that better than you do.

Mr Seeney: Your nose is growing again.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the Deputy Premier requires an extension of time she is going to get it. There have been far too many interjections from the opposition. Can I ask you to not interject to the level you have been. I note that the member for Gregory has been well behaved. I call the Deputy Premier.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I move—

That the Treasurer be further heard.

Motion agreed to.

Mr Messenger: Come on, lie to us again. You're full of lies.

Mr SPEAKER: I say to the member for Burnett, who I have warned before for using exactly the same unparliamentary language he has just used, use it again and you will be out of the chamber.

Ms BLIGH: Everybody on this side of the House is hoping that the member for Burnett asks the police minister another question today.

Let me conclude my remarks on this project by reminding the House that those opposite voted against this pipeline. In this House they voted no to this pipeline being built. They have voted against the pipeline carrying recycled water. They are running an active scare campaign out there wherever they can against recycled water. Then they come in here and suggest that we should not pay the companies and the workers who are building it. What people know about the people on that side of the House is that they do not want a dam, they do not want a pipeline, they do not want a desalination plant, and they voted accordingly.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the Leader of the Opposition, I acknowledge in the public gallery today the electorate officer for the electorate of Keppel, which is represented in this House by Paul Hoolihan. I recognise Thelma Humphris, her husband Gary Spence and their daughter Renee.

Western Corridor Recycled Water Project

Mr SEENEY: My second question is also to the Minister for Infrastructure. Last week the minister announced a \$630 million increase in the cost of the pipeline project, claiming that it would boost capacity, even though the available volumes of water for recycling are falling as the water efficiency measures take effect. I ask the minister: if we strip away the political rhetoric, is that \$630 million just a cost blow-out, with no bigger pipes, no bigger pumps, just bigger water bills for everybody forever?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. I am never happier than when I am talking about this pipeline because I think it is a terrific project. Let me explain to the House what the additional funds will buy for the people of south-east Queensland. Firstly, it will buy 22 megalitres of water per day for the whole project. As I said earlier, not only does that provide more water for the whole of the south-east corner but it gives the Lockyer Valley irrigators the best chance they have had of securing reliable water supply from this pipeline. So what do we get firstly? We get bigger capacity in the first instance by December next year.

Mr Seeney: Are they bigger pipes?

Mr SPEAKER: I warn the Leader of the Opposition.

Miss Simpson: Bigger pipes and bigger pumps.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maroochydhore!

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. There are inane calls from the engineers opposite about bigger pipes and bigger pumps. Let me explain to the House that the funds will pay for a substantial increase in the capacity of the advanced water treatment plants so there will more recycled water to put into the system.

It is pretty straightforward. There will be more capacity in the first instance. The additional funds will also buy an acceleration of the project so that it can provide water into our dams from October next year, not December next year. There are acceleration costs in there such as shift allowances and extra workers on site. It must really disappoint those opposite. The only people who will be crying the day that we open this facility will be the members of the coalition opposite.

In addition, it will pay for the pipe that will go from the western corridor pipeline to the Wivenhoe Dam. Members will remember that when this project was originally proposed, it was to take water to the power stations. A subsequent decision by government to take the water into the dam means that we need to put an additional pipe into the dam and it will pay for that. Further, it will pay for another pipe, a new pipe, underneath the Brisbane River connecting Gibson Island and the Luggage Point water treatment plant to allow for a further expansion in capacity should additional water become available, for example, from the Sandgate area—we are in discussions with the Brisbane City Council—not next year but five years down the track. This is a project we are building not just for next year but for the next century. We are not going to build it once and come back in 20 years time and say, 'I wish we had more capacity in that because we now have more water to put in it.' We are building for now and we are building for the future. It is worth every single cent we have invested in it.

Infrastructure Funding

Ms MALE: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline the Howard government's approach to infrastructure funding and its impact on Queensland?

Mr BEATTIE: I am delighted to do that because I heard the member for Callide on radio this morning praising the Howard government's approach to funding infrastructure. I must say that I was intrigued. The real concern for Queensland is that it appears that this is the model that the Leader of the Opposition would use if he had a chance to be Premier of this state. What does this mean for Queensland families? Let us just spell this out. Let us have a quick look at the figures.

Next year we are expected to spend a record \$14 billion on infrastructure including capital grants. Keep that number in your head, Leader of the Opposition. What will this do? This money will build new schools, hospitals, dams, roads, rail, water, community facilities—you name it. What is the Commonwealth government doing? By contrast, the Howard government is spending only \$12 billion and that is Australia wide. It is spending less on the nation than we are spending in Queensland. Of this amount, more than \$7 billion is being directed to state-initiated projects—they are projects initiated by the states which the federal government is putting a contribution towards. How much is the Commonwealth putting towards infrastructure projects of its own? The amount is \$4.9 billion. The amount of \$4.9 billion is being spent on Commonwealth-initiated projects. This is what the Leader of the Opposition supports. In other words, in the entire country the Howard government is spending on its own projects about one-third of the amount that we are spending in Queensland alone. We are building for the future while the opposition is stuck in the past.

The member for Callide wants to copy a model of economic management developed by the highest taxing government in the history of Australia with one of the lowest real levels of infrastructure spending, a model that takes from Queenslanders with one hand and slaps us with the other. What other wonderful models of economic management will the member for Callide borrow from his coalition colleagues? Hopefully not the dodgy approach to administrative budgeting outlined in the media today. Apparently, desperate coalition MPs are bombarding voters with leaflets and flyers to stay in power, yet in a recent Senate estimates hearing it was revealed that the Queensland branch of the Liberal Party still owes money from the last state election. According to the media reports, this figure is as high as \$400,000. The Senate hearing revealed that Australia Post is considering its options for recovery which may include suing the Liberal Party while refusing to deliver further material. What a financial ruse that is. There is a clear link from this debt to the murky Printgate. We have not heard the end of Printgate or Mr Greene yet, but the drums are beating louder.

What does the Leader of the Opposition stand for? Less infrastructure and more taxes! Let us be clear. I say to the Leader of the Opposition: let us hear in your contribution to the budget debate what infrastructure projects you would not build.

Water Assets

Dr FLEGG: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. On 13 March the Deputy Premier stood in this House and berated local authorities for using a commercial rate of return of 7 per cent on their existing water assets as the basis for charging water customers. The Deputy Premier personally recommended that a 4 per cent return would 'make a very big difference to the hip pockets of Queensland water users'. Now that the government has seized these very same council water assets, what rate of return will she be charging and does she intend to take her own advice?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. As members know, we are in the process of negotiating with local councils in relation to a very substantial water reform that will see the state take over the ownership and control of bulk water assets in the south-east corner—a process of reform that I remind the House the coalition voted against last night. It is against water reform, it is against bulk assets in water such as dams and it is against pipelines. I am yet to find anything that it is actually in favour of.

When we looked at water pricing, members will recall the Water Commission put forward an assessment of what water prices would be if the national water principles were applied to the new infrastructure that would be part of the water grid. In order to moderate the effect of that price on consumers, I gave a commitment that the state government, in relation to our new assets, would be seeking only a 4 per cent rate of return to ensure that the acceleration—and it is a very substantial acceleration—of that urban water infrastructure would not have a damaging effect on the hip pockets of consumers.

Dr Flegg interjected.

Ms BLIGH: I did make the point, and I am happy to make it again, that those councils that were out in the public arena at the time accusing the state government of in some way imposing unreasonable water charges on consumers because we were looking at a 4 per cent rate of return should have a very long, hard look at themselves—I encourage them to keep doing it. In relation to the

assets that we take over, we will negotiate a fair compensation with the councils and on the basis of that compensation we will then determine the lowest and most reasonable possible rate of return for consumers. I will not pre-empt the discussions with councils. I do not know what their current rate of return is on every asset.

Dr Flegg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I warn the member for Moggill under standing order 253.

Ms BLIGH: I do not know the value of every asset and I do not know the debt profile on every asset. Until we sit down and systematically go through every single one of those negotiations I do not intend to pre-empt them and I do not intend to in any way show disrespect to the mayors and the CEOs of the councils. We will sit around the table, we will do it sensibly, and we will end up with the most sensible form of water institutional arrangements in the whole of the country—no thanks to those opposite.

Mr SPEAKER: I welcome to the public gallery teachers and students from the Forest Lake State School in the electorate of Algester which is represented in this place by Karen Struthers.

Water Reserves

Ms NOLAN: My question without notice is to the Premier. Now that there has been substantial rain in the south-east, can we relax our efforts to save water?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for the question. Unfortunately, the answer is no. What we need to remember is that despite some reasonable heavy falls over the past couple of days we cannot afford to stop our efforts to save every drop of water possible. The seven-year drought has taken an enormous toll on our water reserves and I am told that it would take somewhere in the vicinity of 300 millimetres falling in the Wivenhoe catchment to significantly raise levels in the dam.

I am advised by SEQWater that when one takes into account water releases over the past couple of days, on average 400 megalitres per day, the impact of the rain over the past 48 hours has put an additional 3,000 megalitres into our dams. SEQWater is confident that our storages will receive at least another 2,000 megalitres of inflow over the next couple of days as a result of the rain. SEQWater advises that on its latest information Wivenhoe Dam rose 37 millimetres, Somerset Dam rose 74 millimetres and North Pine Dam rose by 55 millimetres.

The Queensland Water Commission advises that on a conservative assessment—and this is conservative—in total, the rainfall over the past 48 hours should add between just seven to eight days to supply based on current consumption. That is just over a week. We are delighted to get it, but it is not enough. This is the key: if we all continue to exercise the care we have been taking with water, we can delay the introduction of stringent level 6 restrictions for a week, but we need to continue our efforts. The Queensland Water Commission advises me that there is no likelihood that it will be in a position to lift level 5 water restrictions. I appeal to everyone today to keep up the good work. This week's rain has given us an extra week of water but only if we all continue to save every drop.

I noticed that there was a report in the *Australian* today in relation to the Traveston Crossing Dam. The advice selectively quoted in the *Australian* was information provided to the Senate committee by the Coordinator-General. It says in full—

If the Traveston Crossing Dam had been built prior to 2003, it would have filled on two occasions and reached 87 per cent of its capacity in April 2006. The Traveston Crossing Dam would have been at 52 per cent of capacity in October 2006 and approximately 60 per cent early in April this year based on continuous extraction of 70,000 megalitres—

that is taking that out. It goes on—

If the dam were in place prior to the commencement of the current drought—

that is 2000—

it would have delivered 70,000 megalitres per year to SEQWater and the Wivenhoe-Somerset-North Pine Dam system would currently be above 35 per cent.

In other words, the Traveston Crossing Dam would have considerably eased the pressure on south-east Queensland families by providing a massive amount of water. I repeat: If the dam were operational, 35 per cent—

Time expired.

Traffic Congestion

Miss SIMPSON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Minister, traffic congestion in Brisbane is the worst it has ever been, which is confirmed by the 2007 RACQ Travel Time Survey, which I now table. For over a decade the minister has presided over increasing travel times and costs for both commuters and business. I ask: is this not another example of this Labor government's incompetence in failing to build timely infrastructure?

Tabled paper: Copy of an RACQ document dated May 2007 titled '2007 Travel Time Survey'.

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is always a pleasure to receive a question from the honourable member. I am delighted to talk about what we are doing in this city, because we can actually work with the Brisbane City Council and others in relation to providing better infrastructure for us. Of course, that RACQ survey—if the honourable member had read it—referred to many Brisbane City Council roads as well as many state roads. I will take the honourable member through a bit of a potted story about what we are doing in terms of roads in Queensland. By the way, I have not been a minister for 10 years, although I would have liked to have been.

First of all, let us look at the Gateway Bridge. There is a \$1.9 billion project to construct six lanes from the existing Gateway Bridge across the airport to Nudgee Golf Course, six lanes back from Wynnum Road to Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road. It is a \$1.9 billion project and a National Highway. What is the contribution from the federal government? Zero! Had it actually met its contribution requirement long before it refused to, the toll would have been much lower for Queensland motorists and we would have got it much quicker.

Next is the north-south bypass tunnel. The level of cooperation between the Brisbane City Council and the state government has been extraordinary, unlike the member for Moggill, who shows no leadership when it comes to transport issues. God help us if he ever has the keys to the Treasury because he cannot take any hit in his own electorate when looking at what is in the best interests of south-east Queensland. However, the Premier and the Deputy Premier are happy to do that.

Airport Link is about a \$2.5 billion project. We announced a short list the other day. Anyone who goes to King George Square would see the \$333 million busway project. When it is completed by this time next year—ahead of schedule, just like the Tugun bypass—there will be 700 to 800 trains meeting 2,700 buses on platforms 1 and 2 at Roma Street each day. If the member goes out to Inala now, she will see the Centenary Highway-Kelliher Road interchange. It is almost finished. The people there are on track. If she goes to Caboolture she will see that last week the federal government announced that its six-laning of the Bruce Highway off the Caboolture bypass is well and truly on track for completion. If the member goes down the Mount Lindesay Highway she will see the continued works going on to improve travel times there. If she goes to Boggo Road she will see the Boggo Road busway that is under construction as we speak. We can talk about what we announced in the budget, but more things were announced in the budget as a result of that.

We are putting more and more people onto public transport—27 per cent in patronage. We are putting an enormous amount of money and effort into improving public transport patronage for those people in the outer urban areas of Brisbane in particular, which takes people off the road. Each full bus that travels through the South East Busway takes 40 cars off the road. We make no apologies for doing both road and public transport capital works, which is nothing that the member opposite did.

Fuel Prices

Mr FINN: My question is to the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure. Earlier this week the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission publicly asked petrol retailers to give consumers a fair go. This followed revelations that lower international prices were not being passed on to Australian motorists. Can the Deputy Premier advise whether the Queensland government has made representations to the federal government in relation to this issue?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question and for his well-known interest in this issue. As we come to the close of a week and come up to a long weekend, motorists across the state will be worrying about whether we will see the usual long weekend hike come into place at many petrol stations either tonight or Friday night. I was astonished to see a press release issued by the Australian government's competition and consumer protection watchdog this week in which the director, Mr Graeme Samuel, essentially had this to say. Firstly, he noted that towards the end of May the Singapore benchmark price had significantly declined. He noted that, while that had been reflected at the wholesale level, those decreases were not being passed on to motorists by retailers. He then went on to say—

In light of the recent movements in the Singapore benchmark price ... Australian retail prices should be declining.

Then he called on the petrol retailers 'to give motorists a fair go'. I endorse the comments of Graeme Samuel, but what has it come to when the only power that the head of our consumer protection watchdog has is to put out a press release and plead with the companies to give motorists a fair go?

The petrol committee of this parliament made a bipartisan recommendation in relation to giving the ACCC some teeth on this issue. It has been ignored by the federal government. Earlier this year when I announced that we would be auditing petrol retailers, I sent a letter to the federal Treasurer, Mr Costello, on 3 April—and I table that letter for the benefit of the House—in which I also urged him to put some teeth into the ACCC so that it could take action where there was clear evidence, as there is this week, that the international price has dropped at the wholesale level and retailers are not getting the benefit of it.

Tabled paper: Copy of a letter dated 3 April 2007 from Hon Bligh to Hon P Costello, Commonwealth Treasurer.

I support the ACCC's efforts to name and to shame. I support its efforts to call on the petrol retailers to do better and to give consumers a fair go. However, it is ridiculous, in my view, that we have a consumer watchdog such as the ACCC that lacks any teeth whatsoever in policing these issues when there is clearly something that is happening that is not in the interests of consumers and motorists.

I am not surprised at the mute silence from those opposite on this issue. Yesterday in the House we passed a bill that removes the technical arrangements by which the state government passed on the federal government's fuel subsidy to rural petrol carriers which was then passed on to rural producers in remote parts of Queensland. We had to remove that technical device because the federal government has ceased that subsidy. I pay tribute to a couple of the Independents who stood in this House and took the opportunity to condemn the federal government for that. Members opposite were mute in their silence.

Gold Coast Rail Line

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Minister, in an October 2006 media release, you promised two new six-car city trains, creating 651 extra seats on the Gold Coast line. On Sunday, 27 May this year, the government reneged on that deal and announced two three-car sets only—long overdue and running at the wrong time. Why has the minister short-changed Gold Coast commuters?

Mr LUCAS: I am delighted to talk now about Gold Coast public transport, because again it is something that the members opposite have done nothing about. Before we get onto the Citytrain network, we might talk about the Gold Coast Rapid Transit System, a half a million dollar-odd project that we are doing with the Gold Coast City Council and the Gold Coast community to give them a rapid transit system down the Pacific Highway—something that members opposite never thought of.

Actually that is not true. Steven Ciobo put some federal money into it early on, but then when it came down to doing the proper planning and construction the federal government was nowhere in action at all. We are currently doing the planning with the people on the Gold Coast as to the actual route of the light rail or guided bus system that will operate there. But let us now talk about the rail system on the Gold Coast.

Mr Wallace: They ripped it up.

Mr LUCAS: The Tories did rip it up in 1965; that is true. That is their philosophical commitment to the Gold Coast's public transport system.

We have now delivered 44 three-car sets through EDI Bombardier. A while ago we announced an extension of that program to get more trains. The first of those trains are now in service on the Gold Coast, and already they are making a difference to the 7.38 am service. As we continue to get them, a third of those trains will be headed for the Gold Coast.

But it is not just a question of how much rolling stock we have got there; it is also the track capacity. In October last year we finished the Ormeau to Coomera phase, and as we speak we are in the middle of the Salisbury to Kuraby triplication. The Salisbury to Kuraby triplication, which will be completed by about March next year, will allow an amazing increase in capacity on the Gold Coast line. It is not actually so much about Brisbane services—although all those people in a number of electorates in Brisbane will get improved stations, better car parking and disability access—but that extra rolling stock that will come into play will allow the express Gold Coast services to run around those tracks in peak times on that third track. That will mean a major addition to the Gold Coast track capacity. In fact, by the time the projects are rolled out, we will have a 50 per cent increase in seating capacity for people on the Gold Coast.

Off the top of my head, those 44 three-car sets cost about half a billion dollars. When that is matched with the multimillion-dollar investment in the Gold Coast track capacity, which will ultimately extend to Elanora and then to Coolangatta, that is a vote of confidence on the Gold Coast that has no match.

I also point out for the honourable member's benefit that under this government we have 24-hour bus services down the Pacific Highway, down the spine of the Gold Coast. We have had many, many increases in services. The Brisbane City Council cannot claim anything about those, although some councillors may try to—and the honourable member was there, trying to claim credit for the buses that we actually funded.

I am more than happy on any day of the week to back our record on public transport expenditure, whether it be capital or the vision that we have for our busways, such as the Eastern Busway, the Boggo Road Busway, the Inner City Busway—and I did not talk about the Premier's electorate and what we announced the other day—and the Northern Busway through Royal Brisbane Hospital.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the member for Cook.

Mr LUCAS: I could go on all day about this. Ask me some more questions.

Mr SPEAKER: I am sure you can, Minister, but I have called the member for Cook.

Ergon Energy, Childers Substation Upgrade

Mr O'BRIEN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Mines and Energy. Ergon Energy is spending a record amount on capital works in regional Queensland this year, almost \$800 million, covering around 150,000 kilometres of electricity lines from Thursday Island right down the coast and out west. In fact, I recently had the pleasure of opening the new power station in Pormpuraaw on your behalf. I was impressed with that work and would like to know what initiatives, other than poles and wires, Ergon Energy is delivering to the people of Queensland.

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for his question. That new power station cost \$7 million and will provide a reliable and secure power supply to the community well into the future, but there is more to Ergon Energy than poles and wires. Ergon Energy is spreading that good work right across the state from Cape York to Childers where demolition work starts this week on the second stage of the Childers substation upgrade. It is being totally rebuilt at a cost of \$7.7 million.

The old substation is not heading for the scrap heap either. The huge steel towers will end up on the ocean floor where they will form part of an artificial reef. The Cochrane Artificial Reef covers 32 hectares just north of Elliott Heads. The reef has been a boon to local ecotourism. Nature went to work as soon as the steel towers were sent to the ocean floor late last year. The very next day squid eggs were discovered on that steel. So rather than ending up as scrap, these steel towers have been given a new life.

There is another ecofriendly side to the new Childers substation. It takes incoming power from a cogeneration plant that Ergon Energy has developed at the Isis sugar mill. The 25-megawatt plant is fired by gas, a by-product of the sugarcane milling process. It is expected to reduce the mill's greenhouse gas emissions by 50,000 tonnes a year. When fully operational, the \$23 million plant is expected to turn tonnes of sugarcane waste into environmentally friendly fuel—fuel that could produce enough electricity to power 7,000 homes a year. So from Cape York to Childers and out to Camooweal, there is more to Ergon Energy than poles and wires.

Gladstone Electorate, Leukaemia

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. As a result of information provided by the minister in answer to question on notice 548, residents of my electorate are concerned about elevated rates of certain leukaemias. Minister, will you outline what action you have taken to investigate and identify any local factors which could contribute to the increased incidence of these serious illnesses?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for the question. Queensland Health statistics provided to the member for Gladstone and released publicly indicate no differences between Gladstone and the state average for asthma, stillbirths and cancers of all types, including leukaemia. The Chief Health Officer of Queensland, however, is looking into concerns raised by the member for Gladstone about a possible excess of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia, or CLL, in the Gladstone area. CLL is a rare disease which usually affects older people. There have been numerous scientific studies in the past 40 years into the causes of CLL, but no environmental risk factors have been clearly identified to date.

I am advised that the high rate of CLL in Gladstone is equivalent to one additional case per year than would be expected according to the state average. The type of leukaemia most strongly linked to occupational and environmental causes is acute myeloid leukaemia, or AML. If there was any link to environmental exposure, we would expect to see elevated rates of AML in the Gladstone area; however, the AML rate in Gladstone is the same as the Queensland average.

I appreciate the member for Gladstone and her responsibilities in representing the interests of people in her electorate and I respect her for that. Whilst obviously the scientific evidence produced to date does not suggest or support a cause for elevated levels of concern at this point, I appreciate the sensitivity of the issue and will keep this matter monitored. Should additional evidence become available that would cause a revisit by those qualified to undertake such population based health studies, then we will certainly take that on board.

Corrective Services, Water Policy

Mrs MILLER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. Minister, I was very interested in your comments yesterday on the water conservation measures you have undertaken in prisons. Can you inform the House on how Corrective Services staff are made aware of these water policies?

Ms SPENCE: I think the Department of Corrective Services has done a very good job of making sure that our prison officers are aware of our water conservation measures. In fact, in August last year the department posted on the intranet three pages of policies, 10 pages of implementation guidelines plus some other appendices to guide our corrections officers into water conservation. I table these because they go into a lot of detail about how our officers can help prisoners save water—

Tabled paper: Copy of a Queensland Corrective Services document (undated) titled 'Procedure-Water Conservation'.

Mr FOLEY: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Could the minister advise whether their custodial sentences will be extended if they flush seven times?

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms SPENCE: Not only does it talk about showering and the sort of stuff that we spoke about yesterday; it goes to the detail of prisoners not rinsing their razors under running taps but instead using warm water in the sink for rinsing. That is the kind of level that we are looking into in water-saving measures. In fact, last year the Department of Corrective Services spent \$234,000 on water efficiency plans for our prisons.

I would have thought that after the member for Burnett got it so wrong yesterday he would have left it alone, but he did not. He had to go out into the media and make more false statements about prisons. He claimed that prisoners 'can smoke wherever they like, designers have been called in to sex up prison clothes'—and I do not know why he had to use that kind of language, but he did—'and the minister's providing fluffy puppies. Paris Hilton would be right at home'.

In the law and order business the member for the Burnett would be known as a recidivist offender. He is desperately attempting to draw attention to himself in his own Paris Hilton like fashion. I do not have time this morning to go into all his false accusations, but let me tell members a few. In November last year he said that no nurse was on duty at the Rockhampton Correctional Centre that weekend. That was wrong. In February he said that I refused to supply enough cars to police. Wrong—I have never knocked back a request for cars for police.

This is my personal favourite. On the Channel 7 news in Bundaberg he said that in Maryborough prison officers are subject to daily violence and are shot at. No prison officer at Maryborough prison has ever been shot at. Daily this man is out in the media making false statements about our police and our prison officers. He claimed that the new prisoner uniforms are black. Wrong—there is no black in them at all. His claims that prisoners can smoke where they like are wrong. Of course we have smoking policies in our prisons. His claims that designers have been called in to 'sex up' prisoners' clothes are wrong. We use students.

Queensland Rail

Mr DEMPSEY: My question is to the minister for transport. For some time charity groups have been provided with free freight by Queensland Rail when sending items across this state. But now Bundaberg Lifeline has been told by Queensland Rail that from 1 July it will have to pay full freight costs. Lifeline exists for the relief of poverty and to help those less fortunate in our community. Is the government so desperate that not even charities are exempt from its grab for cash?

Mr LUCAS: It is always interesting that conservative politicians ask questions of ministers with respect to government owned corporations such as QR. However, ministers are not expected to reply to questions in relation to private sector organisations such as Pacific National and its competitors. Before I answer the question—it is a good question—I will tell the member a few little things about rail in Bundaberg and rail in all places south of Rockhampton.

There is competition on our rail network at the moment. I know that Mark Vaile does not understand that.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr LUCAS: All right, I will do it the other way around. I will answer the question first. I am advised that QR has adopted a new policy with respect to making space available on its rolling stock for charitable purposes. My understanding is—and I will get the exact details and provide them to the honourable member—that it wants to provide some consistency in terms of the support it provides to community organisations on a whole-of-state basis. What I mean by that is that it is fine that it might do something for Bundaberg Lifeline but there might be a Lifeline somewhere else that may not be able to be accorded the same treatment. As I understand, its policy is that it wants to have a more transparent method of seeking sponsorship and conferring that against the services it provides. I will provide the member with information about that. Let me talk about rail services.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr LUCAS: It relates to the honourable member's electorate. Pacific National has been competing on our rail track in Queensland since 2004. Obviously, the federal Treasurer and the federal transport minister do not understand that. It does not provide rail services south of Rockhampton—in fact, I think it might even be south of Mackay. QR is there operating trains, freight services and the like in our communities. That is what happens—

Mr DEMPSEY: Point of order, Mr Speaker. The question was not about rail services, it was about rail costs.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr LUCAS: In that case, I know that the honourable member clearly has no interest in rail services into his electorate because I was more than happy to tell him about the benefits.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr LUCAS: Well he does not. He did not want me to answer that. I am more than happy to do it.

Mr DEMPSEY: Point of order, Mr Speaker. I have a great interest in rail costs. I thank the minister for those rail costs.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr LUCAS: We will try roads in the honourable member's electorate. We will try the Bundaberg ring-road which is revolutionary in terms of the services that it provides to those in the honourable member's electorate. That project will support the port in terms of its development and growth in the future and also improve the quality of life for people in the member's electorate and the electorate of the rocket scientist, the member for Burnett, as well.

We will support regional Queensland if those opposite do not. We will support developing and growing regional Queensland. I have made clear to the member what I will do in relation to the charity issues with QR. But I tell you what digger, do not go asking Pacific National to do too much.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Barron River, I welcome into the gallery teachers and students from Warrigal Road State School in the electorate of the Mount Gravatt, which is represented in this House by Minister Judy Spence.

Ethanol

Mr WETTENHALL: My question is to the minister for state development. There have again been calls from the Queensland coalition to rush an ethanol mandate through the parliament. Can the minister tell the House what harm this course of action would do to the industry in Queensland?

Mr MICKEL: I am delighted to tell the House that the private sector has responded magnificently to policy settings that we as a government have outlined because last week BP Australia announced—and I was there when it did it—that it had sold its 100 millionth litre of ethanol blended fuel. But the important point about it for motoring organisations and for motorists in general is that BP tells me that it has not had one consumer complaint as a result. BP is showing the way.

How is the Queensland government doing it? We are assisting the service stations. We now have service stations selling ethanol blended fuel in many parts of Queensland. The number of service stations has increased from 40 in 2005 to over 220 today.

Last sitting week in this House and over the last couple of weeks we have seen a demand from the opposition, amongst other people, to try to bring the mandating policy of ours forward. The introduction of a mandate requires careful consideration to ensure it effectively supports a Queensland ethanol industry and does not harm other industries. So what we are trying to do is get that balance right. Based on current supplies of ethanol, what the opposition's call and the opposition's plan—we would never call it a policy—would do is import from other countries.

What that would mean is the importation of ethanol from Brazil. In other words, what we have got from the opposition is a Brazilian policy. It is the boys from Brazil trying to tell us how they would run an ethanol industry. We saw them all in the House last sitting week dragging their conflict of interest in—all the sugarcane farmers running in here telling us that what we should do is import ethanol from Brazil in a Brazilian led recovery.

We are not doing that. What we are going to do is honour the commitment we made to introduce a five per cent mandate with respect to unleaded regular petrol sold in Queensland by 2010. It is sensible policy backed by real dollars in the \$7.3 million Queensland ethanol industry action plan.

My department is also working with producers on a number of ethanol projects, including two new developments, at Pinkenba and Dalby, which will have the potential to easily meet the production required for the five per cent mandate. I might say that all of this is happening at a Queensland level with no leadership whatsoever at a national level. John Howard is completely silent on this.

Patel, Dr J

Mr MESSENGER: My question without notice is to the Premier. Tony Mokbel is one of Australia's most wanted criminals who is allegedly responsible for multiple serious criminal charges and multiple deaths. He fled overseas to try to escape Australian justice. Premier, is it not a fact that the only difference between Tony Mokbel and Jayant Patel is that the Queensland government did not pay for fat Tony's airfare overseas? While the Victorian government offered a million dollar reward for Tony's capture, this government has offered nothing but excuses for Patel. If the job of getting Patel back to Australia to see justice is too big for the Premier, why does he not give the job to the Victorian Premier?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for the question. As everyone knows, the issues relating to Jayant Patel are very serious ones. The government has taken every possible step to have him returned from the United States to face trial. Extradition proceedings have started. It is not a case of where he is; he is in the United States. We know that. The federal government, in partnership with the state government, has begun extradition proceedings. The difference in the case that was mentioned by the member for Burnett is very simple: they did not know that Mokbel was in Greece. It is clearly a different set of circumstances, hence the basis for issuing a reward.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: This government is serious about dealing with Jayant Patel, so I ask for a bit of courtesy during the answer because we are talking about people who lost their lives. We take very seriously what happened in Bundaberg—there is a clear difference in the cases. The \$1 million reward was offered to actually find out where Mokbel was and then bring him home. We know where Jayant Patel is. The issue is that we have now begun extradition proceedings to bring him home. I want to say this to the member for Burnett: the people of Bundaberg have gone through a great deal. I think it is very important that we allow those victims to have the dignity of this process that is being pursued in accordance with the law. I understand the politics that the member for Burnett wants to play, and we have seen the result of that when he was asked to leave a number of meetings in Bundaberg. Let us treat the victims with courtesy. We have begun a process. It does not do anyone any good to take a cheap shot about what has happened in terms of a criminal who will be brought home from Greece. I just make the point that we will do everything we can to get Jayant Patel back to this country, and we will do it within the law. If we could have him here tomorrow he would be here, but extradition laws require proceedings. It is done in accordance with federal government law and its requirements and we will do everything in our power to get him home.

Mr SPEAKER: That completes question time. Before calling the Premier, I welcome to the public gallery today the principal and school leaders from the Beerwah State High School in the electorate of Glass House, which is represented in this House by Carolyn Male.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Unemployment Rate

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.31 am): Mr Speaker, with your indulgence, can I just inform the House that the unemployment rate for Queensland is down from 3.7 per cent to 3.5 per cent.

CAPE YORK PENINSULA HERITAGE BILL

First Reading

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.32 am): I present a bill for an act to provide for the identification of the significant natural and cultural values of Cape York Peninsula, and cooperative and ecologically sustainable management of Cape York Peninsula. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (11.32 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Bill 2007 because this is history in the making today. This bill provides for the identification of the significant natural and cultural values of Cape York Peninsula and cooperative and ecologically sustainable management of Cape York Peninsula. The Beattie government—my government—has demonstrated a strong commitment over several terms of government to managing economic, social and environmental issues on Cape York Peninsula. While finding a balance between these issues is a challenging task, I am pleased that some significant successes have been achieved in recent years. Land tenure negotiations have been successfully completed with traditional owners at a number of properties including Marina Plains, Kalpowar, Archer Point, Dowlings Range and Melsonby. Official handover ceremonies with traditional owners have occurred for these properties. These historic occasions have recognised the natural and cultural heritage values of Cape York Peninsula and a shared commitment to their protection.

While it is important to recognise these achievements, it is now appropriate to progress an integrated approach to natural and cultural resource management arrangements. This approach includes a tenure resolution model that provides Indigenous people of Cape York Peninsula with greater recognition and autonomy in the ongoing delivery of land management in areas of conservation significance. The introduction of this bill today demonstrates another important step on the path to sustainability for Cape York Peninsula. The bill provides a number of benefits for key stakeholders on Cape York Peninsula. For Indigenous communities, the bill—

- enshrines joint management of national parks with Indigenous owners;
- allows development on Aboriginal land when supported by appropriate scientific and economic assessment;
- creates the ability for land trusts to form subregional aggregations for the purposes of negotiating resources and management; and
- protects native title rights in wild river areas and provides for a reserve of water to be set aside for Indigenous communities.

For conservation interests, the bill—

- identifies areas of potential World Heritage significance; and
- removes current impediments to the declaration of national parks by establishing joint management arrangements with Indigenous landowners.

For the pastoral industry, the bill:

- rewards graziers who choose to protect World Heritage values on their properties; and
- provides for the consideration of the impact on the Cape York grazing industry of any decision to transfer ownership or convert a lease to another tenure.

The bill proposes a new model for tenure resolution by creating a new class of protected area under the Nature Conservation Act 1994 called National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land). The new class will enable a perpetual national park to coexist with Aboriginal land and allow for joint management of national park land by traditional owners and the state. Joint management arrangements will be defined under an Indigenous land use agreement and an Indigenous management agreement. An Indigenous management agreement will include details such as how the land will be managed, the responsibilities of each party involved in the agreement and to confirm public rights of access.

The extent of the EPA's role in the management of national park land will be negotiated for each subregion and be dependent on the capacity of traditional owners to undertake day-to-day management. The greater the capacity of the traditional owners to manage the day-to-day aspects of the national park, the greater their responsibility will be. Subcontracting arrangements to traditional owners will be detailed in the Indigenous management agreement. Where the EPA undertakes management of the national park land, it will occur in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. This will bring a new dimension to the presentation of the Cape York Peninsula national park estate and ensure that Aboriginal cultural heritage is fully acknowledged.

I would like to reaffirm the 2006 election commitment that the state will allocate \$15 million for voluntary land acquisition for the dual purposes of the protection of conservation values, including new protected areas, and the continued return of homelands to traditional owners to enable them to develop an economic future. These agreements will be prepared and finalised prior to the transfer of land to Aboriginal freehold and the dedication of a national park. A formal management plan will be prepared once the national park has been dedicated. The new class of protected area may apply to both the existing national park estate and the creation of new national parks on Cape York Peninsula. An advisory structure for the protected area estate has been provided for within the bill. A Regional Protected Area Management Committee will be established with representation from land trusts and the EPA. Representation will be drawn from existing subregional structures wherever possible.

The role of this committee will be to advise the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism about matters relating to the protected area estate in Cape York Peninsula, including—

- park management plans before the plans are presented to the minister for approval;
- employment opportunities to increase Indigenous representation in the national park workforce; and
- provision of resources for management of the protected areas.

The advisory structure also includes subregional committees and will allow traditional owners to speak with a single voice on national park management issues for Cape York Peninsula. The bill further proposes to designate areas of international conservation significance within Cape York Peninsula for areas that are considered to have World Heritage values. The designation will be based on a scientific

assessment of natural and cultural values of Cape York Peninsula, as well as the criteria for inclusion on the World Heritage List that are established and kept under the World Heritage convention. Once a designation has occurred, integrated management plans will only be developed for areas where there is agreement from the land owner or lessee rather than for the entire area under the designation. Management plans will be developed in consultation with the Scientific and Cultural Advisory Committee and the Cape York Peninsula Regional Advisory Committee. The bill enables future economic development opportunities for Indigenous communities on deed of grant in trust land, Aboriginal freehold land and the Aurukun Shire lease land.

Indigenous community use areas will be designated on a case-by-case basis in locations that have the capacity to support aquaculture, animal husbandry, agriculture or grazing activities. Expert advice will be sought to determine where these locations occur. A policy will be developed to provide guidance on who should be consulted and a process for consultation before the declaration of an Indigenous community use area.

Applications for limited clearing of remnant vegetation will be permitted within Indigenous community use areas where a number of criteria have been demonstrated including—

- the clearing is for agriculture, animal husbandry, aquaculture or grazing;
- the development is likely to be economically viable;
- clearing will not occur in an 'endangered' regional ecosystem, 'of concern' regional ecosystem or in essential habitat for a threatened species;
- clearing will not occur for the purpose of planting high-risk species or for trees to make woodchips; and
- a property development plan has been prepared.

A Vegetation Management Code will be developed to assess clearing within areas of Indigenous community use on Cape York Peninsula. The code will be based on part S of the current Regional Vegetation Management Code. It will also consider the size and configuration of clearing in a way to maintain ecosystem functioning and ensure that remnant vegetation remains in the landscape. A draft code will be developed within the month.

One small but immediate action to promote development opportunities for the Indigenous community at Pormpuraaw is to allow for the commercial use of crocodile eggs and their progeny in the Edward River Crocodile Farm. These eggs must have been taken from the wild as part of a research project investigating the viability of the practice.

I understand that there may be concerns that using the progeny of the crocodile eggs for commercial purposes will be to the detriment of the wild crocodile population. To ensure this is not the case, a review of this provision will occur after 12 months. The review may take up to three months to complete and the findings and recommendations of the review will be tabled in parliament.

Advisory arrangements are further enhanced within the bill by the establishment of a committee to advise—

- the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism on the declaration of areas of international conservation significance;
- the minister for natural resources and water on the declaration of Indigenous community use areas; and
- on other matters that are relevant to this bill.

This committee, the Cape York Peninsula Regional Advisory Committee, will have 50 per cent representation from traditional owners and the remaining 50 per cent representation will be composed of conservation, pastoral, mining and tourism interests and local government.

The bill also recognises the pastoral industry of Cape York Peninsula by providing rural lessees with the ability to access a lease term of up to 75 years. This term is offered as an incentive to lessees to undertake additional measures to protect and manage lease land that occurs within an area of international conservation significance. The lessee will need to demonstrate they have—

- entered into a conservation agreement that, in particular, protects the World Heritage values on their lease; and
- negotiated an Indigenous land use agreement for use and access rights of traditional owners and the ILUA has been registered.

Cape York lessees also have access to the existing lease extension opportunities available under the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2007 approved by this parliament in April 2007. Given the strong Indigenous presence on Cape York Peninsula, Indigenous access and use agreements with native title holders will be mandatory for lease extensions beyond 40 years.

As further recognition of the importance of the pastoral industry, the state government will be required to ensure that any transfer of pastoral lease ownership or conversion to another tenure does not adversely affect the viability of the industry on Cape York Peninsula. This will be achieved by the Minister for Natural Resources and Water taking advice from the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries and taking into account any other relevant information such as that contained in planning schemes or instruments.

Indigenous stakeholders remain concerned about the effect of the Wild Rivers Act 2000 on native title rights. Therefore, the bill proposes to amend the Wild Rivers Act to recognise prior native title rights. We will also ensure that water allocations made as part of a wild rivers declaration include a reserve of water for future use by Indigenous communities for sustainable development.

A proposal for employment of wild rivers rangers is currently being finalised. However, initial funds for employment of 20 rangers for this program have been set aside. The state government will work closely with all stakeholders in delivering the wild rivers rangers program to expand the program over the next three years. The state government is also prepared to fund an Indigenous arts program and other projects to assess sustainable development opportunities on Cape York Peninsula.

The bill presents a significant opportunity to further protect the natural and cultural values of Cape York Peninsula whilst enhancing the social and economic circumstances of the Indigenous communities through active involvement in conservation and land management programs. Indeed, I consider the bill to be symbolic by acknowledging the respective aspirations of all stakeholders on Cape York Peninsula.

I publicly thank all the stakeholders for the goodwill that they have demonstrated in the negotiation of this agreement and in consultation as part of this legislation. In particular, I want to acknowledge the member for Cook. I know a number of the stakeholders were in the gallery earlier and I think a number are still there now for the introduction of this bill. I want to acknowledge all of them and thank them. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Callide, I welcome to the public gallery today a further group of teachers and students from the Warrigal Road State School, which is in the electorate of Mount Gravatt and represented in this House by the minister, Judy Spence.

CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill resumed from 6 June (see p. 1896).

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill resumed from 5 June (see p. 1822).

Appropriation Bill resumed from 5 June (see p. 1830).

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.46 am): The true measure of a good government is its ability to provide for our future generations. Unfortunately, for the future generations of Queensland the legacy of the Beattie government will not be a good one. The legacy of the Beattie government will be a massive failure induced debt, a crippling interest bill, inadequate infrastructure and poor-quality services. In this budget bill before the House, it is obvious that the Beattie government lacks the vision and the economic prowess to properly manage Queensland's future.

Queensland is enjoying unprecedented economic prosperity on the back of the global resources boom. Despite record levels of income from mining royalties, GST revenue and property taxes, this government has failed to secure Queensland's future—it has failed to secure Queensland's future up until now and it has failed to secure Queensland's future in this budget. The whole of Australia is enjoying the longest period of economic expansion in history. The economic boom is led by the resource states, of which Queensland is foremost. But the Queensland government has squandered the opportunities afforded by such prosperity. The Beattie government has been handed a once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure the future for Queensland while we are enjoying such good economic times. Over the past nine years the government should have been strategically and comprehensively planning for the future, it should have invested in visionary projects and it should have modernised service delivery. But it has failed to do so and now our children will be forced to pay for the debt that this government is inflicting on them as it frantically tries to catch up after nine years of that chronic failure.

We have heard a lot from the government about record levels of spending for infrastructure in this budget. But when a government spends nothing on infrastructure for nine years, any increase is a record. When a government has been underspending on infrastructure for nine years and then suddenly starts trying to catch up by spending in a panic, there is no credit to be gained by claiming that it is a record level of spending.

Nothing better illustrates the worth of this budget than to make the comparison with what is happening at the federal level. There is no greater contrast in financial management styles than the contrast between the socialist Beattie Labor government and the conservative federal coalition government. When the coalition took over federal government 11 years ago, it inherited a \$96 billion debt—the legacy of successive socialist Labor governments. Through responsible economic management, it eliminated that debt. By the end of the 2005-06 financial year, it was zero. The federal government is now delivering strong surpluses. That surplus is predicted to be almost \$12 billion this financial year. The federal government is investing that money for the future and all of us as Australians will benefit, and we will benefit for generations to come.

Therein lies the paradox. While the Commonwealth government has repaid Labor's high levels of debt and is investing its budget surplus for the future, the Beattie government has been squandering the spoils of economic prosperity and it is now borrowing at dangerous and unprecedented levels. The contrast could not be more stark. This reinforces what we all know and what I have said for a long time: we cannot trust a socialist Labor government to manage the money and balance the books. It just cannot do it.

Queenslanders need to be warned by what they see in this state budget. It is an indication of what they will get if they elect a Labor government at the federal level. We will see the return of record levels of Commonwealth debt, placing enormous upward pressure on interest rates. We all remember the dark days of the Keating era. We remember the interest rates when they were through the roof. We had record high levels of unemployment, we had the recession we had to have and we had the unions running the workplace to the detriment of productivity and employment.

Queensland today is being managed in the same irresponsible socialist style. We on the conservative side of politics believe in responsible economic management. We have a track record of success in economic management and we can rightfully be proud of that track record. Our track record is a track record of reducing debt levels, it is a track record of investing for the future and it is a track record of creating a climate for growth. Unlike the socialist Beattie government, we do not believe in squandering Queensland's future, we do not believe in burdening our children and our children's children with debt and we do not believe in crippling interest payments.

The people of Queensland have every right to ask today: where has our share of the good times gone? Where has the share of the good times that rightfully belongs to the people of Queensland gone? Why, at the top of an economic boom, do we in Queensland have to borrow at such high levels when other governments are able to save money for the future? The answer lies clearly in the Beattie government's track record. It is a track record of failure and crisis creation.

The Beattie crisis list is a long one and we know it too well. There is the water crisis, the health crisis, the ambulance crisis, the electricity crisis and the child protection crisis. Then there are the emerging crises—the housing affordability crisis and the traffic and public transport crisis. No other government in history has failed so miserably in so many areas of core responsibility. That chronic and systemic failure will cost Queenslanders for generations to come.

Queenslanders are well aware who is responsible. They know who is responsible when they cannot see a doctor and cannot get into the hospital. They know who is responsible when the ambulance takes too long to get to them. They know who is responsible when their kids are not meeting the national benchmarks at school. Queenslanders are well aware that they will be forced to pay more for their water because the Beattie government did not invest in any water infrastructure for the past nine years. Queenslanders are well aware that while their cars sit idling in traffic the Beattie government has not invested in roads for the past nine years. They are well aware that they cannot afford to buy a home because the Beattie government has failed to plan for growth, it has failed to release land and it has failed to adjust property taxes. Queenslanders are well aware that they get left behind at train stations and bus stops because the Beattie government has failed to invest in public transport. Queenslanders are well aware that they will be forced to pay more for electricity because the Beattie government did not have the foresight to invest when it should have.

Queensland is a resource based state in a country enjoying a worldwide resources boom. However, this budget makes it clear that at the top of that economic boom Queenslanders are paying more and getting less. Nine years of ineptitude and failure have necessitated a focus on crisis management, and it is reflected in this budget. This is a budget from a government that operates in a continual sense of panic, focusing only on the latest crisis. This budget is playing catch-up big time, and that is why this budget is borrowing record amounts in a climate of record revenue increases.

For nine years the Premier has got away with putting his hand on his heart, looking at the camera and promising to fix his failures. But now the financial cost of those failures is apparent for all to see. There is no better example for the people of south-east Queensland of the financial cost of management failure for this government than the way it has created and managed the water crisis. For years we stood in this parliament and urged the Beattie government to build dams, to build a recycled water pipeline, to build something to secure our future water supplies. We were laughed at and we were criticised. We were ridiculed and we were pilloried, but we were right. Now, in a mad panic, there are crews working 24 hours a day incurring huge unnecessary costs and paying a premium for everything because of the overheated construction environment resulting from this government's failure to act. Now it will cost many times more. No-one knows how many times more, but it will cost many times more for these projects than if they had been planned properly and built in a responsible, professional way. Queenslanders will have to pay. Queenslanders will have to pay today and they will have to pay for years to come.

Health is another massive planning and management failure that has horrendous financial costs. Despite the huge amounts of money consumed, Queensland Health is still marred by horror stories, with patients left waiting, botched treatments and senior medical staff leaving in droves, sick of the culture of bullying and harassment fostered and tolerated by the Beattie government. The government is throwing more money at health but fewer Queenslanders are being treated and patients are forced to wait longer. There are 30 per cent more people waiting for urgent category 1 or 2 surgery than there were five years ago, yet the health budget has increased by more than 50 per cent over the same period. It is incomprehensible to ordinary Queenslanders, but it is about management.

The Ambulance Service is another prime example of the Beattie government's ineptitude. Labor's tax on electricity bills promised to provide the world's best service. That was the promise. It has collected the best part of half a billion dollars over four years, yet the Ambulance Service has never been worse. Response times are blowing out, and long-serving and dedicated staff are leaving in droves because the culture of bullying and harassment is rife—and those staff are being threatened with \$3,000 fines if they speak out. The response in this budget is to throw money at it again—\$50 million—in the hope that it will go away.

Climate change is shaping up as another Beattie government financial black hole. Focused solely on clean coal technology, this budget ignores workable low-input technology carbon sink and offset trading systems that could be up and running within months, rather than years. Offset programs would provide a real boost to regional Queensland with sustainable jobs, but this budget ignores them. It ignores the coalition's proposals—the voluntary carbon trading scheme, the free registration for hybrid cars and the mandating of ethanol in petrol. New South Wales has mandated ethanol, but it is too hard for the Beattie government here in Queensland.

Infrastructure delivery is one of the great failures of this government. The Beattie government just does not have the capacity to manage projects on time or on budget. I had a quick flick through the capital works statement this year and compared it to last year's, and there are nearly 100 projects that the government said would be finished this financial year that are late—100 projects that were announced with much fanfare this time last year and still have not been delivered. Add to this the enormous revisions in costs on a significant number of projects and we get a true picture of what this government is capable—or in this case incapable—of delivering.

I am genuinely concerned for the people of Queensland, and this budget heightens my concern. The danger signs we see in this budget are only the beginning of huge financial problems to come. We are already borrowing at dangerous and unprecedented levels on early cost estimates. Wait until the government starts building those big projects and then the true cost will be realised. Unfortunately, our kids will be the ones who will have to pay for those inflated costs.

I will now look at the budget in some detail and examine the numbers. Most of the announcements, predictably enough, were drip-fed to the media, some announced several times, some even rehashed from last year and announced again. But we expect that. If there is one strength that this government has it is in packaging, spinning and pitching media opportunities. For the last nine years it has worked tirelessly to create an illusion of action and progress. But that illusion has collapsed with this budget.

If I could sum up the budget I would say that it was an empty budget from a tired government in a panic to paper over its failures with borrowed money. It is a budget from a government unable to manage, unable to plan and unable to invest for tomorrow. It is a budget that is all about buckets of borrowed cash to pay for management failures and nine years of doing nothing. There is no thought, no direction, no leadership and no way of addressing the fundamental problems that have created the financial problems that are obvious.

The budget is one of record revenues. The state government is receiving record revenue from its own taxes and record revenue from the GST. The state taxation revenue has increased by more than 80 per cent under the stewardship of the Beattie government and GST revenue has increased by 60 per cent since it was introduced in 2001. State taxation revenue—that is, the government's own source

revenue—is up 13.2 per cent in one year alone in this budget. From the previous year to the year dealt with in this budget, the government's own source revenue has risen 13.2 per cent. State taxation revenue in 2006-07 totalled \$8.375 billion, which exceeded the GST revenues of \$8.053 billion. When the state tax revenue starts to eclipse that river of gold which we have come to know as the GST revenue, then Queenslanders are simply being taxed too much. Our claim of being the lowest taxed state is but a distant memory.

So the government has received record revenues. Now we need to look at expenditure. Recurrent expenditure is the cost that the government incurs doing business. The budget shows that that cost is clearly out of control. Total employee and operating expenses alone grew by 12 per cent last year to almost \$20 billion, which would be fine if we were getting a proportionate increase in service delivery, but everyone knows we are not. This is not a one-off; it is a well established and easy-to-see trend. In fact, the same government expenditure grew by 13 per cent in 2005-06, 10 per cent the year before and 12 per cent in 2003-04. If we take away wage rises, this means that the government's recurrent expenditure has increased by 30 per cent over four years. It is spending 30 per cent more now, after subtracting the wage rises, than it was four years ago.

If that increase had been responsible expenditure Queenslanders should have received a 30 per cent increase in services from this government over the last four years. For that to be true, our roads should be 30 per cent better, 30 per cent more patients should be getting treated in our hospitals, 30 per cent more ambulances should be on the road with 30 per cent more paramedics, there should be 30 per cent more police officers, with 30 per cent more equipment and buildings and so on across-the-board. But, of course, we have not seen this level of increase in services and infrastructure. In fact, as we have illustrated in this parliament over and over and over again, service delivery has gone backwards. That 30 per cent increase in recurrent expenditure has been wasted. It has been wasted on poor management and it has been wasted on crisis management. Rather than having a surplus to invest in hard assets this government has had to borrow and borrow big time. Despite all of the government's income streams being awash with cash, that cash has been wasted and now debt per capita is ballooning.

Government owned corporations in particular have been forced to borrow heavily. In 2006-07 this sector borrowed \$19.6 billion of the government's overall borrowings of \$22.53 billion. Almost all of the debt was in the GOC sector. The state government's borrowings are forecast to grow to \$51.73 billion in 2010-11. In three years time this budget tells us that our total debt will be almost \$52 billion, with the government owned businesses, the GOC sector, forecast to hold \$32.38 billion of that debt.

It is a tried and true strategy to try to hide government debt in the GOC sector but the interest cost still has to be met. To meet the interest cost in the government owned corporations sector, Queenslanders will have to pay more for electricity, water, transport and the other services that the GOCs provide. There is nowhere else to get the money from. The general government sector, which is the sector other than the GOCs—the government's day-to-day operations, if you like—is forecast to have a borrowing of \$19.4 billion by 2010-11. The interest expenses associated with this debt will be \$1.1 billion annually. They are the budget figures, not mine. It means that this government will have to find \$1.1 billion every year to meet interest payments. The amount of \$1.1 billion out of the current account every year will have to be found by this government and by every government that follows it. That interest bill will need to be found from either current revenue streams or by increasing taxes and charges.

The opportunity cost associated with meeting that interest payment will mean that the government will have to forgo one major 700-bed hospital every year or 30 new fully equipped public schools every year. That \$1.1 billion would have employed more than 3,000 extra police officers every year; it would have built a whole heap of roads and busways every year; and, probably most pertinent of all, it would have built three 200-megalitre desalination plants every year. That is the cost of that \$1.1 billion in interest.

At a time of bright economic sunshine such unprecedented levels of borrowing highlight a fundamental failure to manage the economy. What is most troubling to me is that if one looks at the budget papers there is no provision for the repayment of the debt—none at all—just the payment of the interest, which means that the government is simply passing the debt on to future generations. It is a strategy of 'borrow now and let someone else pay it back'. That is a terrible strategy. It is a strategy that should frighten all Queenslanders and make them concerned for the generations of Queenslanders who will follow.

The lack of economic management skills in the Beattie government further increases the likelihood of a new range of state taxes and charges that must follow to pay those interest costs. The first of these, announced by the Treasurer on Tuesday, is the increased tax grab on the sale of motor vehicles. Last year, vehicle registration duties provided \$285 million to the government. The increases in duties are expected to produce an additional \$200 million in revenue. Overall, this represents a 70 per cent increase in the government's coffers. But those large figures hide the true impact. That increase in

tax will have an impact on every Queenslanders every time they go to buy a car—a new car, a second-hand car, a car for their kids or a car for their wife. Every time they go to buy a car they will be slugged to pay for the Beattie government's failures.

The government will not use this additional taxation for mental health facilities. Nobody believes that. It needs it to fund its blow-outs in recurrent expenditure. So what is the alternative? The alternative is better management. The alternative is better management of the increased revenue streams and better management of the out-of-control recurrent expenditure. That is the key. Management is the key. That is what the federal government has done so well and the Beattie government has done so badly. The alternative is managing to avoid the crisis rather than constantly being consumed by high-cost crisis management. The alternative is to start looking beyond the next crisis and the next ministerial failure. The alternative is to get the recurrent expenditure under control, instead of letting it blow out year after year, and the alternative is to curb the continuing blow-out in the costs that escalate year after year. The alternative is to prudently and responsibly manage the revenue streams that are currently at such high levels. The alternative is to prudently manage the rivers of gold while they continue to flow by dint of good fortune. The alternative is to manage the GST revenue, manage the resources boom revenue and manage the huge state based tax revenue during this time of economic good times.

The alternative is to prudently and responsibly manage these revenues so that we have some money to invest in infrastructure and we do not have to borrow at these frightening levels. The alternative is to start planning properly and deliver infrastructure on time and not in a mad rush or in a high-cost rush when the crisis hits. The alternative is to provide service delivery by focusing on front-line staff, reforming the culture of bullying and harassment that prevails under the Beattie government and increasing the efficiency and productivity in the public sector workforce. That is the alternative and it is not rocket science; it is good management. It is the sort of good management that has delivered such wonderful dividends to every Australian when it has been applied to government at a federal level.

The Queensland coalition wants to see real action in key policy areas like traffic management and public transport, climate change and housing affordability, and we have taken the lead on those issues. The Queensland coalition has already introduced a number of initiatives to focus the government's attention on these critical policy areas. We changed our shadow cabinet make-up to focus on traffic management and public transport. We created a housing affordability shadow ministry before the government acknowledged it was an issue. I was pleased to see that in this budget the government has included some small housing affordability measures, but they are small. The budget contains a commitment to allocate some money from the sale of assets to what is called social housing. This is a bandaid measure that does not address the underlying causes of the housing affordability crisis but it plays to the Labor socialist ideology of public housing, in this case funded by the sale of our electricity assets. We believe in attacking the cause of housing affordability. We believe in addressing the issue so that Queenslanders can own their own home, so that they can afford their own home.

The coalition's actions have forced the government to pay attention to these issues, which is why today I am announcing that we are extending the portfolio of the shadow minister for environment to include the issue of sustainability. The shadow minister for the environment and sustainability will work across all industry sectors as well as local governments to develop policies and to encourage long-term environmental sustainability. We have already released a number of climate change and sustainability initiatives—and the government has picked up some of them and they have been used in its recently announced strategy.

We have also introduced draft legislation for carbon trading and free registration for hybrid cars and we call on the government to support those ideas. We are leading the debate in climate change and we are also leading the way with our focus on traffic, transport and housing affordability. Over the coming months we will be releasing a series of initiatives in these areas and I am happy for the government to pick them up, too. We do not mind that the government copies our ideas; it has been doing it for years. I just hope it does not take five years to implement these ideas as was the case with our water policy.

I conclude by saying that future generations will judge this Beattie government budget harshly because future generations will be forced to live with the outcome of this inept government's failures and its expensive, panicky attempts to rectify them. Despite the economic boom and despite its increased revenues, this budget is underpinned by dangerous and unprecedented levels of borrowings—levels of borrowings that have had to be made to pay for the management failures of the Beattie government. However, this budget has given no thought to redressing the fundamental problems that the government itself has created. It is a budget that erodes the great legacy of previous coalition governments because it is a budget that erodes Queensland's great economic strength. In this budget the Beattie government has had to load future generations of Queenslanders with debt. It has had to load future Queenslanders with debt to replace the money that it has squandered on its failures. That failure induced debt will be the legacy of this Beattie Labor government. It will be the legacy of the Treasurer, Anna Bligh. It will be a coalition government that will have to repay that debt in the future.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (12.15 pm): The Queensland economy and the Australian economy in general have been characterised by strong growth, by delicately poised interest rates and by significant and disciplined federal government fiscal policy. There are risks to an economy that is going along as well as the Queensland economy is going. The good times do not last forever. This budget is all about the four-letter word that those opposite dare not utter: debt. Interest rates are a function of the demand and supply for money. Queensland's massive demand for money to fund its catch-up for infrastructure is set to push inflation higher, as we have seen, across all the Labor state governments. At a time when the federal government has been exerting fiscal discipline repaying debt, putting extra funding into areas like education and the Future Fund, where that money is locked away from current demand, the state governments have been borrowing to make up for years and years of neglect. Those who watched *Lateline* last night on the television would have heard leading economists say that the threat to interest rates in this country was the state governments conducting this desperate borrowing act to pay incredibly inflated prices in order to catch up with years and years of neglect.

Ms Nolan: That is exactly what was not said. What was said was that—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Ipswich!

Dr FLEGG: There seems to be a distinct lack of knowledge of economics on the other side. When people are worried about interest rates the last thing they do is pump-prime the economy with excessive borrowings.

Inflation will also be driven higher because we have GOCs in this state chock full of debt that have to service that debt with increasing fees and charges. It is the borrowing at the top of the cycle that causes the bidding up, as we have seen with some of the projects in this state where we are paying double or more than what we would have paid a few years ago, and at the same time pushes up the prices for skilled labour and for resources. These measures will undo the fiscal discipline that we have seen from the federal level.

The state government delivered a fiscal and cash surplus in 2006-07 but yet has created a cash and fiscal deficit among every sector in every year of all its forward estimates. Queenslanders should enjoy this year because this is the last year that they will see a surplus. We know that when governments allow debt to spiral upwards it is taxpayers who pay. They pay when they buy a car, when they turn on a tap, when they switch on the lights. Combined debt for the general government sector and the non-financial government owned corporation sector is estimated to reach \$12.4 billion by 2010-11. The Treasurer was quoted in the *Brisbane Times* yesterday saying—

It was unfair to combine government sector and GOC debt, because much of the GOC debt was paid by user organisations, not taxpayers.

I think that is a quote the Treasurer might hear again.

There are three serious qualifications I have with a Treasurer who could come out with a clanger like that. I will talk, firstly, about the unfair point. This should not surprise us from a government that has tried more than any other to hide and conceal debt in its GOCs. This hiding of debt is the new version of dividend stripping out of our GOCs. Let us call it interest stripping from the GOCs. Our debt-burdened GOCs will have to recover it from somebody. I would say to the Treasurer that the combination of the government sector and the GOC sector is a standard for state governments and it is based on Australian Bureau of Statistics government finance statistics standards.

Ms Bligh interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I will send the Treasurer the *Hansard* after this and perhaps she will learn something. For the Treasurer's information, this combination is referred to as the non-financial public sector.

Ms Bligh: Gosh! Really? Fancy that!

Dr FLEGG: I am surprised that the Treasurer is surprised by this, because she is the one who publishes this data. There is an operating statement for this sector, there is a balance sheet for it and there is even a cash flow statement for it. The combination is reported in the Treasurer's own budget papers and the midyear review, and she says it is unfair to combine them.

In fact, it is so important that this combined sector represents one-quarter of the statements and tables in her annual midyear fiscal and economic review—a quarter of the document is economic reports that she says are unfair and should not be used. It is not unfair. In fact, it is dangerous and unprecedented that a state Treasurer refers to the consolidated statement as 'unfair'.

I wish to table for the benefit of the House a page from the federal government's budget paper No. 5.

Tabled paper: A page headed 'Chart 10: Individual state net debt by sector (as at end of financial year)' from a document titled 'Fiscal developments in the States'.

This has an extraordinary graph that I recommend to all members. It shows the indebtedness of the Queensland GOC sector soaring above every other state in Australia. We have the most indebted GOCs in the nation. Eleven per cent of gross state product is indebted in our GOCs.

Here are some facts on the combined statement. The combined operating statement reported a fiscal deficit of \$5.8 billion and a cash deficit of \$3.2 billion for 2006-07. The combined operating statement forecast a fiscal deficit of \$8.5 billion in 2007-08 and a cash deficit of \$7.1 billion in 2007-08. Combined interest expenses were just over \$1 billion in 2006-07, and combined interest expenses will total \$1.6 billion in 2007-08. This will grow to \$2.7 billion by 2010-11.

On the balance sheet, total borrowings for the combined sector will reach \$51.7 billion by 2010-11. Despite the best of economic times, the principal sum is rising astronomically and there is no evidence of any policies to repay the massive borrowings. Net debt of the combined sector is forecast to reach \$12.4 billion by 2010-11. That will be a \$23 billion reversal of fortune in just four years. These are the Treasurer's own numbers. These are forecasts that have taken place during an economic boom in this state. Mr Speaker, I say this to the Treasurer: what will the credit rating agencies say about this standard reporting measure in the context of your statement that the national standard of combination is unfair?

Secondly, in relation to the GOC debt being paid by user organisations, not taxpayers, what a bunk! How are these user organisations going to pay their charges? What do these organisations do? They market goods and services to businesses, families and communities. The Treasurer is turning average Queenslanders into user organisations. Has the Treasurer even bothered to investigate the possibility of these user organisations passing on the higher cost of debt servicing charges through higher fees and charges to Queensland communities and businesses?

Thirdly, the combined sector is typically referred to as the state government. This government is about to take the combined sector across the debt threshold. Driving this is the net debt in the GOCs. These are our Queensland icons, and there are 36 of them in total. By 2010 the Queensland ratio of debt to gross state product in these GOCs is forecast to be twice as much as the other states. This is an extraordinary feat given the powerful financial legacy this government inherited and blew. The ratio will be twice as much as New South Wales and Western Australia, four times as much as South Australia and five times as much as Victoria. This is the debt burdened on our GOCs that they have to pass on to ordinary Queenslanders.

I will look specifically at the general government sector. The general government sector incurred its very own interest expense of \$218 million in 2006-07. This interest expense is forecast to grow to \$390 million next financial year and then blow out to \$1.145 billion in 2010-11. That is a fivefold blow-out in the interest expense in the general government sector. The unprecedented accumulation of this debt will end up a burden not just on us but also on our kids. It is a tax on present and future generations. It is extraordinary to be borrowing aggressively at the top of the boom when revenue is pouring in. It is dangerous and unprecedented.

I want to look at the CPI and the opportunity cost of \$1.145 billion per year in borrowing costs in 2010-11. This cost could double expenditure in emergency services overnight, it could double state government grants to every local government across Queensland or it could build an extra 2,000 public housing units. We are going to have to tighten our belts.

This imminent journey into unprecedented and dangerous debt servicing coincides with record revenue windfalls to the state. State taxation revenue in 2006-07 totalled \$8.38 billion; this exceeded GST revenues which came in at \$8.05 billion. State taxation revenue is up 13.2 per cent from the previous year. GST revenue is up 3.6 per cent. Since the GST was introduced, it has consistently been the largest source of state revenue, except for a property boom blip in 2003. Now Queensland collects more in state tax than GST revenue. Under Commonwealth-state taxation arrangements, it was always expected that the majority of state revenue would come from the GST to allow the reliance on narrow based state taxes to be diminished.

Of particular concern to Queensland taxpayers, families and businesses is that in recent years we have seen Queensland lose—and dramatically lose—its long-held status as Australia's lowest tax state. In fact, we are losing it so quickly that in last year's budget—2006-07—Tasmania was the only state with state taxes that were lower than ours but, if we look at this year's statements, we have left South Australia miles behind and we are within \$3 per person of overtaking Victoria, and Victoria is a state that did not inherit the strong financial position of Queensland and was a financial basket case only a few years ago.

Mr Lawlor: What do you think? We have the same economy as South Australia?

Dr FLEGG: I take the interjection from the member from Southport who said do I think we have the same economy as South Australia. We do not. We have a far stronger economy than South Australia. It is generating an awful lot more revenue for the government here.

Queensland needs the infrastructure. There is no disputing that we need to build infrastructure but it is infrastructure that this government failed to plan and build when there was better capacity in the economy. It knew our population was going through the roof, it knew our roads were being choked, that our public transport was inadequate and that our water supply per person was dwindling. They have been shown up trying to deliver this much needed infrastructure at twice the price at a time in our history when the resources are very much scarcer than they were when this infrastructure should have been built.

The construction of this infrastructure in Queensland has been placed at the mercy of cost overruns because the government failed to deliver it in an orderly and appropriate manner. It failed to deliver 127 planned projects in 2005-06. In 2006-07 it made somewhat of an inroad into this failure to deliver on its capital program. But before anyone gets too excited, this time it has only failed to deliver 97 promised projects. This is hardly a record to be proud of. It is good, however, to see the government look at itself. In the meantime, general government recurrent expenditure and outsourced expenses grew by 12 per cent in 2006-07. This is with the Queensland wage price index growing by only 4.5 per cent over the same period. Looking at recurrent expenditure and adjusting for the wage price index, government services should have increased by 30 per cent across-the-board since 2003-04.

Looking at this from the point of view of what was budgeted and what was spent, there has been a budget blow-out in employee and other expenses of 3.4 per cent in 2006-07, following on from a blow-out of five per cent in 2005-06, four per cent in 2004-05 and five per cent in 2003-04. It is obvious that the Queensland economy is in the hands of the Socialist Left. Queensland businesses and communities need to brace themselves for this spiral, this deterioration that Australians have seen under governments that fail to practise appropriate financial discipline.

What do some other commentators have to say about this budget? A Standard and Poor's analyst said that the borrowing would increase the whole-of-government net financial liability to operating revenue ratio to over 85 in 2011, up from 17 per cent in 2007.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I take that interjection because they warned that operating surpluses at these levels expose the state to some vulnerability and the strength of Queensland's balance sheet could erode over time. The Australian Industry Group said, 'The Queensland government has missed a valuable opportunity to cement the state's competitive edge.' Commerce Queensland said very succinctly, 'This is not a business budget.' That is a bit of an understatement, perhaps.

The AMAQ said that the budget is disappointing. The increase of 200 beds a year over five years in public hospitals is short of what is needed and many patients will be unable to get a bed. Again, that is something of an understatement if we look at the number of hospital beds in Queensland. They have not kept pace with population growth—not even close.

Queensland will have a choice later this year and that choice is whether we risk having debt at the state and federal levels. Treasurer, time is running out not only for vital infrastructure but also for this myopic interpretation of how state finances should be managed. It is not the policies of the coalition that the Treasurer does not understand, as she says in this place; it is economic management. She will be remembered for not delivering vital infrastructure and services while delivering a massive debt burden.

We heard in this place this morning the Treasurer say that for \$600 million we would get an extra 22 megalitres of water supply on the western corridor. Working that out per megalitre—

Time expired.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.35 pm): At the outset, I advise the House that I am actually speaking to the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill. I will finish the contribution I was making before the debate was adjourned yesterday evening. I have discussed with the Speaker this issue. He said that I was able to continue my speech on the clean coal bill and speak in the appropriation debate later. He said I could delay my contribution to the clean coal debate until after the Leader of the Opposition, the member Callide, and the shadow Treasurer, the member for Moggill, made their contributions to the cognate debate. The appropriation bills are usually recognised as the most important bills to be introduced into the House each year.

I will now complete my contribution to the clean coal legislation. It could be said that, despite the Coal Association's endorsement of the agreement, it had no option in the face of the Premier's threat to increase royalties. The Premier's previous blanket endorsement of his flagship, the ZeroGen project, was quietly dropped. The Premier explained this by saying—

ZeroGen I seized on because it really is just a signal for a gasification project—I seized on it as one of the ones that had a pilot (project) that work was being done on.

To be perfectly frank with you I don't care as long as it's leading edge and in Queensland.

Yet if we were to track the press releases from the Premier he certainly did care about this particular project. It underlines the Premier's propensity to ignore or disregard advice on practical and viable options in favour of choosing high-profile vanity projects.

The amount of money from taxpayers' coffers that has been spent on ZeroGen is not clear. I would certainly welcome the government's advice in this regard. I understand that approximately \$29 million has been spent on clean coal technology in the last year. I would welcome the government's advice on how much of this was spent on ZeroGen. I note that ZeroGen was part of Stanwell. The retiring Coordinator-General was previously at Stanwell. In July 2002 he returned to the position of Coordinator-General. Since that time ZeroGen was recognised as a significant project.

The Clean Coal Council will comprise at least 11 members including chair—five government representatives, five representatives of the Queensland black coal industry nominated by ACALET, as well as other persons the minister considers suitable. The minister appoints the council members and determines the terms of office and conditions of office. The minister may also delegate his functions to another minister.

The functions of the council are purely advisory and include advice to the minister on priorities for funding, recommendations for project funding and reporting on prerequisites for funding and coordinating international research collaborations. The council may also report to the minister on its own initiative for a request for funding. The agreement determines how the voluntary funds will be collected and spent and commits to allocate \$300 million to an integrated gasification combined cycle plant in Queensland. Such a plant is to be determined by the Premier.

It also determines that the CS Energy oxyfuel project will be funded from the Queensland contribution. The agreement may be terminated if there is any change to the method of calculating the increase of royalties or introduction of any new fee, tax or other impost on Queensland coal producers for the purposes of increasing funding for the initiative. However, any existing agreements in place will continue. It could therefore be construed that, in exchange for their agreement, the voluntary levy contribution and willingness to allow the Premier complete control of how funds will be spent, the council has been given an assurance that royalties and other fees will not be increased. However, we would seek the government's clarification on that. The agreement also states that in the case of the introduction of a state or federal carbon tax any Queensland contributions to projects are recognised as an offset against those contribution obligations.

It is likely, though not confirmed, that the Queensland clean coal board announced by the Premier on 26 July will be disbanded and any work handed to the new council. There is not a determination as yet about how the intellectual property issue will be determined. Again, it looks likely that, although the council will consider this, the Premier could have the final say. As the issue of the value and holding of intellectual property rights is a major issue in its own right, given the large amounts of money involved, the ultimate value of any technologies and the stated desire to involve other funding and research partners, this could be a major concern. There is also no provision for a dissolution of the agreement except in the case of the government increasing or imposing royalties or fees and taxes or a mutual agreement to cancel the agreement. This means that ACALET is bound by the agreement and that the Premier will ultimately retain complete control of all funds regardless of the opinions of the five producer representatives.

This brings us to the major concern that the state coalition has. We support the need for innovative technologies. However, we have a grave concern that the Premier has set things up where there is no independent scrutiny and there is no accountability up to \$600 million worth of funds, yet the Premier has ultimate control in how those funds are spent—funds of industry, funds which are required to develop this technology but funds in an environment where increasingly the line between the private and public sector is blurred and the need for new probity measures to ensure that governments are held accountable are strengthened. We not only need clean coal technology; we need clean hands from this government on how it handles other people's money.

That is why the state National-Liberal coalition has an amendment on the table which we will be seeking to move later on with regard to the recommendations of the council having to be tabled here in the parliament. It is vital that when we are talking about amounts of money such as this it is not just a slush fund for the Premier's pet project but there is genuine accountability and scrutiny of how those funds are spent to ensure that they are spent in the wisest way. We have already raised issues of concern with regard to ZeroGen, but while the bill and agreement seem to have the endorsement of Queensland producers and dedicate industry funds to accelerating the development of clean coal technology but beyond the scrutiny of how those funds are allocated, the concern is that the Premier has the final say on how, where, when and what these funds will be spent on, and that, we believe, requires mechanisms to provide scrutiny.

Mr BOMBOLAS (Chatsworth—ALP) (12.46 pm): The electorate I represent is one of south-east Queensland's fastest growing areas and I am proud to say has been recognised in the state budget with major funding for schools and community services. The budget handed down by the Treasurer has delivered for the region, including significant funding for emergency services. The Beattie government is determined that as the south-east region grows infrastructure will match the growth and, as such, we will be recruiting 250 new ambulance staff across the state, part of a \$50 million injection to the Queensland Ambulance Service to meet increasing demand for services.

The budget also delivers vital new infrastructure in that regard for the Chatsworth electorate, including \$2.5 million for the completion of the Camp Hill-Carina Police Station and \$1.82 million to build the new Carina Ambulance Station. Incidentally, tenders for the Carina Ambulance Station have closed and I, like the emergency services minister, am eagerly awaiting news of the successful tenderer. While the project is behind schedule, it will be delivered better late than never. But in the meantime 16 extra mobile paramedics have been diligently servicing the area. There is also \$15.65 million for the commissioning of over 140 new ambulance vehicles across the state to replace older vehicles. Around 135 new defibrillators have been budgeted for, as well as three new ambulance stations, including the Carina one, 17 redeveloped or replacement stations, and 42 paramedics will be recruited in the next 12 months. I would like to pay tribute to the QAS, which serves four million Queenslanders across the nation's most decentralised state which covers 1.77 million square kilometres.

To further ensure Queensland remains a safe and secure place to live, \$1.437 billion has been allocated for policing. The budget ensures another 200 police officers will be sworn in, taking the number of officers in the service to 9,928 by October. As I mentioned earlier, \$2.5 million has been set aside for the Camp Hill-Carina Police Station as part of \$102.3 million that has been earmarked for capital works, building, replacing or refurbishing police stations. I also note that more than \$500 million has been allocated to build and upgrade schools and training facilities across the state, and in Chatsworth the funding includes \$12,000 for maintenance of hard external surfaces at Carina State School as well as \$20,000 for high priority maintenance related to flooring.

I know that Principal Kathy Roman and her P&C really appreciate these funds. There is also \$8,000 for maintenance at Tingalpa State School. This, too, will go to flooring. Principal Ken Peacock is particularly thankful. An amount of \$11,000 has been allocated for maintenance at Whites Hill State College. The money will be used for work on hard external surfaces. There is also \$30,000 for flooring at Whites Hill State College and \$75,000 under the Triple R Maintenance Program for reticulation at Whites Hill State College. Principal Karl Shrubsole and his hardworking P&C are appreciative of these funds.

Our teachers are helping to shape the futures of our most precious commodities, our children. Therefore, it pleases me that we will invest \$70 million over the next four years to provide every teacher in a state school or TAFE institute with their own laptop computer. It is part of almost \$6 billion that has been set aside for education and training. We will employ the equivalent of 437 full-time employees to meet the growth and deliver new programs. Up to 192 of these positions will be teachers and teacher aides, with up to 195 assigned to the training sector. In 2008, prep will be implemented fully and a budget allocation of \$50 million will support this implementation through the employment of more prep teachers and the provision of professional development for teaching staff.

With the unemployment rate in the Sunshine State down to an amazing all-time low today of 3.5 per cent, a shortage of skilled workers has surfaced. To help find a solution to the shortfall, the Beattie government has included \$17.1 million to create 250 new trade training places across the state and another \$13.4 million for training and career information services at 17 Skilling Solutions Queensland centres.

As the Chatsworth electorate, particularly around Gumdale and Wakerley, continues to expand, it is an imperative that we get the community infrastructure right. Funding for Chatsworth community services includes \$2.67 million to increase the transformer capacity at the Camp Hill Electricity Substation. The facility is on the border of the Chatsworth and Greenslopes electorates and I am sure that my honourable neighbouring colleague will agree that this is great news for the constituents of both of our electorates. There is \$1.29 million to assist adults with a disability to live and participate in the community as part of an ongoing commitment that is contained in the budget of DSQ, which totals almost \$1.1 billion. There is \$500,000 towards the construction of an indoor heated pool at Zahel Street, Carina. It incorporates an access ramp, amenities and change rooms, with a total state government contribution of \$1.5 million. This area is part of the Clem Jones Sports Complex, which is used by 19 clubs and many residents in and around the area. There is \$28,000 for the Multicultural Centre for Mental Health and Well-Being at Carina to implement a physical, social and nutritional program for people from a refugee background through the Community Partnerships Grants Program at an overall cost of \$57,000.

We are all aware of the pressures on housing and the Beattie government is playing its part to combat the crisis. We have allocated in the Chatsworth electorate alone \$3.53 million to commence the construction of 12 public housing apartment units at a total cost of \$3.65 million. There is \$1.22 million to build 14 public housing apartment units at a total of just under \$4 million from the Queensland Future Growth Fund. An allocation of \$822,000 has been made to begin construction of public housing in Chatsworth as part of the spinal injury initiative to house severely injured persons, at a total cost of \$890,000. In fact, \$500 million from the Queensland Future Growth Fund has been allocated for social housing, and that is to be applauded. In all, a record Queensland Housing assistance package of \$719 million has been budgeted for 2007-08 and that includes a massive \$479 million in capital programs.

In my electorate there is \$35,000 to provide before and after school and vacation care for school-age and under school-age children. There is also \$91,241 for the Warehouse Cricket Association to construct a four-wicket synthetic grass practice facility, including lights, at Kianawah Park, Tingalpa—

Mr Reeves: It's an institution.

Mr BOMBOLAS: Yes, under the Minor Facilities Program at a total cost of \$136,181. Funding for Transport and Main Roads initiatives that will benefit the Chatsworth electorate includes \$46.7 million to continue planning and land acquisition for the Eastern Busway from Buranda to Capalaba. The total cost of the project is \$1.34 billion. There is \$1 million for concept planning of the upgrade of the Gateway Arterial between Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and the Pacific Motorway at a total cost of \$4 million. There is also \$260,000 to complete a planning study of the Cleveland subarterial at the Tilley Road intersection at a total cost of \$432,000.

I am also pleased to see an allocation of \$691.2 million for the continuation of the Gateway upgrade project, comprising a second Gateway Bridge river crossing and increased capacity on the Gateway Motorway between Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Nudgee Road, at a total estimated cost of \$1.88 billion. Obviously, this project will benefit not only the constituents of Chatsworth and the neighbouring electorates but also most people who live in or visit south-east Queensland. In all, a record \$5.53 billion will be spent on transport and road infrastructure in the next 12 months.

Major transport projects being funded in the 2007-08 budget, which will benefit us all, include the Inner Northern Busway, the Boggo Road Busway and the south-east Queensland cycleway network. There is also \$19 million for improving bus infrastructure across the south-east and \$16 million for integrating bus, rail and ferry services, ticketing and fares, including the public transport smartcard. My constituents will also benefit from the record \$7.15 billion that has been earmarked for Health, with around \$26 million being spent on various projects at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

In the midst of the worst-ever drought, this financial year the Beattie government will spend \$2.22 billion on several major projects establishing the south-east Queensland water grid. I also note with great interest that a further \$80 million will be provided to extend the popular Home WaterWise program, which now boasts more than 170,000 successful applicants. In fact, one in five south-east Queensland households has received support through this scheme, with one in every 10 households in the region now having installed a tank with a rebate.

Although most of us hope to avoid going to court, more Queenslanders will be able to access free legal aid following a funding boost of \$13.6 million. The increase will help some of the most disadvantaged members of the community access legal advice and representation that they would struggle to afford. There is also a commitment of \$2.4 million over three years for a judicial registrar pilot program to help clear the backlog in the Magistrates Courts.

Through sports minister Andrew Fraser, \$50 million will be delivered in funding grants to encourage Queenslanders to live more active and healthy lifestyles. An amount of \$41.1 million will go towards developing and enhancing sport and active recreation infrastructure. There is \$3 million for sporting clubs to fund training and participation initiatives, organisational planning and recognise volunteer support. That is a very important aspect that we must remind people of. There is \$2 million to assist young athletes competing at state sporting championships or state school championships. I know there will be a couple of schools, community organisations and sporting groups in Chatsworth who might feel disappointed because they missed out. But let me assure them that I will continue to fight for the best possible outcomes.

In closing, I praise the hard work of the Treasurer and her staff in preparing a well-rounded budget that will ensure that Queensland continues to prosper under the sound economic initiatives of the Beattie government. I commend the Appropriation Bill to the House.

Sitting suspended from 12.58 pm to 2.30 pm.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Before calling the member for Southport, I welcome to the public gallery teachers and students from Sacred Heart Primary School in the electorate of Toowoomba North, which is represented in this House by the Attorney-General, Kerry Shine. I am reliably informed that one of the students, Anthea Smith, is celebrating her 12th birthday today. Happy birthday, Anthea!

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (2.31 pm): Firstly, I would like to make some general comments about issues raised by members opposite. Dr Flegg, the shadow Treasurer, has referred to the government incurring 'escalating debt for future generations'. If we do not borrow to incur debt to provide infrastructure—such as dams, the water grid, roads et cetera—for the future, what are the alternatives? One is that we put a freeze on capital works just as the coalition did the last time it was in government, or we pay for capital works out of current revenue and the surplus. That is probably impossible because of the size of the Capital Works Program. But, even if it were possible, it would be

quite inequitable because we would be making the people of today pay for infrastructure that will benefit people in say 100 years time—for instance, dams that could last several hundred years. Although they would benefit from such a piece of infrastructure, they would get that benefit for free.

The only way that intergenerational equity can be achieved is by responsible borrowing which then allows the beneficiaries—that is, the successive generations—to be responsible for the interest and redemption costs. Nothing could be fairer. This budget proposes just such responsible borrowing of \$3.6 billion to fund a Capital Works Program of \$5.46 billion in the general government sector. Even with this borrowing program, the state continues to maintain low-debt servicing costs, with interest costs as a proportion of revenue averaging just over two per cent over the forward estimates. These borrowings will not adversely affect Queensland's AAA plus credit rating with Standard and Poor's.

If the opposition says that we should reduce borrowings and freeze capital works as it did when last in government, which of the following projects would it shelve—the Houghton Highway, the Gateway Bridge upgrade, QR central Queensland coal tracks, the water grid, the Gold Coast desalination plant, the Kogan Creek baseload power station, the Cairns airport upgrade? Perhaps it would scrap the lot. While other states have net financial liabilities of \$517 per head, Queensland has net financial assets of \$5,931 per head. That situation is not as a result of chance; it is the result of 10 consecutive responsible budgets by the Beattie government. Contrast the fiscal responsibility of the Beattie government with the irresponsible decision by the coalition when it was last in government to sell off Suncorp and blow the proceeds on recurrent expenditure. That money is now gone and what have we got to show for the sale of Suncorp? Nothing!

Mr Stevens: A great highway that you travel on.

Mr LAWLOR: That money was not used to fund the highway at all actually. That is as irresponsible as a government can get and it has the hide to presume to lecture us on financial responsibility!

This is the Beattie government's 10th budget and Southport has again done well. With a forecast state budget surplus of \$268 million and Queensland's economic growth outperforming Australia's growth for 11 consecutive years, we are definitely living in the Smart State. Unemployment is forecast to be lower than the rest of Australia, and this with 1,500 interstate and overseas migrants coming to Queensland each week. The government has abolished seven state taxes since July 2001 and another two taxes will be abolished in the next four years. Motor vehicle duty will change from a flat two per cent rate to a rate dependent on the number of cylinders with no change for hybrid vehicles. The record \$7.15 billion health budget continues to drive the reforms of the Health Action Plan. With \$5.767 billion for Transport and Main Roads and \$2.5 billion in water infrastructure Queensland is moving forward, and thanks to this government Queensland's economic growth is secure for years to come.

I am proud that the electorate of Southport will share not only in terms of major programs but also with specific initiatives. These include \$6.45 million to the Gold Coast City Council to assist with the redevelopment of the Southport Broadwater Parklands. I have always been an advocate for the restoration and maintenance of the Broadwater for passive recreation—and I emphasise passive recreation. Only three years ago I campaigned and achieved funding for the construction of a new police station at Southport. I can now say that Southport will be at the forefront of emergency services facilities as this budget provides \$2.55 million for the redevelopment of the Southport Fire Station. Statewide, the budget also delivers an additional 200 police positions and 250 new ambulance staff at a cost of \$50 million to meet growing demand. Another \$15 million will go towards the commissioning of over 150 new ambulance vehicles across the state to replace the older vehicles.

The amount of \$31.09 million is allocated to the Queensland Academy for Health Sciences to complete construction of the Health Sciences Academy, which opens in 2008. This is a fantastic boost to educational opportunities on the coast. With the sort of population increases we are experiencing, it is vital that we have facilities like this. I am also pleased to announce \$2.5 million for the Southport State High School—one of my old alma maters—to complete development of its home economics block. Queenslanders everywhere deserve the very best in educational facilities.

The government has prepared for the future medical needs of the Gold Coast, and this can be shown through its support for university students and training of new doctors. At the planned 750 bed Gold Coast University Hospital at Parklands, \$14.5 million has been allocated for the development and planning of the \$1.23 billion facility. Griffith University itself has been given \$4.87 million, from a statewide commitment of \$60 million, to help train and support doctors to work in Queensland public hospitals and help staff the new university facility. The long-wait category for elective surgery patients has decreased by eight per cent through the increased number of surgeons working at the Gold Coast Hospital, and the funding will only further this achievement.

As well as the new facility, the Gold Coast Hospital will receive funding to upgrade its own services to accommodate the growing needs of a growing city. The emergency department at the hospital will receive \$5.12 million in upgrades, increasing patient capacity by 30 acute beds at a total

cost of \$8.2 million. In addition to this, the government has put \$5.03 million into community support organisations under the Home and Community Care Program. This will help support home nursing groups such as Blue Care. This will enable them to continue their high level of care for their clients and provide support to their clients' family members and carers providing the care.

I congratulate the Treasurer and her staff on an excellent budget. I seek leave to incorporate the balance of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Other specific initiatives include:

- \$5.7 million on the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program targeting employment assistance specifically at disadvantaged Queenslanders in the region from Logan to Gold Coast, including Beaudesert and creating 914 jobs in 2007-08.
- \$1.18 million to provide training for disadvantaged Queenslanders in the Logan and Gold Coast area to improve their skills and employment prospects at a total cost of \$3.55 million over 3 years.
- More than \$500 million has been allocated to build and upgrade schools and training facilities across the state.

This electorate will benefit from—

- Approximately \$112.8 million will be invested in over 7.2 million hours of vocational education and training in the region during 2007-08.
- \$135,000 in continued funding for the Logan and Gold Coast based Tactical Crime Squad which targets known crime hotspots with an emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences.
- \$555,000 to complete concept planning between the Gold Coast Highway and Southport-Nerang Road, on Labrador-Carrara Road, at a total cost of \$600,000.
- \$4.47 million for duplication from two to four lanes between Government Road and Robert Street on the Gold Coast Highway (Helensvale-Southport), at a total cost of \$57 million. This includes Gold Coast City Council contribution of \$4 million and contribution from TransLink (Queensland Transport) of \$1 million.
- \$125,000 for bikeway linkages at various locations in Gold Coast City, with a total State Government contribution of \$225,000.
- \$9 million for widening to six lanes between Pacific Motorway and High Street (in sections), on the Smith Street Connection Road, at a total cost of \$68 million. Includes Gold Coast City Council contribution of \$1 million.
- \$886,000 to complete the resurfacing of asphalt on Southport-Burleigh Road, between Winchester Street and Rudd Street (in sections), at a total cost of \$2.6 million.
- \$2.11 million to complete bus priority works between the Gold Coast Highway and 4km west along Smith Street, on Smith Street Connection Road, at a total cost of \$6.55 million.
- \$1.23 million for widening to four lanes between Minnie Street and Queen Street, on Southport-Nerang Road, at a total cost of \$38 million.
- \$11.46 million to complete widening to four lanes between Robert Street and Stevens Street, on the Gold Coast Highway (Helensvale-Southport), at a total cost of \$21.63 million. Includes Gold Coast City Council firm contribution of \$1.3 million.
- \$28.3 million to continue planning of a Gold Coast Rapid Transit System from Parkwood to Broadbeach at a total cost of \$901.92 million.
- \$12.65 million to continue work on the bus and high occupancy vehicle priority measures for three major road corridors on the Gold Coast at a total cost of \$83.57 million.
- \$488,000 supports the drug court trial in Southport at a total cost of \$1.7 million.
- \$215 million to improve the working conditions for Queensland Health staff, including Visiting Medical Officers, Clinical Staff and Administrative Staff in 2007-08 as a part of a total package of \$3.48 billion over 3 years.
- \$1.86 million allocated to libraries in the Albert/South Coast area as part of an ongoing commitment to improve the stock of books in public libraries.
- \$201,000 for ongoing regional tourism marketing.
- \$631,000 for ongoing promotion of major conventions.
- \$460,000 in continued funding to the Society of St Vincent de Paul State Council of Queensland under the Home and Community Care Modifications Program which provides information and financial assistance with bathroom adaptations, for people who are eligible, at a total cost of \$920,000.
- \$964,000 to Gold Coast Community Housing Association Inc under the Community Rent Scheme to provide short and medium-term accommodation to public housing applicants in need of immediate housing in the private rental market at a total cost of \$2.89 million.
- \$699,000 for the Gold Coast North Home Assist Secure program, which provides free information and referrals regarding home maintenance, falls prevention, repairs and modifications and home security as well as financial assistance to eligible people, at a total cost of \$2.15 million.
- \$1.54 million to complete construction of 16 public housing apartments units for low-income earners at a total cost of \$3.47 million.
- \$286,000 to assist Gold Coast Turf Club Ltd with costs of maintaining training facilities.

- \$207,000 to provide a sexual abuse counselling service to children and young people in care and their non-offending family members and carers with total funding of \$622,000.
- \$3.59 million to provide post school options for young adults with a disability and their families as part of an ongoing commitment.
- \$114,000 to trial innovative support options for people with a disability that foster community capacity in Southport as part of an ongoing commitment.
- \$320,000 to improve the sustainability of non-government organisations delivering services to people with a disability and their families and carers in Southport.
- \$875,000 to provide a counselling support service, counselling, referral and support for women and children affected by domestic and family violence, women accessing in court services and to work with men to encourage them to modify their violent behaviour.
- \$301,000 to provide an accommodation and support service for women and children escaping domestic and family violence.
- \$29,000 to provide before/after school and vacation care for school age and under school age children.
- \$303,000 to provide, counselling and support for young people at risk of homelessness.
- \$278,000 to provide families with crisis or short term accommodation and support to deal with issues that put them at risk of becoming homeless.
- \$56,000 to provide outside school hours care activities for young people (13-15yrs).
- \$42,000 to provide support services for older people, including enhancing safety and well-being.

The Government is undertaking an unprecedented expansion of urban water infrastructure, with the \$9 billion SEQ water grid. Once completed, the Water Grid will not only secure more water for the region but also enable it to be moved to areas of most need. \$81 million for the Home Waterwise Rebate Scheme, which offers rebates for water-saving devices such as rainwater tanks, washing machines, shower heads, dual flush toilets and pool covers, across South-East Queensland and the Darling Downs at a total cost of \$175 million.

I therefore commend the budget to the House.

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (2.38 pm): It gives me real pleasure to rise and support the 2007 Appropriation Bill and to take the opportunity to congratulate the Deputy Premier and Treasurer on her second budget and the Beattie government's 10th budget, a budget that once again delivers a forecast surplus. This year's surplus is \$286 million. It is a budget that allocates \$14 billion in capital works on vital services and appropriately uses our strong economic position and a strategy of sensible borrowing for a part of the investment to fund infrastructure for future generations of Queenslanders.

The state of Queensland is the nation's leading state. It is expected that Queensland will outstrip Victoria's population in the not-too-distant future. Queensland leads the nation in economic growth at five per cent. Today unemployment is at 3.5 per cent. Queensland has a AAA credit rating and in the last 12 months business investment has increased by 18 per cent. The economy is well and truly well managed by this government and it is responsible to invest in this record capital spend to place Queensland in a position where we have the right infrastructure to drive future growth, productivity and prosperity.

I note in recent days the media's portrayal of the Treasurer pictured in a hard hat and tagged as 'Bligh the builder'. I will go out on a limb and say that I am delighted by that portrayal on two counts: the first is that the Treasurer is, indeed, Bligh the builder—building with this budget a Queensland that is strong, fair and prepared. Secondly, I am delighted to see a woman in a hard hat portrayed positively in the media, particularly a woman like Anna Bligh who is such a great role model for women and girls in this state. In a growth economy such as Queensland we need everybody contributing to the building of this fantastic state and additionally we need to ensure that everyone derives benefits from the jobs and opportunities that arise from the resultant prosperity. Our government, through the Premier, Deputy Premier and the cabinet, have delivered through this budget a real chance for all Queenslanders to share in a strong and positive future.

I will now detail how the budget benefits my electorate of Aspley, and, as the parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Education and Training and the Minister for the Arts, outline some of the commitments to the Department of Education, Training and the Arts portfolio. Schools, sporting clubs, roads and vital infrastructure in Aspley were all big winners the 2007 state government budget which allocates millions of dollars for the northern Brisbane region. The area shared in a significant portion of the \$500 million made available by the Beattie government to build and upgrade schools and training facilities across the state.

Aspley and its surrounding region is home to thousands and thousands of people and that figure increases every week. It is critical that we have the right facilities in which we can educate our young people, that we have the best system of transport and that we have the sporting and recreation clubs to cater for our growing population. The 2007 budget places funds in all the right places for this community. It is a budget that recognises the area's standing as one of Brisbane's go-ahead areas.

The remainder of my speech details extensively the allocation of the budget to the Aspley electorate and is part of a public press release that I have already issued which also contains information in relation to the Department of Education, Training and the Arts. It encourages my constituency to contact the Aspley electorate office to either get the information in writing or talk to me directly. In the interest of what I think should be a parliament that role models for healthy working hours, I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Funding for schools in the Aspley electorate included:

- \$888,000 to Pine Rivers Special School to complete construction of an administration block and relocate the Special Education Developmental Unit
- \$750,000 to Craigslea State School for an amenities upgrade
- \$90,000 for maintenance and re-roofing at Aspley State High School
- \$40,000 for repainting and maintenance at Craigslea State School
- \$17,000 for repainting at Pine Rivers Special School
- \$24,000 for repainting and re-roofing at Pine Rivers State High School

Aspley also did not miss out as part of the government's \$50 million injection to the Queensland Ambulance Service. This will fund additional staff and vehicles across the state.

There is \$2.15 million to begin construction of the new Carseldine Police Station a station on busy Gympie Road. The Budget gives \$137,000 in continued funding for the North Brisbane Tactical Crime Squad which targets known crime hotspots with a strong emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences.

The Aspley electorate will share in new transport funding including:

- \$239,000 to complete installation of a guardrail on the Albany Creek Sub—Arterial
- \$489,000 for intersection improvements at Bald Hills Road
- \$165,000 to construct a bus bay at Aspley State High School
- \$200,000 to complete concept planning of the Gympie Arterial at Linkfield Connection and Strathpine Road interchange
- \$37,000 to complete intersection improvements at Webster Road
- \$100,000 for resurfacing on the Brisbane—Woodford Road
- \$98,000 for traffic management devices between Webster Road and Strathpine Road
- \$1.38 million for resurfacing on the Gympie Arterial

In addition, the Budget recognises how important sporting and recreational clubs are to the electorate.

Funding for Aspley's sporting clubs includes:

- \$487,000 to Aspley Australian Football and Sporting Club to construct a new amenities facility at Carseldine
- \$206,000 to Ridge Hills United Football Club Inc towards construction of an amenities facility at Stanley Day Park
- \$651,000 to libraries across the Pine Rivers area
- \$250,000 to the Pine Rivers Shire Council to help provide a Outdoor Performing Arts Venue
- \$1,000 for the Aspley State School to deliver aerobic dance sessions
- \$112,302 for Aspley State High School to upgrade five tennis courts
- \$600,000 to improve facilities and equipment for people with a disability
- \$311,000 to provide funding to develop support options for people with a disability

In the area of Education and Training \$527 million is committed state-wide to school and TAFE infrastructure.

Including a range of new schools, Prep facilities and new TAFE projects.

The \$35 million Queensland Academy for Health Sciences is being established on the Gold Coast and a permanent facility for the \$43.3 million Creative Industries Academy will also open in Brisbane in 2007-08.

Recurrent investment in state and non-state schooling and the training sector has increased by 7.2 per cent on the 2006-07 Budget to a record \$6.484 billion.

Funding is available to improve literacy and numeracy for all students, from Prep to Year 12 through \$1.5 million for a new numeracy initiative, which will help build teacher capacity through professional development programs and the development of teacher resources and training packages and \$35.6 million over the next four years to improve literacy for students in all schools, with intensive literacy support being offered to upper primary students identified through the Year 5 National Benchmark Tests as needing assistance. An additional 437 full-time equivalent employees to meet new growth and deliver new programs will be delivered with up to 192 of these positions will be teachers and teacher aides to meet enrolment growth in our state schools and support students with disabilities.

Up to 195 will be allocated to the training sector.

The Government will invest \$2.5 million a year to provide Professional Support Teachers and Learning Support Teams throughout the state at schools with high numbers of Indigenous students.

In state schools and TAFE institutes, teachers will benefit from the Budget's provision of \$70 million over four years to supply them with classroom computers.

The Government will invest \$118 million in 2007-08 as part of its four-year \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan which includes \$17.1 million to create 4,250 new trades training places across the state and another \$13.4 million for training and career information services.

In the area of the arts the Government commits \$1 million to plan a major international design centre as well as \$2.3 million allocated to create The Edge, an ideas and technology centre for children at the Cultural Centre, South Bank.

\$12 million is allocated over three years to create a new fund for public art. The fund, to replace the highly successful Art Built-In, will focus on commissioning world class public art for all Queenslanders to enjoy.

The Budget re-affirms our Government's commitment to the backbone of the Queensland arts and cultural sector with \$112.3 million for our flagship cultural institutions and \$9.6 million allocated to fund the small to medium arts sector.

The Government's support for the State's signature arts festivals, such as the Brisbane Festival, which showcase new and innovative arts as well as promote local talent and stories, will also continue, with an extra \$1.25 million for the Queensland Music Festival.

The Budget also delivers an increase of 33 per cent to the Pacific Film and Television Commission's Revolving Film Finance Fund taking it to \$20 million.

The Budget delivers across the range of public housing, disability, child safety, tourism and importantly health initiatives. The continued rebuilding of the new Prince Charles Hospital, creating a world class hospital that incorporates the best of the cardiac, respiratory and orthopaedic services the hospital is renowned for as well as general admissions and emergency services for the north side of Brisbane and Pine Rivers. The budget delivers more doctors, nurses, allied health, police and ambulance officers.

Mental health will receive \$200 million state wide—through a marginal increase in motor vehicle duty. As a former nurse I am disturbed at times by the increasing pressure I see on our mental health staff, facilities, patients and their families. I applaud the move to fund the program through this reasonable duty increase.

Public housing and home affordability are given priority through an historic \$500 million to construct public housing, where the federal government has failed or most disadvantaged we have delivered. Public housing is critical to many people in my electorate and I welcome this initiative.

Tax cuts for land tax will also give relief to home buyers.

In the time available to me I have given but an overview of the detail of the budget and I would encourage my constituents to contact my office for further details of a fantastic 2007 state Budget. Congratulations must go to the Treasurer and her hard working team for their efforts. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (2.43 pm): As the Deputy Premier and Treasurer said in her budget speech, 'In a Labor budget, no-one will be left behind'. I am proud of this budget because it delivers on the essential components of a sound economy and a just community. These include investments in infrastructure to drive economic performance and growth; social justice programs and services to meet the needs of our growing population; and education, training and research to drive the ideas and innovation to equip us for the future.

Queensland's economy is the engine room of the nation. Unemployment is at its lowest level for 33 years at around four per cent. Our economic growth has outperformed the rest of Australia for the past 11 years, and 10 of those years have been under the leadership of the state Labor government. On average, Queenslanders pay \$131 a year less taxes than residents of other states and \$284 less than our southern neighbours in New South Wales. Queensland is undergoing growth that is almost unprecedented in our history. Forecast population growth for the next year is two per cent ahead of national growth of 1.25 per cent. Business investment is booming and estimated to surge by 18 per cent in 2006-07.

We have some exciting challenges in Queensland at the present time and this budget delivers in a range of areas to tackle them head on. None is starker than the current difficulties we are facing from one of the worst droughts on record. This budget delivers a massive \$2.5 billion to continue the acceleration of critical water projects over the next year including two new dams, the water grid, a desalination plant and a recycling plant. The government has also provided an additional \$80 million to continue with the very popular WaterWise program which has delivered thousands of rebates to people who install rainwater tanks and other water-saving devices in their homes.

The budget papers contain a lot of detail on a wide range of initiatives. However, some of the headline allocations which impact more visibly on people's lives include: funding to recruit and train an additional 250 paramedics for our ambulance service, \$70 million to provide laptop computers to school teachers, the staged abolition of mortgage duty and an additional \$500 million injection of funds to boost the supply of social housing.

I will outline in more detail some of the statewide initiatives in areas such as health and education later in this speech, but first I want to highlight some of the specific budget allocations for the electorate of Nudgee. A welcome surprise in this year's budget is a \$500,000 down payment to commence planning and construction of a new indoor sports centre at Earnshaw State College. This is the icing on the cake following the recent \$10.6 million redevelopment of the school as a P-12 college.

Since being elected as the member for Nudgee I have lobbied hard for major sport and recreation facilities in my electorate. Two of the more significant gains include the installation of an international standard athletics track at Nudgee College and major upgrades to O'Callaghan Park at Zillmere. In my first speech in this parliament I identified the need for major indoor sport and recreation facilities in the areas of Banyo, Nudgee and Zillmere. I specifically referred to the needs of the then Nudgee State

School which had to hold its annual pantomime in the assembly hall of Sandgate High School in the neighbouring electorate of Sandgate. Today, I am proud to say that both needs have now been addressed by the state Labor government. In July 2001, with the support of a \$1.1 million state government grant, we opened a new multipurpose Police Citizens Youth Club at Zillmere. Today, I am proud to confirm the allocation of \$500,000 to commence planning and construction of a major indoor sports centre at Earnshaw State College. This facility will not just be a local school initiative. It will provide, for the first time, a major indoor sports facility to service the needs of neighbouring communities in Banyo, Nudgee, Nudgee Beach, Northgate, Nundah and Virginia. I take this opportunity to thank the minister for education, Rod Welford MP, and the Treasurer, Anna Bligh MP, for listening to the needs of my community and approving this most welcome budget allocation. I look forward to working with the community to ensure this initiative provides the maximum benefit possible.

The \$15 million Nundah Community Health Centre is well underway and construction activity is expected to continue till later this year with an opening early next year. This budget allocates \$12.9 million towards the project. Recently I joined with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health, Karen Struthers MP, to officiate at a sod-turning ceremony to celebrate the commencement of construction at the Melton Road site. The Nundah Community Health Centre will provide massive benefits to residents of north-east Brisbane and particularly to my own constituents who in the main will all live within a five to 10 minute drive from the facility. It is also conveniently located close to the Nundah Railway Station and a bus route. The Nundah Community Health Centre will bring together existing services which are currently accommodated in separate facilities across three key health service districts: Prince Charles Hospital, Royal Children's Hospital and Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

It will house around 100 staff using common services and resources. Services to locate to the new centre include Adult Community Health Service, Child Community Health Service, Child and Youth Mental Health Service, Adult Mental Health, Women's and Newborns' Service, Alcohol and Drug Service Visiting Service, BreastScreen Queensland mobile van and Renal Outreach Service. This is another example of the positive steps this government is taking to strengthen our health system which, through this budget, will receive a massive allocation of \$7.1 billion. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Major call-centre for Zillmere

The Nudgee electorate will be home to a purpose built government call centre. I have been advised that the centre will be built in Zillmere and this year's budget allocates \$14.1 million out of a total budget costing of \$46.7 million over four years.

The new call centre will help enhance the delivery of police services to the community. It will allow the public to easily contact the Police Service through a central phone number and will also assist with 000 emergency calls. Of significance is that when the centre is fully operational, the efficiencies gained will allow around 210,000 hours of police effort to be re-directed to proactive policing and crime prevention activities.

It will also be a major source of local employment opportunities.

Allocations for local schools

A number of local schools have received specific allocations for minor works in addition to the funding for a new indoor sports centre at Earnshaw State College.

Virginia State School will receive \$25,000 for targeted maintenance of some school buildings and Zillmere State School will receive \$15,000 for maintenance of some hard external surfaces in the school grounds.

Budget allocation for Catholic Schools

Each year the budget makes mention of specific allocations to a number of State Schools in my electorate. This is because decisions on funding for state schools are determined by Education Queensland. My local catholic schools also benefit directly from the budget however, specific allocations to particular schools is determined by a non-government body called the Block Grants Authority. School grants for the next financial year will be determined separate to the budget process.

I can however provide some detail on how the State Government has assisted Catholic schools in my electorate in the years before this budget.

A recent example is the new prep year classrooms at St Dymphna's school at Aspley/Zillmere. The State Government provided \$239,000 towards this project to complement the sterling effort of the local school community and parish which provided \$294,000.

Since 2000 the State Government has provided \$1,776,727 for small to medium-sized capital works projects at my local catholic schools. That money has assisted with projects ranging from the installation of school drop-off zones, new classrooms, administration upgrades, furniture and equipment and new prep year facilities. Schools which have benefited from this funding include St Pius at Banyo, St Kevin's at Geebung, St Flannan's at Zillmere and St Dymphna's at Aspley/Zillmere.

Local Community and Sport and Recreation funding

A number of local sport and recreation clubs have received funding in the budget. They include Virginia Golf Club who will receive \$14,000 to complete a new toilet facility on the fifth hole with a total State contribution of \$28,000. The Zillmere Police Citizens Youth Club is receiving \$16,000 to provide sporting activities and a program on the importance of physical activity. Mayne Junior Australian Football Club at Nundah has received \$117,250 to upgrade its change rooms and toilets; and Kurbingui Youth Development Association at Zillmere will receive \$60,000 to continue the employment of a part-time sport and recreation officer.

Upgrade plans for Gateway—north of Nudgee Golf Course

As I have said many times before, the Gateway Arterial Motorway is a federally funded road in name only, because the Federal Government has failed to adequately fund upgrades necessary to keep up with the burgeoning population growth in South-east Queensland. In fact, the Federal government's failure to commit direct funds to the construction of the new Gateway Bridge will cost motorists through increased tolls.

The State Government has initiated the \$1.9 billion project to duplicate the Gateway Bridge and new extensions to the Gateway Motorway, without Federal Government support.

One of the areas of the Gateway in most need of upgrade is a section of the motorway the Member for Sandgate and I have dubbed, the 'Ipswich Motorway of the north'. It includes that section of the Gateway extending from the Nudgee Golf Course right through to the Bruce Highway. In afternoon and morning peak hours, this section of the Gateway is starting to resemble a car park and is in urgent need of an upgrade.

I am pleased that this year's budget commits State Government funds to commence planning for this necessary work. An allocation of \$2.35 million dollars out of a total of \$6 million will allow the concept planning of measures to alleviate the traffic congestion currently experienced on this road.

I thank the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Paul Lucas MP, for recognising this need in my electorate and call upon the Federal Government to commit some of its funds to this necessary project. After all, this is a Federal Government Road.

Public Housing in Nudgee Electorate

The budget provides \$510,000 to commence construction of six public housing apartment units for low-income earners at a total cost of \$1.68 million. \$1.32 million will be provided to continue the renewal of public housing stock across the electorate and \$126,000 will be provided to assist community organisations provide crisis accommodation.

Capital Works

This budget delivers another record breaking capital works program. Queensland is the economic powerhouse of Australia and the State Labor government has increased capital works spending from around \$5 billion 10 years ago to a massive \$14 billion in this budget. This represents the highest per capita expenditure on capital works of any state in Australia. Queensland's per capita investment in capital works is now \$3,212 per person compared to our nearest rival, Western Australia, at \$2,224. In addition to the benefits we derive from completed infrastructure such as schools, health facilities, roads and the water grid, these capital outlays will also support around 101,000 jobs throughout the next year.

Tax cuts to mortgage duty and land tax

One of the key initiatives in the Budget is the full abolition of mortgage duty over the next two years. It will be halved from 2008 and totally abolished from 2009. Home ownership is the goal of many Queenslanders and this tax reform will go some way to easing the financial impact of buying a house. When it is abolished in 2009 it will save consumers around \$435 million dollars. This reform is in addition to the generous stamp duty concessions the government has introduced over the past few budgets.

The land tax threshold has also been increased for Queensland residents from \$500,000 to \$600,000. For companies, trustees and absentee landholders the threshold will increase from \$300,000 to \$350,000. As a result of these increases, 6,000 Queenslanders and 4,000 companies, trustees and absentee landholders will not have to pay land tax.

Funding infrastructure and growth

Queensland is growing stronger than any other state in Australia. It is placing huge demands on our infrastructure and services. As noted earlier, our \$14 billion capital works program is now the largest in the country on a per capita basis.

With a record building program it is necessary for the government to borrow funds just as most businesses and households do to finance major purchases.

The government believes it is economically and financially responsible for governments with a growing population and economy to borrow for capital investment. The borrowing proposed for the capital works program will result in interest costs as a proportion of our revenue of around 2% over the forward estimates. Thanks to the prudent management of the State's finances Queensland's balance sheet will remain one of the strongest in the country.

Health

The health budget has increased by 12% this year. One of the cornerstones of the allocation is a \$895 million increase in mental health spending in just over five years. There are around 103,000 Queenslanders with mental health problems. They are amongst the most vulnerable people in our communities and this funding is a significant step forward in our endeavours to provide them with the support they need.

Education

This year's budget commits \$6.484 billion in recurrent funding and \$527 million in capital works funding for Queensland's education and training facilities. \$50 million has been allocated to support the full implementation of the prep year through employing more Prep teachers and providing more professional development for staff. The funding also includes \$5.5 million in grants to schools for curriculum resources including books, art and craft materials and indoor play equipment.

As mentioned earlier, one of the headline budget allocations is a \$70 million program to ensure that all State School teachers will be supplied with a laptop computer. Teachers in the Catholic and independent sectors will also benefit from a \$7 million allocation to assist this sector provide similar benefits to its teachers.

Conclusion

There are a range of other major initiatives in this budget but time constraints do not allow me to canvass them in any detail. As I said at the outset, this is a budget that I am proud of and one which provides a sound basis for Queensland's growth and future prosperity.

In closing I want to place on record my congratulations to our Deputy Premier and Treasurer Anna Bligh on the delivery of her second budget. I have the privilege of working closely with the Deputy Premier in my capacity as her Parliamentary Secretary.

As I said last year, through this Budget, Anna Bligh once again sends a clear message to all Queenslanders that she understands their needs and has the strength, compassion and capability to deliver balanced solutions through sound management of the State's finances.

Good credentials for a future leader.

I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (2.50 pm): I rise to speak to the budget as delivered by the Treasurer. Firstly, I would like to comment on the rain. Even if the budget has not been so generous as to deliver every one of our requests, the rain has given a very positive feel to the immediate future. One thing I have always noticed is that no matter how dire conditions become due to the harshness of the elements, rural people smile and their mood lifts when it rains.

One positive to come out of these severe drought conditions has been to make urban residents at least begin to recognise just a little the pressures placed on rural landholders during drought and to have a little understanding and compassion. I think the enormous public support for and adoption of the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme and the need for the government to put another \$81 million towards it proves the point. I hope nobody forgets that it was a motion moved eight years ago by the Independents and which the government supported that got this particular ball rolling. However, please do not think the drought is over. It is not. A lot of rain will be necessary before we even get close to seeing the drought break. I remember quite clearly the Premier asking everyone a little while back to pray to God for rain and I now wonder if he will ask everyone to say thank you.

Back to the budget reply. There have been so many leaks about this budget that, other than the finer details, there was very little in it which has not already been revealed and about which some viewpoint has not been expressed in the papers. In total, according to the budget papers, the Nanango electorate will receive tens of millions of dollars. It will also benefit from hundreds of millions as part of district and regional funding targeting the Wide Bay-Burnett. I will not go through the list, but constituents can obtain a detailed list from my electorate office at any time.

Perhaps it is what is not in the budget papers which is of more concern to my constituents. I will ask the Deputy Premier and Treasurer to forgive me if I have failed to discover the various things I am about to mention due to the fact of the limited time to peruse the papers in minute detail made it difficult. At this point I would also like to thank the Treasurer for her assistance in deciphering the benefits that the Nanango electorate will receive in this budget.

The water issue is a major one and the drought really emphasised the vulnerability of Queensland during such times. Queensland is currently paying a premium for its water infrastructure purely, I believe, due to a lack of planning and foresight. This is much publicised, but there are many issues which do not get to see the light of day that are endured by residents day after day, and these are the things I will address today.

I failed to see in the budget anything to do with a water supply connection to the small community of Coominya in the Brisbane Valley. The pipeline construction passes virtually the doorstep of this community and they are within a stone's throw of the Wivenhoe Dam. I would have thought it would have been a relatively easy matter to address. I did suggest fairly recently that, as the abattoirs at Coominya already access water via their own pipeline, perhaps an investigation into the possibility of connecting into the abattoirs' infrastructure and a payment for the use of that infrastructure be investigated. It would obviously require a larger pumping system but, if the parties were willing, I am sure it could be an affordable option. Although informed that it would be looked into, I have yet to be told if such an option has been investigated.

Cleaning out dams and other water storage infrastructure during times of drought and low water levels to re-establish capacity seems logical to rural people. However, nothing along these lines appears to be catered for in the budget. Dredging on property dams is commonplace. Honourable members might ask why. Rain deluges carry rubbish and top soil into dams and slowly over years the debris builds up and decreases the water storage capacity of those dams. It is essential to restore the original capacity and secure maximum water storage for the future in tough times.

I recognise that dams operate differently. Some have spillways and others have outlets closer to the base of the dam. Either way, debris builds up and reduces water storage capacity. I am told by government departments that it is not cost effective. However, I know of instances where contractors have offered, or been prepared to offer, to dredge dams at no cost to ratepayers except for the contractors being able to onsell the silt. The silt and other rotting debris at the bottom of most dams is black gold to gardeners and farmers and is a very saleable commodity. The greater depth of the water storage afforded by the removal of this debris would ensure that water remained cooler and, thus, would result in less evaporation. However, I could find no mention of funding in the budget to address this kind of long-term maintenance.

I now turn to health. I welcome the record spending but, in all honesty, I cannot see the results of many dollars being spent in the Nanango electorate. I constantly have concerns about low staffing causing increased work pressure and longer working weeks or excess on-call time in many departments, whether that be doctors, nursing or laboratory staff. Yes, I get the odd complaint against staff members, too. However, the majority of complaints relate to the conditions and the lack of resources with which the staff have to contend. There are also complaints of constantly long dental waiting lists. Ours blew out to five years at one stage, which is horrendous. Now it is back to four. There is a lack of mental health services. I welcome the increased funding in these areas.

Mostly, I receive complaints about the totally inadequate Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. I read in the *Courier-Mail* on 27 May that the Minister for Health said that there was to be a rise in the travel subsidy from its 20-year-long level of 10c per kilometre to 15c per kilometre. While any little bit of aid to help people get city based medical treatment is gratefully received, the slug that was delivered in the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill last night regarding the rise in vehicle registration duty will negate any real benefit. A lot of people in my constituency are pensioners of various kinds and older cars are their only option.

A rise of 5c is quite miserly when viewed in the context of the extended distances and overnight accommodation costs that rural people have to endure in order to receive equal treatment to their city counterparts. I note that the minister mentioned that in the article. I also note that the Minister for Health was also quoted as stating there would be no change to the accommodation subsidy. That is a shame because that is one of the major burdens on rural people.

I recently had a constituent come to my office to say goodbye. He has been diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer and said that, although he had been offered the treatment, the system had made it all too hard and he had decided to stay home until his time came.

We still have unacceptably long waiting lists for many treatments. As of 1 June 2007 the waiting list for dental services, as I stated, was still over four years. In saying that, I cannot complain about the willingness of dental staff to address any emergency issue I have brought to their attention. Again, I have not actually found dental references in the budget papers, nor have I seen any reference to increased staffing levels in diagnostic laboratories, where there are often unacceptably long waits for diagnosis. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Can the member indicate if the speech has been approved by the Speaker?

Mrs PRATT: It has been taken to the Speaker. I do not know if he has actually approved it, but he has a copy in its entirety.

Leave granted.

Non urgent ambulance transport has dropped from 4,649 cases in 05/06 to 3,486 in 06/07. I've had many constituents who simply cannot make their own way to specialist treatment due to various reasons and these people literally have no way to get themselves to their treatment but have still been refused non emergency ambulance transport. I have to ask are these refusals the reason for the significant drop in the number of transports?

People question where exactly is the ambulance levy being spent when all many see is that its introduction heralded in an era of unprecedented ambulance staff and service deficiencies?

I welcome the budget funding which will see more dialysis services for the state and I particularly ask that Kingaroy and Esk have the opportunity to gain these services.

Recently a constituent was unable to receive dialysis treatment when he suffered a heart attack something he's to receive every two days. He went without dialysis for 4 days because no hospital would take him due to the fact there were no dialysis machines available for him to use. Even the Princess Alexandra refused to admit him for the same reason. His wife finally had to take him home to dialyze him, running the risk of him having another heart attack while she did this. When he did have another heart attack he was taken to Esk Hospital, transferred to Brisbane (again) as Esk has no dialysis unit. He sat in the Ipswich ward from 1am Monday morning until 1pm Monday afternoon with no action being taken. He finally went home undialysed and passed away the following Saturday. This patient died because not even Brisbane could dialyze him and although the Gold Coast hospital had machines available, they had no beds so couldn't take him either.

My urgent request is for more dialysis machines. We have been told that Kingaroy is next in line to get one but when and when can Esk hospital also receive a dialysis machine?

There are so many instances with regard to health and the difficulties rural and remote areas endure that time doesn't permit so I'll leave them for another day.

Mr Speaker, the Coolabunia toilet amenities are completely unsuitable for the number of staff and children. Funding was given for new amenities in 2004 and work started soon after school commenced in February 2005. The complex is still unfinished and children and staff are still using the old amenities due to sloppiness on the government's part.

How long is it going to be before this work is completed and why didn't government do it's homework properly before starting this project instead of getting it half done only to find the type of system was not suitable?

I have mentioned several times in this place the stress and pressure the communities of the South Burnett have been experiencing of late, the primary one being the delay in a decision by the Tarong Energy Corporation. That decision is the new source of fuel for the power station and although recognising the importance of that decision it has no less of an impact on the community because of that importance.

Many individuals are affected, one school community and the business communities in at least five towns. Although Tarong personnel making this decision and those communicating with the public express concern for the distress the delay is causing the truth is their lives go on regardless, they will still have their pay packets and they can move on with their future plans—the communities and individuals affected are in limbo—neither moving forward or sure of what their future's hold.

It's alright to say get on with your lives, don't not carry on with plans you'd made because Tarong decisions might not impact at all but the facts are the very possibility that anything you do could be wiped away in an instant by the stroke of a pen will stop the average person.

People in the South Burnett just need to know.

Tarong Energy has been the mainstay for the South Burnett communities bringing in millions of dollars each year but with the uncertainty about the location of where it's fuel will be sourced combined with the loss of jobs from Tarong Coal, the Murgon meatworks closure and loss of 400 jobs and the drought the community is suffering.

Mr Speaker, one of the major concerns for me was the total lack of any reference in the Deputy Premier and Treasurer's budget speech to primary industries. Each year I've been in this place I've watched as primary industries has been relegated to the portfolio of least regard. I've watched local facilities diminish until they are barely in existence at all. I find that really disturbing in a state as dependent on primary industry as is this state. I note however in the budget reference to about \$6 million for ongoing research to improve productivity, profitability and practices in animal industries especially pork and beef and the horticultural industries. I believe decent rain will improve productivity and profitability if enough is forthcoming than this paltry amount.

I now turn to main roads and transport and I must say I was more than pleased to see the number of new works to be undertaken in the electorate, especially the overtaking lanes between Harlin and Ipswich and between Kilcoy and Yarraman. Also the amount of widening, strengthening, resealing and shoulder work.

However and there's always a however—there's still a lot of work to be done on the D'Aguiar Highway including more overtaking lanes between Woodford and Caboolture, Kilcoy and the foot of the Blackbutt Range and between Nanango township and Kingaroy. The electorate has been given approximately two each budget and if we can continue that way I think most reasonable people will be happy.

There are other issues with regard to safety with roads near schools but I've discussed possible solutions with the minister and I will continue to discuss the various needs of the electorates with the relevant ministers as required. I have to thank all ministers for their willingness to meet with me and my constituents throughout the year. I know where possible you all resolved issues and listened to the concerns if you could not with the view to possible solutions in the future.

Mr Speaker, the operation of courtesy buses have resulted in the loss of one South Burnett town's taxi services due to their ability to compete with the courtesy service which doesn't have to comply with the strict requirements, attain the same licences or pay the same fees of the taxi operator. The minister is aware of the issue and I would ask if any solution has been found to ensure both the courtesy buses and the taxis service both survive in smaller rural towns.

Mr Speaker I'd now like to address the matter of police and correction and I have for some time been approached by various prison officers, QCS representatives, public sector unionists from a number of Qld correctional facilities. What concerns me among other things is the escalating amount of overtime and the cut backs in activities within the correctional service which could possibly present a danger to the staff and the general public all because of a blow out in overtime which has to be covered.

Yet another email received today—and believe me I receive many from staff and QCS members concerned about the negative effect the rotational roster is having on staff morale and the not so smooth running of the prison facilities stated—

"Recently I had a short discussion with our DG who agreed with me (amazingly) that the rotational roster forced state wide on all correctional centres needs to be slowed down. He also agreed that staff should stay much longer in each area of the centre in the hope ownership and knowledge will improve."

Now we have an overtime bill Edmund Hilary couldn't climb over that the poor old taxpayer must now cough up for when it's purely a bad call by the DG who won't back down.

Mr Speaker I expected to see some reference in the budget to address the problems in the system. We have a DG admitting to high level people within the system that there needs to be changes but either not having the intestinal fortitude to recommend such changes or if he did not having a minister who took his advice. I don't know which is the case but changes need to be made in the best interest of the staff and members of the QCS.

I note in the budget mention that Murgon's to get a replacement police station/watchhouse and although I don't begrudge them getting such a facility I believe Kingaroy Police Station, once dubbed dump of the month in the Police Magazine has a greater need.

Although the Kingaroy police station has received some repair work, painting, new furniture and air conditioners, the front counter is to be closed in for safety reasons. However the fact that the Station needs such attention and has safety concerns is not surprising as it was built to accommodate 6 officers in around 1967 and it would have been luxurious and the envy of other surrounding stations at that time. But it was built 50 years ago and is no longer an adequate facility for over 20 police personnel that now man it. The police not only need a facility suitable to today's needs to meet the enormous growth rate that Kingaroy as a regional centre is experiencing but they deserve a workspace that is not overcrowded. They deserve a completely new police station in Kingaroy.

The Woodford police on the other hand will be happy to know that there will be a further \$200,000 in this budget to complete the replacement Woodford Police Station at a total cost of \$1million. There is no way anybody could say it wasn't appropriate and long overdue. This is however funding that's been previously announced but that in no way diminishes the community's thanks.

Before I thank the various ministers for their co-operation and willingness to address issues in the Nanango electorate, there are issues which have needed addressing for some time and it will appear that will continue to remain for some time in the future.

Mr Speaker there's probably a lot more community need that I could put forward but time does not permit.

I commend the bills to the House.

Mr STEVENS (Robina—Lib) (2.58 pm): In rising to speak to the government's budget bill for 2007, I would firstly like to congratulate the minister, Mr Schwarten, and his government for recognising the crisis in the affordability of housing in Queensland and the lack of public housing available to some 36,000 Queenslanders waiting for public housing by committing substantial funds to alleviation of this problem in this year's budget. May I say in the first instance that the Queensland coalition welcomes the \$719 million housing assistance package of which major components include \$27.9 million in capital funding and \$3 million in recurrent funding in 2007-08 to continue the homeless initiative and \$297.8 million for public housing and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing rental programs and the long-term Community Housing Program to purchase or commence construction of 544 dwellings, complete construction of 410 dwellings, upgrade existing dwellings and purchase and develop land to facilitate future construction of social housing dwellings.

A government member interjected.

Mr STEVENS: Credit where credit is due. I am certain that the coalition's move early this year to highlight the importance of this community crisis by dedicating my shadow portfolio to housing affordability has in some small way focused the government's attention on this rising problematic area, which has been borne partly as a direct result of John Howard's national success in bringing economic prosperity to the thriving economy of Queensland. The \$500 million allocation over five years for 1,700 new public housing tenancies is warranted and overdue and will assist to address the lack of previous budgetary commitments to this important sector which, by the very nature of the long-recognised population growth in south-east Queensland—it did not happen this year; it has been happening for 40 years—should have been addressed many years ago in the nine-year reign of this Beattie Labor government. It is nice to see that members on the other side of the House have woken up.

The Beattie government has put planning policies in place in south-east Queensland which have restricted the release of affordable land to the low-income and young homebuyers of Queensland. The government is now reaping the pain of a housing affordability crisis which has forced more people into the rental market, which in turn has forced up rental rates and which in turn has forced more people on to the public housing waiting lists because they simply cannot afford the escalating rents charged in the private sector.

Despite low interest rates—the Howard low interest rates—strong economic growth, rising incomes and easier access to mortgage finance, the cost of housing is high compared to other periods in our history. Affordability has not improved over the longer term, and trends show how household values and housing costs have increased faster than wages or inflation. The capacity to pay for housing has diminished and shows no signs of abating, and housing stress remains an oppressing and distressing societal problem.

Mr Lawlor: Distressing? How do you think we feel—

Mr STEVENS: You brought it on.

Mr Lawlor:—listening to this?

Mr STEVENS: Alarming, this has the potential to constrain economic growth in the longer term. Supply of land is a key factor in providing affordable housing. The government simply must restore the orderly release of land, along with facilitating urban consolidation. The move to alleviate the stamp duty on mortgage loans is welcome and, again, is a positive step in addressing the financial chasm that has widened inexorably under the Beattie government's reign to the point where the housing affordability index—

Mr Hinchliffe: Ha, ha!

Mr STEVENS: I heard a chuckle from the member for Stafford. The housing affordability index—which is the publicly recognised indicator of the people's ability to afford home ownership, as prepared by the Housing Industry Association—has sunk to its lowest level since 1984.

Government members interjected.

Mr STEVENS: Members of the government should not be proud. At around \$330,000 for a new home from a developer, the \$100 saving in the first 12 months for the new homebuyer that the government has come forward with in its policy still leaves the new homebuyer with the problem of having to find the other \$329,900. This is a major impediment to even single-income, professional people—such as teachers, nurses and office staff—so imagine the difficulty the little Aussie battler faces. Currently, under the Beattie Labor government he or she is consigned to a life of renting with no hope of home ownership, which is totally juxtaposed to our great Australian dream of giving access to everyone to own their own home. For a party that is traditionally supposed to be battling for the working class out there in Queensland, the Labor Party has dropped the ball badly for Queensland workers in its housing policy, and it is now spending up frantically trying to redress that situation.

With regard to public housing, it is interesting to note that the government announced some public housing reforms in 2005 as it attempted to cut waiting lists and tackle the state's escalating housing crisis. The reforms included a tougher assets test, a tenant review every few years to ensure the tenants were still eligible for housing and the fact that those with improved circumstances were to be given a year to find housing in the private sector.

But the so-called reforms have not had the necessary impact, probably because the minister developed the reputation for fire sales on public housing assets, both land and existing dwellings. Annual reports in relation to the construction of new dwellings for public rental housing, dwelling additions—which include the number of construction completions—and existing dwelling purchases and land purchases clearly show that the number of new dwellings constructed and the number of existing dwellings purchased has been in decline since 1996-97. Since 2001 the total value of land disposals has been \$160 million and public rental dwelling disposals have totalled \$112 million, and last year land and public rental dwelling held for sale valued \$25 million.

I am particularly pleased that the government has flagged the issue of council charges on new land releases because I have highlighted on many occasions before that it is not the developer who pays for these council charges but the poor new homebuyer. It seems incredibly unfair that the new homebuyer should pay for parks, libraries, community buildings and many other local government responsibilities up-front in his first home purchase when other long-term residents are not paying their fair share through council rates because councils do not want to put the rates up.

This year's borrowings from the government of \$16 billion and from government owned corporations of another \$12 billion add up to another staggering \$28 billion of indebtedness foisted on to Queenslanders because of the lack of planning and commitment to infrastructure in the past by the Beattie Labor government. The government's catch-up football mentality is highlighted by the fact that its total borrowings of \$28 billion is nearly equal to the total budget for Queensland this year of \$32 billion.

This heavy commitment to debt from the previously self-funding state of Queensland has continued the infamous path that Labor governments have trodden all over Australia—from Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, the federal Labor government and now Queensland—of economic mismanagement and financial bankruptcy. The Beattie Labor government's inability to prudently run the state's economy in booming economic times in both the mining resources sector and the exploding property and stock market sectors demonstrates conclusively that the 'Labor way is play and pay another day.'

Mr Roberts interjected.

Mr STEVENS: I will take the interjection from the member for Nudgee. I will say that again: the 'Labor way is play and pay another day'.

In Queensland we have enjoyed record revenues through stamp duty, payroll taxes, record GST revenues and mining royalties. We have never experienced a period of such bountiful economic wealth to Queensland as a whole, and the Beattie Labor government has squandered this opportunity to put in necessary infrastructure for Queensland that could be paid for through the massive revenues generated by our own record growth.

The Beattie government should read the John Howard bible for competent economic management. When John Howard came to power in 1996, after the Keating Labor slush fund years, the national debt was \$96 billion. We have not got there yet but we are trying. Through good management in prosperous times John Howard has expunged all of Labor's debt and has saved the Australian public an annual interest bill of \$8 billion. That is \$8 billion 'Little Johnny' has in his kick to put back into health, education and highways every year. We are going in the opposite direction in Queensland with this year's borrowings taking out \$600 million in interest payments alone that could otherwise be spent on hospitals, dams and education.

In respect of my electorate of Robina I am disappointed that out of \$14 billion worth of capital expenditure there is not one new capital project identified in this budget—no new school funding, no new road funding and no new health funding for one of the fastest growing areas of Queensland. Regurgitating and recycling long announced and funded projects is symptomatic of a government dependent on spin rather than substance.

We know that Skilled Stadium is being built for the Gold Coast. We know that for the last two years an accident and emergency wing of Robina Hospital has been planned for the benefit of the whole of the Gold Coast. We know that for the last five years the extension of the train line from Robina to Varsity Lakes has been scheduled in the program for the benefit of the whole of the Gold Coast.

This deferral of necessary infrastructure and funding over many years fails dismally to recognise the importance of planning and investing in the infrastructure of a rapidly growing area such as Robina. Failure to do so results in the disastrous catch-up funding dilemma that we now see is occurring in the water infrastructure sector, which is costing triple what it would have cost years ago.

Roads such as the M1 from Robina to Nerang and Bundall Road are clogged, health services such as palliative care and mental health are fragile to say the least and not one of the state schools in my area has received any substantial new upgrade despite enormous enrolment pressure demanding that those schools be better served.

Another issue that is important is the influx of tourists to the Gold Coast region which makes the number of people who have to be served swell many times during the year. This has not been taken into consideration by the government to ensure that areas such as public transport, road infrastructure and health services are adequate to support this tourist environment.

This influx of tourists will continue to rise and needs to be taken into consideration. We have a unique environment with some four million tourists coming into the Gold Coast region every year. This needs to be addressed in any budget handed down by the government. The growth and development of the Robina area is unprecedented and the increasing support services that come with rapid

development are to be acknowledged. Budget allocations need to be forward thinking and also take into consideration these issues. The particular needs of a community need to be met. In the Robina electorate they have not been.

I, like my coalition colleagues, am astonished at this government's ineptitude at being able to manage a budget and deliver essential services in boom economic times without borrowing billions to do so. Queensland last year lost its status as the lowest tax state—they are very proud of that, I guess. Queensland is now moving from having negative net debt to being a debtor state despite \$3½ billion in asset sales in the last 12 months alone. Queensland's net debt will top \$10 billion by 2009-10. Interest alone will cost \$600 million each and every year from this year. Queensland hides more of its debt in GOCs than any other state.

This government is the largest taxing government in Queensland's history with state taxes up by a staggering 12 per cent in one year, leaping ahead of the GST as the major source of state revenue. The only thing the Beattie Labor government knows how to do is spend. It is spending like irresponsible lotto winners to get out of the many crises that are engulfing it. It is the history of the Labor Party to spend the people's money and immerse its taxpayers in debt. In contrast, the coalition manages to deliver tax relief to the people of Queensland.

In conclusion, in such an economic boom time I wonder how far ahead we would have been in Queensland if infrastructure was planned for our water supply and road requirements, if there was a continued injection of funds into health services and if there was a bit of planning to avoid the housing crisis. It is on reflection of these what-if scenarios that I would like to put forward a positive outcome to my review of the government's budgetary process for 2007.

I would like to suggest that the minister immediately convene a housing affordability summit which would include representatives from his department, the federal government, the development industry and the public housing sector. I am pleased to be a volunteer myself to give the summit a bipartisan approach. This crisis will not go away by burying our heads in the sand and trying to cover up failings with bandaid solutions. I make this suggestion with the honest intent of providing constructive and proactive solutions to an area of the government's administration that it must surely be embarrassed about and must surely wish to remedy as soon as possible.

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (3.16 pm): I strongly support the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill and, of course, the Appropriation Bill. At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure for bringing these far-reaching bills to the House. I would like to address the clean coal bill first before making a few comments about the budget.

The bill formalises a partnership between the government, the coal industry and academic researchers that is unique in Australia and is also vital to our contribution to the global battle to slow the growth of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. I wish to make some observations about Queensland and Australia's coal reserves, our role in meeting world demand for coal in this century and the sustainability of the resource.

First and foremost I want to speak about our obligation as a principal supplier of the world's single biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and that is coal for coal-fired electricity generation and steel production. We have an obligation to lead the way in developing clean coal technology and this bill is a significant step on that path.

It has been essential that Queensland take a strong lead on this issue of national interest and international interest because the Howard government has simply failed Australia. Queensland has had to step up in this area because the Australian government has been in denial about climate change for 11 years—11 years of prevarication, 11 years of obfuscation, 11 lost years.

I refer to a paper by the federal Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, Ian Macfarlane, titled 'A growing role for Australia in meeting the world's energy needs' published in *World Energy*, volume 8, No. 2, 2005 at pages 112 to 117. In his article Mr Macfarlane states that the federal government's policies are 'reducing our greenhouse signature'. The statement is, of course, complete bunkum.

I table for the benefit of honourable members a paper from Professor Albert Allen Bartlett of the Department of Physics at the University of Colorado in Boulder entitled 'A depletion protocol for non-renewable natural resources: Australia as an example' which sets out the truth of this vital matter.

Tabled paper: Document dated 14 August 2006 by Albert A Bartlett titled 'A Depletion Protocol for Non-renewable Natural resources: Australia as an Example'.

In this 2006 article Professor Bartlett comprehensively demolishes the claims of Mr Macfarlane that the Howard government is reducing our greenhouse signature. First he points out that in accepting domestic population growth through its current family and immigration policies the policies will inevitably of themselves increase Australia's domestic production of greenhouse gases.

It has been one of the enduring shames of the federal government that it has refused to recognise population policy as a key driver in the greenhouse area and in fact has adopted policies which are contrary to the national interest. Peter Costello's baby bonus is the last place people would start if they were making a serious effort to reduce our national greenhouse signature. More people means more houses, means more roads, means more electricity demand, means more urban sprawl and all of those things mean more greenhouse. Professor Bartlett makes the second vital point that by exporting coal to the world to be burnt in all corners of the globe Australia makes a very significant contribution to the increase in global atmospheric greenhouse gases, well beyond our domestic greenhouse signature of 1.3 per cent of world greenhouse gas production. The bill before the House recognises that Queensland, as one of the world's few custodians of the major coal reserves of the planet, has an obligation not just to dig the stuff up and help keep the lights on around the world but also to lead the way in finding the technical solutions to the issues of carbon dioxide capture and safe storage thereafter. This bill sees Queensland taking the lead in being responsible for doing something about the global greenhouse gas impacts of our coal exports. This is Australia's obligation. This is Queensland's obligation. This is our obligation.

The paper that I have tabled by Professor Bartlett also makes some very interesting points about Australia's coal reserves and the incompatibility of using the words 'expanded production' and 'sustainability' in the same sentence, which appears to be Mr Macfarlane's constant refrain. Professor Bartlett's paper contains a lot of very conclusive mathematics, concise charts and very clearly written words that set out his conclusions, and I recommend it wholeheartedly to all members of the House, particularly those with an interest in energy security, resource revenues and indeed our budget bottom line.

According to Mr Macfarlane—and I accept his figures—Australia has coal reserves that will last for 110 years at current rates of production, but Australia's production of coal is not static. It is increasing at around five per cent per annum and has done so for the last 20 consecutive years. If we in fact include the business as usual annual growth into the production reserve ratio, then Professor Bartlett demonstrates that we can expect our reserves to exhaust much sooner. In the case of Queensland, which has around 200 years of reserves now, at current usage rates, when you factor in the five per cent annual growth, the resource will exhaust in 48 years. Is it realistic to assume this continued growth in Australian coal production of five per cent per year? I believe it is. I suggest that, first, because of the history of the growth it is a reasonable assumption and, secondly, it is also reasonable because of the certainty of world demand rising while Queensland's reserves become much more in demand as other countries' reserves shrink.

I take this opportunity to table two further papers that I commend to all honourable members.

Tabled paper: Background paper dated March 2007 prepared by Energy Watch Group titled 'Coal: Resources and Future Production'.

Tabled paper: Document dated February 2007 by B Kavalov and S D Peteves titled 'The Future of Coal'.

The first is 'Coal: resources and future production' by the Energy Watch Group released in February this year. The second is 'The future of coal' by Kavalov and Peteves of the Institute of Energy released in March this year. These are not lightweight or political tomes; they are not green biased reports. 'The future of coal' paper was prepared for the European Commission and the energy group paper was prepared for the German parliament, and they are quite startling in their conclusions.

Coal provides 25 per cent of the world's primary energy needs and 40 per cent of electricity generation. Two-thirds of worldwide steel production depends on coal. The World Coal Institute suggests that the world has enough coal to last 155 years, again at that all-important 'current rate of production'. However, the Energy Watch Group found in its report that global coal production could peak in as little as 15 years due to surging rates of production and demand and the downward revisions of coal reserves by many nations. 'The future of coal study' supports this alarming conclusion, noting that world proven reserves are declining fast, bulk production of coal is increasingly concentrated in a few countries and the costs of production are rising sharply around the world as new deposits are more difficult to find and more difficult to develop.

There are many implications in this for Queensland, but they are certainly not all bad. The world does indeed want our coal, and if we can supply that coal along with clean coal technology then we can play a vital role in a world greenhouse strategy that is so necessary. But Australia is one of the six countries in the world that collectively holds 84 per cent of the world's coal, the others being the USA, China, India, Russia and South Africa. While we are working overtime on clean coal, I strongly suggest that it is time for an organisation of coal exporting countries to be formed to look at coal production volumes and to consider what is a sustainable level of world coal production for this century. In the long term flogging the resource as fast as possible may not be in the interests of Queensland, the coal industry, energy consumers or the world. It is time for Queensland and Australia to step forward and become not just price takers and not just price makers but world energy industry managers.

I have mentioned the looming peak in world oil production many times in this place and I suggest that the benefits of the same risk mitigation strategy that is necessary to prepare for a shortage of cheap liquid fuels applies equally to our coal industry. There can be no ignoring the fact that clean coal technology is vital for the environmental future of the world, not just Australia. This bill is very welcome and I expect all honourable members will support it. However, while clean coal research must be encouraged and conventional energy exploration accelerated and alternative energy supported in all its various forms, it is now inescapable that energy reduction targets and depletion protocols are going to be part of meeting the world's looming shortages of cheap liquid fuel and coal. Around the world the locking down of hydrocarbon sources is moving very quickly. The government of Poland, which has Europe's largest coal reserves after Russia and the UK, is moving to end exports and to keep its coal for electricity generation and conversion into liquid and gas fuels. Just yesterday in the *Financial Review* it was reported that Indonesia is considering rescinding coalmining concessions to secure its national coal reserves for future generations.

I am not suggesting that we need to go that far. We do, however, need to consider very closely what is a sustainable long-term level of coal exports for Australia and for Queensland for the benefit of the world and for the benefit of the people we represent here. This is a great bill and it will help propel Queensland towards being a central player in the management of global greenhouse emissions over the next 20 years. At the same time as we become more and more a significant player in what will become a tighter and tighter and more valuable world coal market, it is time for Queensland to work with the other five big players in the world's coal market to ensure that coal trade is managed for both sustainability and stability over the long term.

I also want to say just a few words regarding the Appropriation Bill and what it means for my electorate of Hervey Bay. This has been a great budget, and I again congratulate and thank the Treasurer for the budget that we are debating before the House. In my area of the world it continues to hit the fundamentals—the basics that make a growing city like Hervey Bay livable and economically viable into the future. It hits the fundamentals of roads, energy supply, water supply, support for the tourism industry, support for education and community building, and particularly support for public housing. If there is one thing on which I can agree with the member for Robina, it is how very welcome are the extra funds in this budget for public housing.

Hervey Bay has received \$16 million for road spending this year which will be tremendous in improving roads around the bay and in four-laning large slabs of the Maryborough-Hervey Bay road between the Torbanlea turnoff and McNally Street. In particular, almost \$1 million has been allocated for intersection improvements at Boundary Road and Booral Road. Those road improvements are vital to ensure the city is safe for residents and will also ensure the ability to get tourists and food and goods in and out. This is what we need as a tourism outpost, which has, at last count, some 1.2 million visitors per year for a city of only 55,000 people. It is very important that our roads are up to scratch. Similarly, the fundamentals of power and water have again been dealt with. There is \$8.19 million to continue construction of a new electricity transmission link between Nikenbah and Hervey Bay which duplicates the electricity circuit into Hervey Bay, thereby enormously strengthening both our security and our capacity to grow the city.

As I mentioned, public housing has received a real boost with two projects: \$3.18 million to start the construction of 16 public housing units out of a total cost of \$4.4 million and \$465,000, again out of a total cost of \$1.7 million, to commence construction of four public housing detached houses for low-income earners. Hervey Bay is booming, but it is absolutely vital that we do not let anyone miss out on that growth; that all members of our community have the capacity to live and be part of the good times that are so much a part of Hervey Bay at the moment.

The major election promise that I made with the Premier during the September election campaign was to support the building of a water park for Hervey Bay—again a good way of building and deepening our tourism attractiveness and making sure that our built exhibits are up to scratch in rounding out the extraordinary natural exhibits that we have. Of course, I am delighted to see an allocation of \$2 million—the first part of the \$5 million commitment that the government has made to the building of the water park—and that water park will go ahead over the next two years.

Now that the first part of the state government money is on the table, I take this opportunity to call on the Hervey Bay City Council and Wide Bay Water, which are partners in this project, to step up to the plate and finally resolve where the water park will go in Hervey Bay. It is simply a decision of picking the best spot along the esplanade and getting on with it. I would like to see that happen as soon as possible so that the project can be completed by the end of next year.

With those few words, I take this opportunity to once again thank the Treasurer for the budget this year, and particularly for the clean coal bill. They are very far-reaching, far-sighted pieces of legislation that will serve Queensland very well.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (3.31 pm): In rising to make a contribution to this debate, I would like to start by reflecting upon the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. This morning in this place I would have liked to have had the opportunity to share a few thoughts about the government putting together the clean coal bill and the appropriation bills in a cognate debate. The Leader of the House indicated that the clean coal bill was a money bill and, therefore, it should be rolled together with the budget bills. I have a different view. Basically, that bill is no different from a lot of other bills that are introduced into this parliament that might require some money to get up and going but in many ways they are not technically tied to a budget bill. To me, that really goes to show one of the fundamental problems of this government, and that is its incapability of running the business of this House properly. If the government does not have enough time in this parliament to debate issues properly, then it should schedule some more sitting days. It should not throw together legislation in a ramshackle way and make unprecedented moves in this place.

It also concerns me very much that every year that goes by this parliament, as a forum of debate, is being watered down and diminished. A couple of years ago in this place I witnessed a situation of members coming in, speaking for a few minutes and then having the remnants of their speeches incorporated in *Hansard*. That practice seems to have been allowed again this year. Obviously, the government is responsible for this, because it is incapable of managing properly the time of this place and scheduling appropriately the right number of sitting days.

What are we going to do next? Stay at home and make our speeches by webcam and have them recorded in the parliamentary record? Is that what members want next? This is a debating chamber. If members do not want to debate issues in this place, then they should not bother. They should sit up in their offices and email their speeches to *Hansard*. This parliament is becoming more and more sterile. This week one of the great characters of this place, Tom Burns, unfortunately passed away. He was a person of enormous colour who could come into this place, stand on his feet and give the most extraordinary but heartfelt contribution. We are seeing less and less of that and far more of a machinery process where people do not want to let fly with their thoughts.

Another thing that concerns me very much is that if we are going to have a process of incorporating speeches in *Hansard* then there is no chance for robust interchange across the chamber. Although the Speaker says that he reads the speeches before they are incorporated in *Hansard* to make sure that there are no personal reflections or imputations contained in them, I would say simply that that is not a good reason to justify the incorporation of those speeches in *Hansard*. A member of parliament may want to respond to something that was said by the member who spoke previous to them. That member may want to challenge what was said. If a member speaks straight after a member who has had the majority of their speech incorporated in *Hansard*, that member has no idea what is in that member's contribution. That member may read something in *Hansard* the next day, but the chance to be able to engage in debate with a member who incorporated a speech is over and done with. If a member makes a claim about what the government or the opposition may have achieved or put forward in this place as fact and that claim is incorporated in *Hansard* unchallenged, that is it; it is over and done with. This is a debating chamber. It is not a place in which a member puts together a thesis and has it recorded so that the public can read it but there is no real chance for it to be challenged in this place. I ask that there be a proper reconsideration of that process in future, particularly when the government funds the parliament to be the people's parliament—a place in which people's views can be represented.

A lot of honourable members may wonder what I am on about. They may say, 'So what? Who cares? Parliaments evolve.' I would say that parliaments are debating chambers and members need to be able to hear what is being said and contend with it. That is a member's chance to be able to test the veracity of an argument, not to read that argument five or six hours later when it is all too late.

There is no doubt that this budget is a litany of lost opportunity. When the Treasurer introduced the budget we heard a lot from her about how it was a record budget, how there was a record infrastructure spend in the budget, how there is going to be a record capital works expenditure of some \$15 billion—all of those sorts of things. That contrasts with the just over \$5 billion that was outlaid by the coalition government when it was in power in the latter part of the 1990s. We should also look at the fact that at that time the entire budget spend was less than half of what this government is spending. So the capital works spend was going to be less. But the Treasurer failed to say and failed to understand that \$5 billion in 1998 was going to buy more than what \$20 billion is going to buy today. That is the simple reality.

When I was a minister, I was responsible for the recycled water pipeline which this government placed on hold deliberately and maliciously for seven years when it came into power. That pipeline could have been built today at a cost of about \$600 million. We have a government that failed to spend a dollar in time. It now has to spend nine. That is what we are dealing with here—a runaway and rampant capital works budget that is not about delivering more for the people of Queensland but about delivering less for the people of Queensland and costing more at a time when we have a construction capacity crisis because this government has failed to invest over time.

We also have to look at the issue of \$50 billion worth of government and government owned corporation debt, which the people of Queensland are going to be subjected to in some four years time. It is going to ramp up from just over \$20 billion to \$50 billion—that is the indebtedness of the Queensland government and its GOCs—by 2011. That should ring alarm bells. At a time when we are experiencing an economic boom and we basically have money coming out of our ears, this government has to borrow in such a way to provide for essential infrastructure in Queensland. If the government does not have the money and the savings at such a time, if it cannot put the money away in the good times to be able to do this, then heaven help the taxpayers of Queensland in a number of years time when somebody has to pay the piper. There is no doubt that somebody is going to have to pay the piper one day.

In this budget \$1 billion is going to be set aside for the payment of interest only. It is going to be interesting to see over the next few years how much that amount ramps up. An amount of \$1 billion will soon become \$1.5 billion, which will soon become \$2 billion, which will become much more than that at some time in the future. That is not including the redemption; that is the interest.

We all know that at this time the world is flush with access to cheap money sources. The economy is not always going to be like this. One would hope that it will, but we know that the resources boom will not always be like this. So what happens at a future time when this government has exposed the taxpayers of Queensland, through its own borrowings and the borrowings it has forced on its GOCs, to \$50 billion of indebtedness and that debt has to be redeemed? That is a very serious situation for the people of Queensland. Government members may scoff. They may wonder what is going on. I just say: John Cain and Joan Kirner. That is what they did and that debt had to be paid back in a time of non-economic boom.

The federal coalition government has paid back \$96 billion of government debt which had been built up by the Hawke-Keating legacy. It has all been paid back, saving the Australian taxpayers some \$8 billion per year in interest. So at a time when the federal coalition government has been wiping off government debt, has been saving the taxpayers \$8 billion a year in interest, Peter Beattie, Anna Bligh and their Labor Party cohort have been running around increasing the level of indebtedness in Queensland to \$50 billion. The population differential between the Commonwealth government and the state government is also stark and underpins the government's capacity to repay that debt in the long run. A population base of some 20 million people, many of them taxpayers, assisted in paying back the federal government debt, with the sale of some government owned assets such as Telstra along the way, compared with a state government with a population base of only four million people having to at some time in the future pay back \$50 billion of government indebtedness. That is the real concern that I have.

I will touch again on the cost of construction in Queensland. What we now have is not a gravy train for those involved but a gravy pipe. We know, as the government knows, that the price the government is paying for easements for the pipeline is up to 1,000 times more than what would be reasonably negotiated if the government had done it in time. We know that what the government is paying for bedding sand in many cases is 80 per cent greater than what the price would be for non-water grid pipe-laying projects. We know all of those sorts of things. But this government does not care because it has come up with this whole notion of invoice tendering, or build and charge. That is what it is doing because it wants to avoid a political problem of its own making.

There is one thing that encouraged me today from the Treasurer's comments in the newspaper. The Treasurer said that she would be moving to address the issue of headworks charges for developers across Queensland to try to address the issue of the runaway housing costs in this state. I actually support that. That is something I suggested when I was Leader of the Opposition a couple of years ago when I addressed the Urban Development Institute. We should be ensuring consistency in the charges applied by local government across Queensland to developers to ensure that there is a proper fee for the recovery of reasonable costs of establishing headworks, not seeing a situation of revenue being gathered for other purposes. I actually support what the Deputy Premier is doing there. We need to ensure a consistent approach rather than bludgeoning local government with regard to what it may or may not be able to do—so working with local government, not bludgeoning them.

I also challenge the government to match the coalition's policy when it comes to going a little bit further. We now know that we have extraordinary revenues coming into Queensland, unbudgeted for revenues, as a consequence of the resources boom. We have an extraordinary amount of money which is coming in in the form of GST and we have an extraordinary amount of money which is coming in in the form of untied grants from the Commonwealth—moneys which are over and above what the government has budgeted for to the tune of hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars. It is time to be innovative. It is time to be creative. It is time to move towards the abolition of all stamp duty in Queensland. If the government wants to start an economic boom that will continue into the future then it should do this.

Look at what Dubai is doing at the moment. It realises that its oil reserves are finite. So what it is doing is creating an economy post oil reserves. It is creating an economy that will make Dubai the commerce, tourism and investment centre of the Middle East. So it is applying that now.

Mr Lucas: What's the size of Dubai in area compared to Queensland?

Mr SPRINGBORG: A lot bigger than the government's innovation and the minister's capacity to think outside the square. Dubai realises that it faces a changing reality in its world. It is as simple as this: we know that the resources boom may be finite. We know that there should be a chance for us to continue what is going on in Queensland. If the government wants to have a proper population policy in Queensland and plan for the future, as the member for Hervey Bay talked about a moment ago, then the government should use its taxation policy to drive population policy and investment policy in Queensland. It should move towards abolishing stamp duty. It should phase it out over a period of time and extraordinary investment will come into Queensland. What we lose along the way we will pick up on the roundabout in other forms of growth revenue. The minister knows that to be the case, as happened when death duties were abolished in Queensland. It makes the normal transaction of a business or a household attractive to people as they may wish to move somewhere, buy somewhere or locate their business.

The problem with government members such as the member for Lytton is that they are stuck in a typical Labor paradigm of not being able to think outside the square when it comes to something like this. While this gravy train of economic boom lasts, while this resources boom continues, they think it is fine and do not worry about it down the track. One day all things turn around, and we have to start planning for that now. That is what I am saying.

I want to touch on the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill. We have heard the honourable member who spoke prior to me talk about the necessity for Queensland, as a major coal exporting state in a major coal exporting nation, to do something to plan to meet our greenhouse commitments. He made the statement that we contribute to what is the greatest contributor to greenhouse gases in the world—that is, the burning of fossil fuels. That in fact is absolute and complete bunkum. Those opposite will not find any evidence to back that up. The greatest emitter of greenhouse emissions—being carbon dioxide—is our oceans as they heat up, followed by volcanoes, followed by rotting vegetation, followed by what comes from microbes and animals and then it comes back to industry. They are the facts. We can argue the extent to which we are actually contributing to this, but the unarguable fact is that the greatest CO₂ emissions come from our oceans, from the volcanoes, from vegetation breakdown and then they go down from there. Certainly we make a contribution, but it is just that—a contribution.

I am going to say something in this time of climate change and global warming hysteria which will be unable to be judged here today. The global warming McCarthyists who sit opposite, who actually view anyone who challenges this theory of global warming as a heretic, will not be able to appropriately judge this contribution until such time as a condolence motion on my passing is being spoken to at some future time. Those of my generation sitting in this parliament and those a little bit older than me will remember this: in the four decades post the Second World War, between 1940 and 1970, when the earth's carbon dioxide levels actually rose significantly and our temperature fell by half a degree, there was all of this amazing, spectacular scandal about a second ice age. It was being talked about. There was going to be a second ice age because our world had actually cooled down in the previous 40 years.

We all remember it—those opposite remember it; I remember it. We were told that in our schools, we were told that in print. The BBC actually did a documentary, *The Weather Makers*, on it. What happened? It did not happen. Then the world started to warm up and now we have gone into the global warming climate change phase and we are involved in this particular hysteria. An hysterical approach to this will not solve any problems.

I enjoy science; it is something I look at a lot. I actually enjoy astronomy. One thing that concerns me is that the government and many other people involved in the global warming industry actually subjugate what we know as established science about what is the major contributor to global warming and has been for as long as we know and that is solar activity—that is, sunspot activity. That is the greatest contributor and that is an absolute scientific fact.

We have heard a lot from Al Gore. I have read *An Inconvenient Truth*. It would do the minister for transport good to read it. Al Gore talks about the Vostok ice cores and what they actually show in relation to global warming and carbon dioxide build-up. What he said is true; there is a correlation if one looks at the spikes. But I would challenge members to look at the analysis of the research of the Vostok ice cores. It states that it is true that we have an unprecedented amount of carbon dioxide in our air at the moment. Over 300,000 years ago it was similar, but not quite the same. It states—

According to Barnola ...

and there are some other references there—

... these measurements indicate that, at the beginning of the deglaciations—

that is, the breakdown of the ice age—

the CO₂ increase either was in phase or lagged by less than ~ 1,000 years with respect to the Antarctic temperature, whereas it clearly lagged behind the temperature on the onset of the glaciations.

What that means is that global warming actually causes and contributes to the CO₂ build-up. When it cools the CO₂ falls away as a consequence. Members should look at that research because that should be driving the way we prepare ourselves to respond, rather than hysteria.

Mr WEIGHTMAN (Cleveland—ALP) (3.51 pm): I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill and the clean coal bill in this cognate debate. Since my election last year I have worked hard during my first term to make representations on behalf of the wonderful people of my electorate and to ensure that the Queensland government provides those people with the infrastructure, facilities and services they deserve.

The funding that this budget delivers for roads, schools and health services in my local area is a testament to that work and I am pleased to see that my electorate will receive a significant boost from the Queensland government as a result. This funding boost comes as a result of the good forward planning by our government, an essential component of budgeting for an area with a growth rate such as that experienced by the Redlands.

Based on current trends, medium series projections from the Department of Local Government, Planning and Sport indicate that within two decades over 40,000 people will have moved into and around my electorate—and for good reason. The Redlands is a beautiful area in which to live, work and raise a family.

Mr Choi: And a good local member.

Mr WEIGHTMAN: I will take that interjection from the member for Capalaba. This budget will help ensure that.

I am committed to maintaining the lifestyle enjoyed by Redlanders and their families. The budget has demonstrated a special commitment to the maintenance and restoration of local schools and I am sure that both teachers and students will be very grateful for the funding. The important challenge of education of our young people is greatly enhanced by providing comfortable and up-to-date learning facilities. This budget will deliver three quarters of a million dollars worth of funding for Ormiston, Cleveland and Wellington Point state schools and Cleveland District State High School and Wellington Point State High School.

Ormiston State School received \$500,000 worth of funding to fix amenities within the school, a project which will make the school more comfortable for the teachers and students alike. This money will be used to fix holes in the ceiling of one of the school's toilet blocks, the largest toilet block in the school. Ormiston is a historic local school which was opened in 1872 and now has 600 students. Its popularity requires that we continually upgrade its facilities.

Cleveland State School is another popular primary school in my electorate with over 800 students. The amount of \$65,000 for painting and maintenance at the school will help contribute to the wonderful school atmosphere that the teachers and students at the school generate.

Wellington Point State School will also receive maintenance funding of \$40,000 that will help restore another historic school in my electorate that was established in 1887. Including the students from Wellington Point State School, nearly 2,000 primary school students will benefit from the maintenance projects delivered through this budget. No doubt over the next two decades thousands more primary school students in my electorate will also benefit from this commitment to the local schools and this will continue to contribute to my work in building a better community.

It is not only young children who will benefit from the funding for schools. High school students at both Cleveland District State High School and Wellington Point State High School will receive significant funding for maintenance projects. Cleveland District State High School, which was recently recognised as a result of its accreditation by the Council of International Schools, will also receive funding for reroofing. I am glad that a wonderful, forward-looking and internationally recognised education institution in my electorate will benefit from this budget, and I am confident that that benefit will be passed on to the students and teachers who work and learn in that school.

I am working hard to make the bayside a better community and provide for the future sustainability of that community. An important part of that is ensuring that our students have both the training and education required to continue to work and contribute to our local community. The schools in my area are home to some wonderful teachers and staff who work tirelessly for local students. I am pleased to see that the state government has contributed to that with an increased amount of funding for maintaining local schools.

As well as contributing to our valuable local human resource, the budget delivers funding for local roads that will also contribute to building a better bayside. The budget has delivered over \$1.5 million to road funding in my area to improve signalling at local intersections and improve roads in and around the electorate. Funding roads is another important aspect of building a better community in the bayside. Nearly \$1 million has been allocated to improving intersections where Bagden and Estelle Roads meet Birkdale Road. Birkdale Road is an important link between Birkdale and Wellington Point. I know that

many locals will be relieved to hear about the improvements at those intersections. Improving roads makes people's lives easier and safer and is an important part of ensuring a safe local community. I am proud to note these significant budget funding announcements and the positive implications for the people who live in my electorate.

By far the biggest boost for Redlands from this budget is the significant commitment to increased health funding in my area. We have backed up the strong reforms of the Health Action Plan with record-breaking health budgets of over \$7 billion. Nearly \$6 million will flow into health services and health infrastructure in my electorate in amounts which I am certain will have enormous positive benefits for the local community and the health of my local constituents.

The funding allocated to the electorate includes \$18,000 to Child Health Services, \$3.06 million to community organisations under the Home and Community Care program and just over \$100,000 to support the trial of the Cleveland Drug Court. This follows on and supports the introduction of a Murri Court in Cleveland recently.

In perhaps the most important funding allocation for my electorate, \$2.8 million has been given to fund the completion of the Redland Hospital emergency department upgrade. This has come as part of a total of nearly \$14 million worth of funding for improving, redeveloping and upgrading the Redland Hospital. In March this year I mentioned how pleased I was with the commencement of the emergency department's expansion. To see the delivery of funding for the completion of that project is great news for the people of the Cleveland electorate. The upgrade of the emergency department at Redland Hospital will improve workflow, access and security by increasing the capacity of the waiting room and inclusion of an observation area. The benefits of this increased level of service provision for patients of the Redland Hospital are clear.

Further, as part of the broader hospital redevelopment, the emergency department will expand from 13 treatment spaces to 31, which will include five observation beds for short-stay type patients. Complementing the redevelopment, \$1 million has also been included to complete construction of the new Birkdale Ambulance Station, a project which, excluding any delays that may arise, should be due to commence construction in the middle of July and, barring any unforeseen delays, will see practical completion by the end of November.

When I first raised the commencement of the Redland Hospital renovations in this place I mentioned the increase in the number of people being treated by the hospital each year. I think it is important to note again how rapidly my electorate is expanding and the increased services that that growth demands. In the year 2000 just over 30,000 patients were treated by the Redland Hospital emergency department. In 2003 the number was closer to 35,000 and last year almost 40,000 people came through the doors. With growth rates like this in an electorate like mine it is a struggle to continue to provide the services that my constituents deserve. However, this budget demonstrates how we are working to build a better bayside community by planning for the future and expanding to accommodate the enormous growth that comes as a result of living in such a great state.

I am enormously pleased to see that this budget delivers on the promise of improving the health facilities of residents in and around the Redlands and will continue to work to build a better bayside community in this capacity. However, as important as it is to invest in services and facilities for our electorates, there is more to building a better community than providing for roads, schools, buildings and health and social services. On top of the \$8 million worth of funding in my electorate I have already discussed through investing in education, transport and health, there was nearly \$10 million more for community services, research facilities, public design, sport and recreation, community development and public housing initiatives. My electorate has a wonderful community spirit of which I am proud to be a part and I am pleased to see that this funding will be able to contribute to that.

Over \$1.75 million has been committed to Cleveland's community services, including over a half a million dollars to libraries across the Redlands area. Libraries are an important institute in a contemporary society. In particular, here in the Smart State it is pleasing to see that we are continuing to upgrade facilities that assist in generating greater public knowledge and understanding.

In terms of improving community services in my electorate, Cleveland will also receive \$222,000 to assist people with disabilities with the transition to living in the community and a further \$321,000 to provide post-school support to young people with disabilities. In my first speech in this place, I mentioned two issues that I was particularly passionate about addressing. The first of those issues was the capacity to advocate for people either living with disabilities or caring for people with special needs, and the second one was public safety. I have worked hard so far to address those concerns through making many representations on behalf of my constituents and helping out where I can. It is enormously gratifying to see the state government come to the table to provide over half a million dollars to make life easier for people in my electorate with disabilities. If we are serious about building a better community we need to ensure that everybody has an opportunity to contribute. I am pleased to note my government's contribution in this area.

Young people will also see the benefits of this budget for the future through counselling and support for young people at risk of homelessness and nearly \$50,000 being allocated to provide before school, after school and vacation care for school-age and under school-age children, making life easier for working parents as well.

Another important element of this budget is the contribution to sport and recreation in my local area. I have a long history with local sport in my electorate and I continue to believe it plays an important role in communities through developing social, fit, healthy and active people. This budget makes a further significant contribution to maintaining this culture in my local community by contributing to first-class sport and recreational communities and sports clubs. Mooroondu Sports and Recreation Club will see \$50,000 to complete extensions. An amount of \$160,000 will go towards the construction of a three-tier leisure pool at the Cleveland Aquatic Centre. On North Stradbroke Island—one of the greatest places in my electorate—\$35,000 will be given to assist the North Stradbroke Island Community Development Employment Program Aboriginal Corporation in employing a sport and recreation officer and \$15,000 will be spent in developing a strategy for sport and recreational facilities and services.

The Redlands Little Athletics Centre will receive almost \$20,000 to upgrade the long jump and triple jump pits and the run-up tracks and install a tartan surface. That will be greatly appreciated by the young people in my electorate.

Nearly \$25,000 will go to the Redlands Softball Association, an organisation which I mentioned here earlier this week as having a significant impact in my electorate. This money will enable them to install a multipurpose floor to support other sports such as hockey, boxing and aerobics. A further \$13,000 will go to the Redlands Lawn Tennis Association to enable them to upgrade an existing concrete court.

In total, nearly \$300,000 will be distributed amongst six different significant projects to improve facilities and services for health and recreation in my local area. These sorts of contributions have important ramifications for the long-term health of Queenslanders and are an important part of building a better community. I am sure that this will be the case in my electorate and that the people of Cleveland will benefit from the increased capacity for sports and recreation clubs to provide services.

There are several other important projects that I would like to put on record, including nearly \$5 million to continue the construction of the high-security glasshouses and in vitro growth facilities for world-class plant research, nearly \$1 million for the completion of the installation of a third transformer at Cleveland and \$1.33 million to continue to assist with the development of the Redlands Performing Arts Centre—a facility which I am sincerely looking forward to enjoying. An amount of \$160,000 is available to Redland Shire Council to improve lighting as part of the security improvement program and \$200,000 will be used to begin construction of public housing as part of the spinal injury initiative. This budget is a good budget for my electorate and a good budget for Queensland. The foresight shown by the Treasurer in building for the future will be significant over the next two decades. In my electorate the funding we have been allocated will go a long way to building a better bayside community.

The area I represent is growing and this budget will play an important role in ensuring that we can accommodate more people while maintaining the lifestyle we enjoy. In accommodating the growth occurring in my electorate, the budget will help make schools more comfortable for teachers and students. It will help improve health facilities including expanding emergency departments and completing a new local ambulance station. It will help fix some of the busiest roads in my electorate. It will significantly contribute to many community groups and the community programs will help ensure my constituents continue to enjoy the wonderful bayside lifestyle that we enjoy at present.

The allocations for schools, roads and health will provide services that are vital in building a better community. The funding for my local area of community development will have an enormously positive impact on various sectors within my electorate through the participation in sports and recreation activities, technological development, better built environments and cultural development. I look forward to continuing to serve the people of Cleveland as we build a better bayside community throughout these projects.

I would also like to speak on the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill 2007. The purpose of this bill is to establish the Clean Coal Council. The council will consist of representatives from Queensland's black coal industry, the Queensland government and other relevant experts in the area of clean coal technology. Clause 7 provides for the council to consider and provide advice on clean coal technology projects that it has identified through its own operations. This bill will enable the Queensland government to formalise an agreement with Australian Coal Association Low Emissions Technologies Ltd.

Queensland is the world's largest exporter of coal and we have enough coal to last many generations to come. Coal generates over 40 per cent of the world's electricity and two-thirds of global steel production depends on coal. Global consumption of coal is currently rising faster than that of oil or natural gas. Queensland's population is booming, placing further pressure on energy delivery and increasing demand for energy resources. However, Queensland, like Australia and the rest of the world, has a problem: global warming. We as individuals and, more importantly, as a state need to do

everything possible to fix this problem. One way for us to do this is to invest in clean coal technology. The Beattie government has invested \$300 million in the budget for clean coal technology as well as \$600 million from the coal industry, allowing for deep cuts into greenhouse gas emissions. This investment, coupled with a \$414 million backed commitment to cut carbon emissions by 30 per cent by 2020, means that in total the state government has invested \$1.3 billion in climate change.

Furthermore, we are committed to an emissions trading scheme by 2010. The government is recognised as a world beater in other research industries such as biotech, and now we have set our sights on becoming the leader in clean coal technology.

Because of our status as the world's leading coal exporter, we have a responsibility to ensure that we make coal as clean burning as possible. This is not a dream; it will be a reality. With enough research and given our huge stocks of coal, developing clean coal means that we can maximise the resources we have while reducing the current impact we are having on the environment. We can export clean coal and we can export clean coal technology, and this will secure jobs not only in our coal industry but also abroad. It means that we can maximise our exports to large coal users such as India, China and the United States and ensure environmental sustainability at the same time.

The bill before the House will complement the initiatives that the government has already undertaken in reducing our emissions by 30 per cent by 2020. Importantly, the bill allows for collaborative investment between industry and government by creating a group which includes representatives from the government and the private sector. The Clean Coal Council will allow better communication and closer ties between industry and government. This will lead to a unified approach to achieving our goal—that is, clean coal. The council and the Queensland Clean Coal Agreement have been formed after consultation with numerous government departments and non-government organisations. It will help the government make the right decision and allocate money to where it can be best spent. It will expedite this process to ensure that money gets to where it is needed fast.

The council will be responsible for overseeing a range of functions, including advising the minister about priorities for funding and assessing and making recommendations about proposals. The council has been granted the power to use its own initiative to examine requests for projects; this is an initiative to think for itself and then work out the best advice for the minister. Perhaps most importantly, the council will coordinate the state's involvement in international research projects.

Clean coal and climate change are priorities for this government. Clean coal is better for the environment, it is good for jobs, it is good for the economy and it is good for Queensland. The council provides, in effect, an appropriate body to ensure that we have collaborative investments and closer ties between industry and the private sector to ensure that we get money where it is needed and when it is needed. I commend this bill and the appropriation bills to the House.

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.11 pm): I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community in the electorate of Mount Ommaney for putting their confidence in me and electing me as their local Labor member for a historic fourth term. Along with my re-election to this seat in September last year, I was appointed to the higher office of Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Child Safety, the Hon. Desley Boyle. Through this appointment I hope to be able to make a real difference to the lives of our most vulnerable and precious—the children of this state.

There has been a significant increase in the population across suburbs in the south-east corner. This has had a major effect on the Mount Ommaney electorate, with growing housing developments in the Windermere and Edenbrook estates. An increase in population means a need for increased infrastructure, facilities and essential services, and this year's budget acknowledges that and puts money in all the right places.

Early last year, I successfully lobbied hard and long against the proposed Westgate residential development which would have made traffic in the Centenary suburbs and on the Centenary Highway an ultimate catastrophe. The government agreed instead to preserve our local environment, and this massive green space will remain intact. The government is currently considering the relocation of the Centenary Rugby League Club's football fields to this area, and it is my aspiration that this vast open space at Wacol will eventually host a number of sporting organisations and public recreational facilities.

As members of this House may be aware, I am very proud of all of the community and sporting groups and the volunteers who support their work in my electorate of Mount Ommaney. I seek leave to table a list of these groups.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'List of groups for the Mt Ommaney Electorate'.

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

Leave granted.

Since last year's Budget a number of grants have been issued to local organisations and schools in my electorate:

- \$2,025—PresCare Hopetoun Allied Health Services for a Resistive Exercises Training Program and Equipment Upgrade under the Supporting Community Organisations Funding Initiative.

- \$1,464,796—Recurrent funding from 1 July 2007 for the Wesley Mission Brisbane—YoungCare (Sinnamon Village) and \$1,298,183—One off funding under the Disability Services Qld Funding Program—Younger People in Residential Aged Care Initiative.
- \$306,000—Montrose Access under the Disability Services Queensland Strengthening Non-Government Organisations Initiative for the Sector Capacity Day Service Initiative; \$118,408 for computer equipment under the Assets Acquisition
- Replacement Initiative; \$350,000 under the General Respite Funding Round for the Montrose Access Adult Respite Service; \$5,240 under the Technology Survival Skills Program.

Under the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations—Assets Acquisition/Replacement Initiative:

- \$4,726—Westside Community Services Oxley
- \$1,102—Guyrow Oxley for a multipurpose print unit and software
- \$199,000—in recurrent funds and \$18,000 in non-recurrent funds for Westside Community Services, Stones Corner and Oxley under the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations—Sector Capacity Day Services Initiative.
- \$2,820—Sherwood Respite Services and Sherwood Neighbourhood Centre for a Seniors Week Event—Picnic in the Park with “Back to School” theme.

Local Schools

- \$107,902—St Joseph’s Primary School Corinda under the External Infrastructure Subsidy Scheme. This was an increase on previously approved subsidy of \$15,223 for sewer and water head works charges.
- \$60,000—Jamboree Heights State School Parents & Citizens Assn for Jamboree Heights State School Outside School Hours Care under Child Care Key Funding.
- \$100,000—St Aidan’s Anglican School under the Capital Assistance Scheme—the construction of two primary general learning classrooms, two withdrawal rooms, two store rooms, office, stairs, veranda, site works, furniture and equipment. Refurbishing of the administration offices, staff room and reception, store room, sick room.
- \$30,000—Good News Lutheran Primary School under the Tomorrow’s Schools Infrastructure program for a shade cover for basketball courts and \$27,891 for hardware, switches, installation.

Under the School Community Development Fund:

- \$93,200—Centenary State High for student services and signage and \$126,600 for refurbishment of the Resource Centre.
- \$47,000—Corinda State School for development of a multi-purpose area.
- \$56,800—Jamboree Heights State School for an upgrade of classroom furniture for students.
- \$74,500—Jindalee State School for a Special Education Unit extension (prep program facilities provisions).
- \$72,100—Middle Park State School for covered walkways, fitness circuit, beach volleyball court and tuckshop upgrade.
- \$18,000—Mount Ommaney Special School for installation of a water tank for the SEDU and the installation of water tanks in 2 x learning areas.

Gambling Machine Benefit Grants:

- \$16,440—Endeavour Foundation for the purchase of floor coverings and air conditioning
- \$3,363—Focus on Youth to purchase computer equipment and software.
- \$14,281—Mt Ommaney Special School P&C to install a sandpit/water play area and shade cover.
- \$540.00—Playgroup Assn of Queensland Goodnews Community Playgroup to purchase play equipment.
- \$17,479—Sherwood Neighbourhood Centre to refurbish the pottery studio.
- \$8,570—Sherwood Respite Service to purchase a reclining chair and printer.
- \$25,864—Wesley Mission Brisbane Hadden Place Sinnamon Village for upgrades to the facility and to purchase furniture.
- \$14,410—Jindalee State School P&C to install a playground for prep year.
- \$30,000—Jamboree Community Kindergarten & Preschool Assn to purchase softfall, airconditioning and storage facilities.

Under the Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund:

- \$13,334—Society of St Vincent de Paul Jindalee for equipment repair and recycle essentials project.

Under the Multicultural Assistance Programme 2006-2007:

- \$5,300—Canossa Services for Canossa Multicultural Week.
- \$3,000—Korean Society of Qld for the Korean Musical Festival.
- \$3,000—Jamboree Heights State School P&C for a Multicultural Expo.
- \$3,000—Tamil Assn for a Festival of Light—Enhancing Local Diversity and Identity
- \$2,700—Qld Chinese Assn of Scientists and Engineers for Chinese Kite Flying Festival

A police beat was purchased for the Centenary North area in July last year and recruitment of the Beat Officer has been finalised. A further \$150,000 in this year’s budget will complete the upgrade to the property to police beat standards. This follows on from the success of the Beat established at Oxley, the upgrade of the Sherwood Police Station and the extension of the operating hours of the Mount Ommaney Police Station.

The budget delivers an additional 200 police positions, taking the number of officers in the Queensland Police Service to 9,928 by October 2008.

Continued funding of \$70,000 will be provided for the Oxley based Tactical Crime Squad which targets known crime hotspots with an emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences.

These measures all improve the safety and security of residents in the Mount Ommaney electorate.

Asbestos was removed from the roofs of three classroom blocks at Jindalee State School last year and action was taken to investigate and remove other signs of asbestos in some flooring areas in the administration block.

Corinda State School has seen the completion of a major upgrade of their facilities to support arts initiatives with previous funding support of \$436,000.

Jamboree Heights State School had previously received \$736,000 funding for a major resource centre upgrade to support ICT initiatives.

In this year's budget, the Mount Ommaney electorate has received significant funding for schools, roads and community assets. My electorate will share in a \$500 million education windfall as part of a state-wide allocation.

This funding will build and upgrade schools and training facilities across the state.

On top of normal maintenance funding, some of Mount Ommaney's state schools will receive extra funding which includes:

- \$50,000 for reticulation at Corinda State High School
- \$80,000 for repainting at Jamboree Heights and Jindalee State Schools
- \$15,000 for maintenance at Jamboree Heights State School

\$12,500 will help provide Library Self Check Out Facilities in the Mount Ommaney Library, whilst \$3.7 million has been allocated to libraries across the Greater Brisbane area to improve the stock of books in public libraries. It is anticipated that many school children will increase their exposure to libraries through these enhanced processes.

\$32,000 is allocated to provide before and after school care for school age and under school age children. Children will also benefit from grants under the Family Intervention Program totalling \$1.116 million and from \$1.81 million through the Investing in Child Protection Program for the Brisbane region. Out of Home Care Placement Funding and additional staffing across the region is provided for through an allocation of \$18.332 million.

This year's budget also announced a record Queensland Housing assistance package of \$719 million in 2007-08 including a massive \$479 million housing building program. For Greater Brisbane, \$30.6 million will upgrade public housing dwellings, including kitchens, bathrooms and provide disability modifications.

Many of my constituents already know that I am a great supporter of public housing. I would like to thank the Minister for Public Works and Housing, the Honourable Robert Schwartz for supporting low cost housing with the commitment to complete construction of 6 apartment units at a cost of \$1.1 million.

In addition more support than ever before is being provided to help struggling Queensland families and communities. \$83,000 will provide counselling and support for families at risk of homelessness. To provide a community centre-based development and support service, \$78,000 has been provided.

In relation to community services, funding of \$107,200 has been provided to the Corinda Bowls Club under the Sport-Minor Facilities Program to extend the clubhouse to incorporate toilet facilities including a disabled toilet and meeting room at a total cost of \$160,000. This money will be well spent to improve this valuable community asset.

In this budget, \$2.99 million has been set aside to begin construction of a new high voltage feeder line out of the Sumner Power Sub-Station in my electorate, at a total cost of \$3.12 million. \$10.4 million will be spent on rebuilding and upgrading the electrical switchyard at the end of Sumners Road which is expected to be completed in 2008.

Mr Speaker, Mount Ommaney will benefit from \$412,000 to assist adults with a disability to live and participate in their community as part of an ongoing commitment. \$1.509 million will provide assistance to reduce the number of younger people with a disability living in residential aged care facilities in Mount Ommaney as part of an ongoing 'YoungCare' commitment to add to their self sufficiency.

Block grants to Mount Ommaney agencies to support people with a disability will be about \$2.498 million while HACC services receive funding of \$2.217 million. Respite projects to provide short term and limited respite support for families, carers and people with a disability will be given \$380,000.

Centenary and Sherwood Meals on Wheels will also have their subsidy increased by just over 10% per meal from July 1st 2007.

In addition, the Disability Services Queensland will complete renovations of a Sinnamon Park property to deliver non-government services to affected residents.

Transport and Main Roads funding for the electorate includes \$1.578 million for concept planning on the Western Arterial between the Ipswich Motorway and the Toowong roundabout. The SEQ infrastructure plan allocates \$300 million to construct a future transit lane along the Centenary Highway and, as I continually drive along the highway and after seeing the congestion during the closure of the inner city motorway, I hope it is soon rather than later.

The four-lane link is being constructed to overcome the traffic bottlenecks at the Ipswich Road end of the Centenary Highway caused by the lights at Kelliher Road. This will alleviate some of the congestion problems for motorists using these roads when it is completed in about 3 months.

The Centenary Highway bikeway was completed last year to the delight of local cyclists. This green friendly transport system is popular, safe and oftentimes faster than travelling by car.

To encourage more people to use pedal power instead of increasing numbers of vehicles, an amount of \$45,000 has been allocated for construction of a bikeway and footpath to the Jamboree Heights State School. There have been traffic issues at pick up and set down times at this popular school and the chaos from too many cars entering and exiting Beanland Street is infuriating residents, parents and local travellers.

The Queensland Ambulance Service has received a \$50 million injection in funding to meet the growing demand for services. The government has announced plans to recruit 250 new ambulance staff across Queensland which will have an impact on our local 24 hour Centenary ambulance station and response times in the local area. 12 additional paramedics will be assigned to the rosters in the greater Brisbane region which covers our ambulance station. \$15.65 million will be used to acquire over 140 new ambulance vehicles across the state to replace older vehicles.

I relish my role in representing my electorate to the highest levels of government and going in to bat for everyday families to achieve a better quality of life, better educational opportunities for their children, improved health services and increased job choices.

My time in Parliament is well utilised lobbying Ministers to meet our many and varied local community needs and to speak out about the good work of our agencies and their volunteers who help to provide a better quality of life for disadvantaged people in the area.

It's imperative that we build on the facilities in the area to ensure that our young people have the opportunities to get the jobs of their choice and to ensure that they are well placed to be the leaders of tomorrow.

\$3.63 million has been allocated for Greater Brisbane under the Queensland Skills Plan to provide additional training places to meet skills shortages in the region at a total cost of \$24.42 million. 6,630 additional training places can be allocated to the region by 2010 (depending on demand).

A record budget of \$7.15 billion will continue to drive the reforms of the Health Action Plan that are improving Queensland's health system. This means Mount Ommaney residents will get access to better mental health services, more hospital beds, and record numbers of doctors and nurses. In addition, \$635 million will be spent building world-class infrastructure that will take our health system into the next decade.

The government is undertaking an unprecedented expansion of urban water infrastructure, with the \$9 billion SEQ Water Grid. Once completed, the Water Grid will not only secure more water for the region but also enable it to be moved to areas of most need.

\$81 million is allocated for the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme, which offers rebates for water-saving devices such as rainwater tanks, washing machines, shower heads, dual flush toilets and pool covers, across South-East Queensland and the Darling Downs. My own rainwater tank is now at least half full because of the recent rains.

Mr Speaker, in most mature communities there are dedicated volunteers who assist others in their local area and provide an invaluable contribution to the community in which they work and live.

I would sincerely also like to thank all of those volunteers who put so much of their own time into being involved in a variety of community groups representing seniors, P&C associations, child care, service clubs, action and environmental groups in the Mount Ommaney electorate.

I commend the Beattie government and the Treasurer advancing this specifically targeted, fair and forward-thinking budget.

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.14 pm): I rise to support the Beattie Labor government's 10th state budget. Its emphasis is on Queensland families and businesses and on building an even better state. While I speak, it is not only raining outside but it is raining in here—it is raining buckets of money.

With so many people wanting to live in Queensland—and as many as 1,000 a week are moving here, and we cannot blame them with our weather and growing economy—we need to ensure that there is infrastructure, services and facilities to accommodate the growing population. This budget delivers what the Treasurer describes as 'the intellectual infrastructure to drive the ideas and innovation to equip us for the future'.

This is the state to live in. Per capita, the state government is investing in infrastructure almost 50 per cent more—or \$1,000 per person more—than our nearest rival, Western Australia. I have a friend who recently moved from Sydney to Brisbane. She said that it is much tougher financially to live in Sydney. They have to pay to fish and park on the beach. There are no free barbecues, more road tolls, and petrol, food, rent, electricity and housing is dearer. She said some take-home pay is a bit more but, if everything is taken into consideration, Queensland is where people are better off.

Many individuals and groups will be satisfied with this budget, while others think we could always do more. Public housing continues to be an issue in the Pumicestone electorate, as in other areas, so the huge injection of an extra \$500 million through a five-year investment will benefit those who have been on the waiting list for some time. This money equates to building around 1,700 units of new accommodation, and the Pumicestone electorate will benefit from some of that.

If the federal Liberal government had put the same emphasis on public housing—or, for that matter, any emphasis at all—we could have made the world of difference to many more people who cannot find accommodation and who are finding the rental market too dear. I am dismayed and disgusted that the Prime Minister thinks so little of people on low incomes that he has allowed his government to axe over \$400 million from the federal housing budget since he came to office in 1996. Does he hate poor people so much that he will not do anything to help put a roof over the heads of their families? Kevin Rudd does not share that opinion, and I know that people who are not as well off as the Prime Minister and do not live in two mansions will be much better off under a federal Labor government.

The Community Renewal Program, funded through the state government's Department of Housing, continues to provide much-needed services and facilities to the area, particularly Caboolture East. There are many completed and ongoing projects, including safety measures to better protect communities, and these will continue to be funded. The community safety trailer to assist Neighbourhood Watch groups to get their safety messages across is a great initiative. I ask that the Caboolture Shire Council support Councillor John McNaught in his efforts to get council funding for ongoing projects that will benefit the community.

Good news stories such as Community Renewal do not get much coverage, but hopefully the new upgraded sporting facilities in Grant Road—which the state government has put in over \$500,000 for—will get front-page coverage when the minister officially opens them in July. I place on record my thanks to Councillor Lynette Devereaux for her support of the state government projects that benefit Caboolture South and Morayfield.

Queensland is still a low-tax state. People pay about \$1,927 per capita in state taxes compared to an average of \$2,272 per capita for other states and territories. We have seen a number of tax cuts across-the-board in past budgets and these have been welcomed by Queenslanders. We have had to scrap some taxes under a deal to get our fair share of the GST. But now for the first time we will receive a lesser amount per capita of GST from the federal government. Remember, the Commonwealth takes our money when we pay an extra 10 per cent for goods and services but we never get it all back. It is a bit like the fuel tax—the federal government takes it all away and then gives a bit back to fix the roads. If we as a state government can afford to give a subsidy on fuel, then certainly the federal government can. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This budget delivers tax relief. It will lift individual resident's tax-free threshold on land tax from \$500,000 to \$600,000 and the exemption threshold for companies, trustees and absentees from \$300,000 to \$350,000. This means another 6,000 people won't have to pay it. 4,000 companies, trustees and absentees will not pay land tax and a 50% cap will be put, for three years, on the annual increase in land values used for calculating land tax for all parcels of land other than newly-created lots. This means people affected will be better off.

Other tax benefits include transfer duty cuts for first home buyers, a 50% reduction in mortgage duty and the abolishing of this from January 1st 2009.

Health continues to be a major focal point of the State Government spending. Another record budget of \$7.15 billion will continue to drive the reforms of the Health Action Plan that are improving Queensland's health system.

This means more funding for mental health services which will translate into new beds for Caboolture Mental Health, more hospital beds and record numbers of doctors and nurses. In addition, \$635 million will be spent building world-class infrastructure that will take our health system into the next decade.

\$13.37 million has been allocated for initiatives to reduce the waiting list for elective surgery in the Redcliffe-Caboolture Health Service District.

Also \$4.33 million has been set aside for community organisations under the Home and Community Care program, which provides support and maintenance services for eligible people at home to prevent early admission to residential care.

\$215.4 million has also been allocated to improve the working conditions for Queensland Health staff, including Visiting Medical Officers (VMO's), Clinical and Administrative Staff in 2007-08 as part of a total package of \$3.48 billion over three years.

There will also be an increased recurrent funding of around \$50 million for the Queensland Ambulance Service to meet growing demand. This will see the State Government investment in Ambulance services exceed \$400 million for the first time. This includes money for an additional 250 ambulance officers, 135 new defibrillators, 140 replacement and new vehicles and upgrading of facilities across the state. It is difficult to keep up with the demand. Costs rise daily and the Compulsory Ambulance Levy only covers 31% of the total ambulance or about \$128 million.

Education is always a winner on the State Labor budget. Labor is a firm believer in education and Queensland enjoys a world-class reputation when it comes to education, skills and innovation. I spend time in all schools in the Pumicestone Electorate and have found the staff and students committed to the best outcomes.

The State Government has shown a commitment to fund 192 extra teachers and teacher aides in this budget.

Millions have been spent on introducing a new preparatory year which will benefit thousands of young children. We have reduced class sizes, lifted the school leaving age from 15 to 16 with our earning or learning strategy and streamlined the curriculum.

More than \$500 million has been allocated to build and upgrade schools and training facilities. This follows the \$1 billion extra in the 2006-07 budget for the Building Better Schools program. There's more money for local schools under the Triple R program and some will see improvements to bus set downs and access.

The Government is investing in the professional development of teachers. They will be provided with a laptop computer and professional development they need to maximise the use of the technology.

Non-state schools will receive \$7 million to share the benefits of this program also.

Roads and public transport continue to get record funding. Currently, Main roads is implementing the largest roads program in the State's history.

\$11.55 billion has been allocated to roadworks.

The Caboolture Northern By-Pass is almost completed after being first mooted some 22 years ago. I'm proud that the Beattie Labor Government will finalize this road project and alleviate the heavy traffic in the Caboolture CBD.

The Bribie Island Road has been surveyed and planning will begin for four laning of the road from the highway to Saints Road in 2007-08 and \$400,000 will be spent on Pumicestone Road.

The Government will spend a record \$70 million over four years to continue to accommodate growth in passenger demand for public transport.

In relation to jobs the current unemployment figure of less than 4% is the lowest in 30 years. But a growing economy like Queensland needs a skilled workforce.

With emphasis on this, our region has been allocated \$7.55 million for the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative to assist around 1,000 Queenslanders who are disadvantaged in the labour market.

Locally Get Set for Work programs are working well with a high percentage of people gaining meaningful employment after 16-20 weeks work under a supervised Government work plan.

The Electorate of Pumicestone has benefited from one of ten Skilling Queenslanders Shopfronts where local residents can talk to qualified people about job opportunities and information on gaining skills to become better qualified to gain employment.

School based traineeships have increased to 7,500 and the number is rising. Skill development is a major focus of this Government and its \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan is starting to deliver results with an increase in apprentices and trainees in training of 7.9% compared to a decline in the rest of the country of 1.8%.

There will be more improvements in community safety. The plans to accommodate the new Caboolture Police District Headquarters have been completed and the new police boundaries are being finalized. Along with the upcoming upgrade of the Bribie Island Police Station to 24 hours, this shows how serious the Government is about community safety and security. These initiatives will see more police and resources in an area that is growing rapidly.

The Police budget for 2007-08 reached \$1.44 billion an increase of \$137 million from last year. Polices numbers will increase to 9,928 with an additional 200 new police positions being funded.

In relation to water the Government is undertaking an unprecedented expansion of water infrastructure, with the \$9 billion SEQ Water Grid. When finished, the Grid will do two things—it will drought-proof the region and will enable water to be piped to areas where and when needed.

Someone had to take decisive action. SEQ Councils are partly responsible for the serious water crises. They control the town water supply, they take the profits from water but few Councils spend their water profits on water infrastructure. Had they done that, they would have been better prepared.

Currently there are 22 bulk water assets (dams, weirs, aquifers) owned by 12 different entities and 17 Councils who deliver water in the region. The new structure will see that streamlined to just three bulk water providers which will be state-owned statutory authorities. Councils will retain control of the domestic distribution system and water retail businesses.

I am pleased to say that residents are playing their part to conserve water. They understand that 60% of the state is in drought.

One in ten people have now installed a tank and with the Government subsidies and the popular Water Wise program, which offers rebates for tanks, washing machines, shower heads, dual flush toilets and pool covers, at a cost to the State Government of \$175 million, many are helping to save our most precious resource.

Congratulations to all businesses who are also doing their bit to save water. Two businesses in Pumicestone, Bribie Island Coaches and Robert Cazalet's Outdoor Cleaning Service have taken steps to conserve water. By putting in tanks and using recycled water they are saving many thousands of litres of town water on a daily basis.

The environment is important to this Government. With climate change and global warming firmly on the agenda, the Government has set aside \$714 million over the next five years to respond specifically to the climate change challenge.

Locally National Parks continue to be funded for more infrastructure and facilities. Access has been improved to enable people to have to benefit of what Parks have to offer.

This budget will support many local community projects. As usual local Council will receive funds for various projects and money will be spent on various disability services, carer initiatives including the introduction of the carers card, sporting venues and counselling services.

I believe everyone will benefit in some way from this budget and I want to add my congratulations to the Treasurer and Deputy Premier for a sound budget that will take Queensland into the future.

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (4.17 pm): What a pleasure it is to rise in support of the bills before the House today, and what a pleasure it is to be a member of the Beattie government that, since it first came to office, has seen this state go from strength to strength. In fact, the Treasurer reminded us of the time when our mantra was 'jobs, jobs, jobs' and how hard the Beattie government has worked towards providing those jobs for Queenslanders.

It is a great credit to the leadership and members of this government that today the Premier was able to announce the delightful news that our unemployment level is down to 3.5 per cent. That was unheard of, and certainly undreamt of, even just a few short years ago. We have to give credit where credit is due, and it is due to the policies of this state government. It is not some accident. It is not due to the Howard government. In fact, Howard's figures are supported by ours. It is quite the reverse of what the opposition would say.

Again, this is another great budget of the Beattie government. Our economy continues to grow in strength. We are in a position where we can invest \$14 billion in infrastructure in this state. That is a fantastic thing and something that I am very proud of. I am pleased to note that more than 50 per cent of that funding will be spent on infrastructure outside the south-east corner. We are a large state and a very diverse state. People in my part of the world and in north Queensland often say, 'The money never comes to the north,' but it does. Over the years this government has been very careful to ensure that the north receives a fair share of the revenue of this state. That infrastructure in north Queensland will be most welcome.

I know that there are many demands on the budget in terms of water infrastructure for the south-east corner. Although where I live we have had a wonderful wet season, I know that that is not the case in other parts of the state. When I come down to Brisbane the pain that people are going through is very obvious. However, we do have water needs as well. I am very pleased that this budget has provided funding to support the Water for Bowen project. Once the feasibility stages have been completed and construction has been completed we will see water brought from the Burdekin Dam through a channel and pipeline to Bowen and then beyond to the Whitsundays. That will drought proof the northern part of my electorate into the future. Not only that, it will make the Bowen area one of the great horticultural hubs of this state.

I am also pleased that the budget contains further money for the Abbot Point coal terminal expansion. I want to put in my plug for getting a move on and seeing the northern missing rail link completed. Let us get that up and going. I think that is a crucial piece of infrastructure that is missing from the overall plan at the moment. A lot of work has gone into preparing for that missing rail link. I would like to see it happen sooner rather than later.

I am really pleased to see that the budget again supports the tourism industry which is so crucial in the Whitsundays. Funding for RTO remains in place. There is funding to improve and upgrade tourism infrastructure on some of our national park islands—Whitehaven Beach is an example. More and more tourists come to these places every year. While we are putting processes in place to make sure that we do not kill these beautiful and unique places through visitation, we need to make sure that the amenities are up to that visitation. We want international visitors to go away with the fondest memories of such a beautiful part of the world.

The budget allocations for education are quite outstanding. As a former teacher I am very pleased with the \$70 million in funding to provide laptops for teachers across the state. I think that is a wonderful initiative. I am sure it will be welcomed by nearly all teachers in the system. There are still some who are uncomfortable with the technology. This will provide them with the opportunity to learn at their own pace in the privacy of their own homes.

The additional funds to support special needs education are also welcome. I know that there are many special needs units across the state that will be very pleased about that. I applaud the additional funding to increase training places and increase the number of apprenticeship places across the state.

I am glad that the minister for housing is in the chamber at the moment, because I want to applaud the extra \$500 million injection into the housing budget. Yesterday was a great day for Queensland. The Mackay-Whitsunday region has not escaped the pressures on housing—not just affordable housing but available housing. I know this is a common story across the state. With the increase in expendable income in our area we are seeing a tightening in the housing market. I am looking forward to the rollout of that additional funding. That should see more people enter the social housing market. That will take some of the pressure and strain off the private rental market. There are other measures that will encourage and support people in buying their own home or buying investment homes that can be used as rentals.

There are some wonderful initiatives in the budget, not the least of which is the funding to address the issue of climate change, the funding to invest in alternative energy sources and, most importantly from my point of view, the funding for the development of clean coal technologies. I will address the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill for the remainder of my contribution.

The commitment of the Queensland government to the development of clean coal technology is unmatched by that of the Commonwealth or any other state. We are contributing \$300 million and our coal industry companies are contributing \$600 million towards meeting one of the great challenges of our time—reducing the greenhouse gas emissions from our vital coal industry.

At the weekend the Premier announced the government's ClimateSmart 2050 strategy and backed it up with a further investment of \$414 million. It is enlightening to see what John Howard announced on the same day. After dithering over the issue not just for months but for years, all he could say was that he would get back to the people with targets next year—after the federal election.

There was a second more subtle message in John Howard's climate change response. It is simply that the Howard government wants to cynically use the strong community concern about the impact of climate change to justify its obsession with pushing a nuclear power industry. The Howard government is not seriously interested in clean coal technology development. It pays lip-service to alternative energy sources such as coal seam methane. It is obsessed with using every excuse and device possible to push a domestic nuclear power industry.

Last year the member for Dawson, De-Anne Kelly, was comprehensively caught out supporting a nuclear power station in the Dawson electorate. She has been backing off ever since following a strong community reaction. But the statement is in print and the people of Dawson know it.

There is one aspect of the Howard government's obsession with nuclear power that I find particularly worrying. Given the opposition of all state Labor governments to the development of a domestic nuclear power industry, the federal government is looking at whether it can overrule state and local governments on the location of nuclear power stations. It follows that it will also overrule and ignore community attitudes, just as it did soon after it came into office and took away community rights with regard to telecommunication towers in residential areas.

This is one of the most sinister aspects of the whole issue. One day the federal government says that power generation is a state responsibility. The next day it talks about imposing nuclear power as an energy source on the people of Australia and on the states. The National and Liberal parties here are trying to walk on both sides of the road when it comes to the nuclear power debate. They need to come clean and they need to tell their electors where they really stand.

The minister for natural resources challenged the member for Burdekin this week to declare whether she supports a nuclear power station at Collinsville or a state-of-the-art clean coal technology power station. The member for Burdekin and the member for Mirani need to state whether they support the construction of a nuclear power station in the Mackay-Whitsunday region. I do not. I am on record as saying that I oppose the construction of a nuclear power plant in our region. The members of the Beattie government do not support it. Labor's candidate in Dawson does not support it either.

There is no doubt that one of the 25 power stations that would be required around Australia for a domestic nuclear power industry would have to be in the Mackay-Whitsunday region. My electors do not want it and object to the sneaky, underhand way the issue is being pursued by the Howard government and the National Party member for Dawson. They are using genuine community concern about climate change and greenhouse gas emissions to promote nuclear power and not the clean coal alternative the Beattie government and the coal industry are working constructively together to deliver for the benefit of our own vital coal industry and to create opportunities to market clean coal technology internationally. With those few words I support the bills.

Mr GRAY (Gaven—ALP) (4.28 pm): It is indeed a pleasure to stand in this place and support the cognate bills before the House which will direct the efforts of this government and the future of Queensland for many years to come. The budget has been well crafted, it is visionary in nature, it recognises the realities of climate change and the needs of all Queenslanders, it is based on sound economic principles, the sound financial position of the state—which is the envy of all Australian states—and it is underpinned by inherent social justice planning.

In an electorate which has within it several of the fastest growing areas in Australia, the reality of high house prices and rents really hit home. This government, unlike the stale and out-of-touch federal government, has taken a range of measures to ease the burden on the homebuyer. The abolition of mortgage duty and the injection of some \$500 million into social housing is proof of the concern that this government has for homeowners and renters. It is a sad reflection on the federal government that it has failed to inject some of the massive federal surpluses it has extracted from the taxpayers of Australia into social housing and continues to pursue its failed rent subsidy scheme, which in a macabre way has contributed to higher rents.

Steven Ciobo, the Liberal federal member for Moncrieff, is so misguided and lacking in credibility that he had the hide to criticise the Queensland government in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* of 6 June 2007 in a futile attempt to shift the blame for the worst home affordability in Australia's recent history from where it truly resides—with the Howard federal government. The Queensland government recognises the pain felt by all Queensland homeowners and has taken action to assist.

This budget recognises that the electorate of Gaven is one of the fastest growing areas in this state, containing within it the growth areas of Pacific Pines, Gaven, Oxenford, Midsland, Mount Nathan and Nerang. Therefore, it needs the best possible services and infrastructure. I am happy to say that the Treasurer's budget reflects those needs and meets them. The provisions made in this budget provide the best roads and services for the hundreds of people who each week arrive in my electorate and call it home. Might I add that they are most welcome. The fact that our population is surging cannot just be put in the too-hard basket. This government is meeting the challenge.

In the past six weeks I have had the pleasure of opening the new ambulance station at Nerang and a new Queensland Transport customer service centre with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport at Helensvale Plaza, and I will be attending the opening of a new police beat in Pacific Pines shortly. I will also be attending meetings with regard to a new police beat at the Westfield Helensvale town centre. The Helensvale Residents Association and other associations have campaigned to achieve these facilities, and the Queensland government has been listening. A similar campaign to the federal government for a Medicare office at Helensvale has been refused. In fact, I fear the federal government plans to close all Medicare offices. Some 5,000 people in Helensvale signed a petition to the federal government for a much-needed Medicare facility. They have been ignored. However, I will be pleased to attend the opening of the Department of Child Safety office in Nerang. The Queensland government listens; the federal government does not.

In the Gaven electorate as part of the \$500 million statewide package for schools this government will deliver \$150,000 to Helensvale State High School for additional amenities this year and \$61,000 again to Helensvale State High School to complete an extension to the administration block. In the interests of time, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

- \$14.13 million for the development and construction of the new West Pacific Pines State School, this will be a wonderful new school with a wireless campus and might I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Peter Brown who has recently been appointed to the role of principal. Peter was a long term deputy of Helensvale State School and then Helensvale State High School where both my children attended. Peter is held in high esteem in education and community circles. Congratulations Peter and I look forward to working with you.
- \$33,000 to Helensvale State School for the construction of a prep adventure playground.
- \$3.65 million to Pacific Pines State High School for Stage 5 construction work.

- \$8,000 for maintenance at Helensvale State high School.
- \$7,000 for maintenance at Nerang State High School.
- \$5,000 for maintenance at Oxenford State School.

Transport and roads funding are vital to the Gaven electorate as a number of major roads pass through my electorate and I am very conscious of the effect road noise has on the lives of those who live near major transport corridors like I do. Therefore I am extremely pleased that significant roads and transport funding has been allocated to the Gaven electorate. This includes:

- \$9.9 million to complete duplication from two to four lanes between Oxenford and Santa Barbara Roads, on Hope Island Road and I must that the Minister for Main Roads and the Regional Manager for funding in the construction, the provision of noise barriers, if required, on that section of the road in the vicinity of River Downs and River Links.
- \$5.42 million for planning and land acquisition on the Inter Regional Transport Corridor between Stapylton and Nerang. This corridor divides Helensvale, River downs and Monteray Keys next to the current rail corridor and while it will not be in use till the mid 2020's, planning is important as it may provide for the extension of the rapid transport section currently being planned at a cost to the sate of \$500 million dollars. This would be a low noise impact solution to future transport needs.
- \$4.22 million for more noise barriers between the Logan Motorway and Nerang, on the Pacific Motorway. This will provide more noise abatement for residents along the M1 and I thank the Minister and the Treasurer for their consideration in this matter.
- \$3.24 million to complete planning to widen from four to six lanes between Nerang and Stewart Road, on the Pacific Highway. This will be greatly welcomed by the Nerang Community. We are still waiting for the Federal government contribution to this import road project to widen the M1 through to Tugan and Coolangatta.
- \$470,000 to complete intersection improvements at Riverwood Drive on the Southport-Nerang Road. This road is the entrance to the lovely community of Riverlea where there is a strong community working together to defeat a proposal of the Gold Coast City Council to establish a motor cross facility within 300 metres of their houses. This idiotic proposal is a short term solution to the long term problem of trail bike provision in GCCC boundaries.
- \$70,000 for concept planning between Mt Nathan and Oak Street, on Beaudesert-Nerang Road.
- \$390,000 to complete installation of guardrails at Near Riverglen Court on Beaudesert-Nerang Road. This will add greatly to safety on this section of the road.
- \$100,000 for traffic signals at North Street, on the Nerang Correction Road.
- \$3.59 million for realignment to four lanes between Riversdale Road and the Pacific Motorway, on Tamborine-Oxenford Road. This area is facing greatly increased traffic volumes and I am pleased this work is being undertaken. Laden trucks add greatly to the dangers in the area.
- \$180,000 for interchange improvements at Neilsens Road on the Pacific Motorway.

Mr Speaker, during my twenty years of voluntary work in my community I have become acutely aware of the need to build community capital and strengthen community organisations which do much to provide support for all. I was therefore thankful for provision within the budget for substantial funding for community support. This includes:

- \$1.86 million to libraries in the Albert/South Coast area. Although I must say at this point that due to the callous actions of the bloc councillors in the Gold Coast City Council the good people of Helensvale, Pacific Pines, Oxenford, Gaven and Coomera will not share in this State subsidy funding towards libraries. I refer of cause to the appalling conditions at the Helensvale which is 11 years old and should have been rebuilt some six years ago. It is crucially undersize being one-fifth of the size it needs to be serving some 110,000 people with some 400 square metres of space. The GCCC says it cannot afford to rebuild this library yet it can set aside some \$20 million to rebuild the Robina Library which is only five years old.
- \$201,000 for ongoing regional tourism marketing. This is vital for an industry which provides a large number of jobs in the electorate of Gaven, many at nearby theme parks. My long association with Tourism Training Australia has provided me with insight into the continuing need for marketing in this competitive industry. Added to this is some \$631,000 for ongoing promotion of major conventions. Another vital source of employment.
- \$99,000 towards the construction of a walkway/cycleway around the lake at the Oxenford Recreation Park. This facility is in the area used by the "Rage" Youth and Community Centre at Oxenford. This is a wonderful facility providing much needed services to the local community especially to young clients and young families.
- \$3.74 million to upgrade public housing dwellings in the Logan to Gold Coast region. Most welcome.
- \$19,000 to provide before/after school and vacation care for school age and under school age children. Working parents do it tough in respect to child care and this funding adds to the support our state provides for families.
- \$200,000 to begin construction of public housing in Gaven as part of the spinal injury initiative.
- \$1.8 million for the Early Years Learning Centre in Nerang. This facility will add great support to the young and young families in the Gaven electorate.
- \$98,000 for youth justice programs that help young people to develop skills to participate positively in their community.
- \$6,064 to the Coomera Hope Island Cricket Club to install cricket wickets. This club has a great facility which will be improved by the addition of these new wickets.
- \$25,561 to the Discovery Park Tennis Club in Helensvale to upgrade two existing hardcourt tennis courts. This is a great club making best use of the facility and adding a great recreational option for Helensvale people.

Finally Mr Speaker might I congratulate the Treasurer on her crafting of this budget, it meets the needs of a growing State, the growing electorate of Gaven, it keeps Queensland well ahead of the other states and far ahead of the Federal Government in that it is a budget of substance and I recommend it to the House.

Mr Speaker

The warming of this earth due to the unfettered increase in greenhouse gases during the last and this century has most certainly resulted in the most serious challenge that the human race, who occupy this planet and are the custodians of all life on it, has ever faced. We are in the grip of the greatest drought in the past 100 years, we are experiencing more frequent and extreme weather

events. The combined outcome of these serious events is the reshaping of the economic, social and geographical fabric of this earth. It behoves all governments around the world to act decisively and collectively to not only do their best to stop climate change but to reverse its effects by reversing the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases entering our atmosphere. This is not a legal obligation but a moral one.

This government acknowledges its moral responsibility unlike the federal government which seems to doubt the reality of climate change. This government not only delivers sound policy positions, but implements its policies. The ClimateSmart 2050 policy is an illustration of moral obligation. This bill is an illustration of the implementation of sound policy. It is also a clear illustration of the implicit obligation which the coal industry and the government recognise and both are to be congratulated on their joint stand. Queensland's economy has many primary drivers, mining, tourism, agriculture, IT, medical and communication technologies to mention a few.

Mining and power generation is vital to the economy of Queensland. The move to clean coal technology is essential so that the benefits of our massive coal resources can translate into economic and thus public benefit. The establishment of the voluntary levy, the COAL21 Fund by the black coal mining industry will support research and development aimed at developing low emissions technologies for coal. This levy is indefinite and therefore will support strong research capacity, some \$600 million over the next ten years.

This bill provides for the formation of a Clean Coal Council to advise the Premier with respect to priorities for funding to accelerate the demonstration, development and implementation and use of clean coal technology. This technology is vital for implementation in this state but also the implementation of the same technology in the countries to which we sell our coal. Queensland needs to be a leader in the geosequestering of carbon dioxide. China, India and the United States are ripe for the sale of such technology.

Projects already agreed for funding are the CS Energy Oxy-fuel project and \$300 million for an integrated gasification combined cycle project that the Council reviews for an optimal configuration. Work is under way. In a recent visit to the Queensland Centre for Advanced Technologies I could not but be impressed by the advanced nature of current clean coal research. More strength to the arm of the scientists who are leading this vital research. When this is combined with the \$600 million from the coal industry it makes a total investment of \$9 million. The funding agreements will be proposed on the basis that the COAL21 Fund will have sufficient balance over the life of the project to support the committed payments. The COAL21 Fund will operate with a rolling balance so that any over and under budget monies in a year are rolled forward onto the fund's balance in subsequent years.

It must be noted that this bill provides that if the State or Commonwealth introduces a carbon tax regime the Government and the Coal Industry will review the fund to ensure the objective of funding to accelerate the demonstration, development and widespread implementation and use of clean coal technology. It will honour any agreement existing at the time. The Government and the industry will attempt to have the voluntary contribution recognised as an offset to the carbon tax costs. The agreement will terminate if the State introduces coal royalty charges for the purpose of funding clean coal technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from coal.

In respect to the Council proposed under the bill, the Premier will make all appointments to the Council including five representatives from State Government and/or Agencies, five representatives nominated by the coal industry, a Chair and such number of other persons with relevant expertise.

This government has a long and strong history in respect to supporting the decline of carbon emissions and it is worth detailing some of this government's track record on this issue. The 2007 stopping of broad scale land clearing is cutting 20 million tonnes of greenhouse gases a year. The 2000 introduction of our Cleaner Energy Strategy has resulted in the 13% gas scheme, the 30,000 hectares of forests have been planted by power station companies. The annual installation of solar hot water systems has increased to over 12,000 a year now eliminating 1.8 million tonnes of greenhouse gases each year. Since 1999 the Queensland Sustainable Energy Innovation Fund has supported 60 projects saving some 20,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year. The clean coal investments I have spoken about, the biofuels projects and the mandating of a 5% blend of ethanol for all petrol sold in Queensland by 2010. The Climate Change Centre of Excellence bringing smart minds and policy together.

The Climate Change 2050 Initiatives with the climate change fund, the renewable energy fund, the solar thermal demonstration plant, the Smart Energy Saving Program targeted at saving a 3280 kilotonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, the Climate Smart Homes rebates, the Energy Choices program, the Home Energy Wise program. The list goes on. These policy initiatives and implemented programs demonstrate clearly that a multi-faceted approach is essential to combating greenhouse gas emissions. We are all responsible for this problem and we are all responsible for its resolution.

The industry and the government are to be congratulated on this vital legislation, the state of this planet is beyond politics, beyond individuals, it is vital to the survival of this planet. The bill adds another plank in resolving this world-wide concern. I recommend it to the House.

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (4.32 pm): It is with absolute pleasure that I rise to support this, the Beattie government's 10th budget. I have had the pleasure of being in this chamber for all of those 10 budgets. In fact, next Wednesday is my ninth year anniversary of being elected to this esteemed institution. The great part of being here to see a budget of this quality being delivered for the people of Queensland is to know that I might have played a small role in it being delivered. Those opposite and others should remember that there is no way in the world that had I not been successful in gaining those mere 83 votes ahead of my opponent in 1998 the Queensland economy would not be in the great state that it is now! Prior to June 1998 we had a government that had no plan for the future. We had a government with ministers who thought they were back in the pre-Fitzgerald era. They wore their capital works freeze as a badge of honour and, worse still, they would have formed a coalition government with One Nation. I should also congratulate the member for Nicklin, who had the wisdom to support our government and I believe he deserves part of the credit for the good state of our economy because he chose a government that he knew would put the interests of Queensland ahead of all else.

We have a strong, robust economy which is the envy of the nation, low unemployment rates and record spending in essential services such as health, education and police. I remember that those opposite laughed at the Premier when he had a goal of five per cent unemployment. What was announced today? The Premier announced that the rate is now 3.5 per cent. Why? Because we had a plan and programs in place to achieve this unemployment rate. It has not happened by accident. The plans we had in place included the Community Jobs Plan, the Smart State agenda and the aviation industry, just to name a few. These types of plans bring results, and today's 3.5 per cent unemployment rate is as a result of those plans. All of this planning is a demonstration of what you need to do when in

government. It is why we are able to deliver a budget as good as this in a growing state which is the envy of other states because it is a low-tax state. When times are good we must plan and invest for the future, and this budget does exactly that.

I congratulate the Treasurer for handing down another fantastic budget, a budget which is an investment in the future of Queensland. I am certain that the constituents living in my electorate of Mansfield in the suburbs of Upper Mount Gravatt, Wishart, Eight Mile Plains, Mansfield, Mackenzie, Rochedale, Rochedale South, Burbank, Sheldon and Carindale look forward to seeing the benefits. Over 40,000 Mansfield residents will benefit from this budget, which represents the best investment in infrastructure of any state in Australia. For the residents of the Mansfield electorate, this budget is testimony that the Beattie government listens, acts and delivers results. As I said, this \$32 billion budget is an investment in the future of Queensland. The government's commitment is a long-term commitment in jobs, education, police and emergency services, health, community projects and transport. This budget is a win for working families, a win for students, a win for pensioners and a win for the environment, and I thank the Treasurer for her hard work and vision for the future of Queensland.

This budget addresses the demand placed on the water supplies of the south-east corner as a result of the worst drought on record and the growing population. There is \$465 million for design and construction of the southern regional water pipeline between the Gold Coast and Brisbane. Funding of \$175 million is allocated to complete the corridor assessments and a range of studies to support the preliminary design work for the northern and eastern pipeline interconnectors ahead of the commencement of construction works. Funding of \$354.9 million is allocated to progress development of the two new dams in south-east Queensland. The western corridor recycled water scheme, the largest recycled water project in the Southern Hemisphere, is due for completion in 2008. In this year's budget there is \$1.183 billion for the design and construction of the project, including water treatment plants and 200 kilometres of pipeline. There is a further \$188.4 million which includes \$46.6 million towards the construction of the \$1.2 billion desalination plant at Tugun which is expected to be completed in 2008 and deliver up to 125 megalitres per day.

It is a great pleasure to be the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport who has a great passion and desire to ensure that public transport is at the centrepiece of ensuring that we are ahead of the game when it comes to the delivery of the infrastructure needed to cope with the growing population, particularly in the south-east corner. All Queenslanders will benefit from the \$5.35 billion in transport and roads infrastructure. This is the best investment in transport in Australia, proving once again that Queensland is the best place to live in the country, if not the world. This investment will fund massive development in our transport networks. We will invest a record \$1.2 billion in public transport infrastructure and service improvements in 2007-08.

I am very proud of the fact that I am the No. 1 ticket holder on the South East Busway, and under this budget the Beattie government will invest \$16 million into developing fully integrated ticketing, including the smart card, making transport easier and more accessible for everyone. This ticketing will be a part of the \$414.8 million towards the continued expansion of the busway network. The Beattie government is also committed to developing trains, investing \$502 million for upgrades to the Citytrain network, and a further \$70 million over the next four years for improvements to public transport services. In south-east Queensland alone the government has committed \$1.9 billion in infrastructure projects. This will not only ensure that Queensland's transport system remains the No. 1 transport network in Australia but also makes it even better.

The residents of the south side will greatly benefit from this investment in transport. This budget is a commitment to improving roads, with \$1 million earmarked for concept planning of the Gateway Arterial between Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and the Pacific Motorway. Mansfield, Wishart, Upper Mount Gravatt and Macgregor residents will also benefit from \$250,000 for the installation of heavy vehicle detection cameras between the Ipswich Motorway and the Gateway Motorway—or BUC as we know it. BUC includes Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Kessells and Riawena Road. We are committed to ensuring that there will be less road noise and safer roads in the Mansfield electorate.

I must say that I am proud of all that I have achieved for the electorate that I have had the honour to represent for nine years, but this initiative is right up there as one of my proudest achievements. From 1 July the technology will be in place to ensure that drivers of trucks that are over 4.5 tonnes who have no reason to be driving those trucks in my local area will be fined and lose three demerit points. I submitted this initiative to the Brisbane Urban Corridor Study a few years ago.

Mr Lucas: You delivered it and Gary Hardgrave couldn't

Mr REEVES: I take that interjection. Gary Hardgrave talks a lot, but he does not deliver anything. I am sure the people of Moreton will realise that come October or November. I was able to convince the minister of the need for this initiative. I must say that the minister did not take too much convincing to deliver on it, as he knows the road well. I thank him for getting this as an election commitment. In one of my first tasks as parliamentary secretary I had the pleasure of assisting in the implementation of this policy.

Mr Lucas: Very sensible suggestion you made.

Mr REEVES: I take that interjection from the minister. This government is also investing \$691.2 million to continue its ongoing investment on the Gateway Upgrade Project, increasing the capacity on the Gateway Motorway between Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Nudgee Road. The Beattie government is also committed to environmentally friendly development and alternative transport solutions. I am proud to announce an investment of \$40,000 for bikeways in Redlands shire, an investment of \$145,000 for bikeways along Bulimba Creek between Logan Road and Craig Street at Wishart, and an investment of \$958,208 to construct bikeways on the Pacific Motorway between Nathan Road and Logan Road as part of an overall \$22.5 million cycle links investment strategy across the region. I know the families of Mansfield can look forward to safer bicycle travel and cleaner air.

This budget is proof of the Beattie government's ongoing commitment to making Queensland the safest state in the country and reducing emergency services response times. It will fulfil this commitment by funding 200 extra police positions by October 2008. I appreciate the commitment of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to reducing crime.

Mansfield residents will greatly benefit from this commitment with a \$76,000 investment in continued funding for the South Brisbane Tactical Crime Squad. This investment, together with \$2.85 million to complete the government's ongoing commitment to upgrade the Upper Mount Gravatt Police Station as well as the Holland Park Police Station, will ensure that the residents of the Mansfield electorate will have the best possible police response times. Families can be sure that that will lead to a reduction in crime and better security across my electorate and across the state. I hear the member who will follow me whinge, but he whinges while we work and deliver.

The Queensland government is also committed to investing in the health of Queenslanders. It is dedicated to ensuring that all Queenslanders have access to ambulance services with a minimum waiting time. It is fulfilling that commitment with \$50 million for the Queensland Ambulance Service to meet the growing demands of this state, the fastest growing state in Australia. The Premier and the Minister for Emergency Services are meeting those demands with \$15.65 million for the commissioning of 140 ambulances to replace older vehicles.

I could speak for hours and hours about the great wins for the people of the Mansfield electorate and the people of Queensland, but owing to the time I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Health

This is another budget that delivers on the government's ongoing commitment to make the Queensland health system the best health system in Australia. The commitment of over \$7 billion is a win for our hospitals, a win for our doctors and a win for families. I'm proud to support the minister for health for his devotion to improving the health system in Queensland.

The Beattie Government's commitment to health will be realised through the Action Plan to improve Queensland's health system. This means better Mental Health, more hospital beds, more doctors and more nurses. This is in addition to a \$635 million investment in health infrastructure.

This is also a win for the dedicated health professionals of this state, with \$215.4 million to improve working conditions for Queensland Health Employees, including Visiting medical Officers, Clinical Staff and Admin staff in 2007-08, as part of a total package of \$3.48 billion over 3 years.

Community

This year's budget announced record Queensland housing assistance of \$719 million in 2007-08. Mansfield residents will be pleased to see \$1.19 million in seniors public housing at Dawson Rd Upper Mt Gravatt as well as \$3 a million investment for the construction of 22 units for low-income earners at the same location, and I am very proud to support the \$30.6 million dollar investment to upgrade public housing across greater Brisbane, with \$1.7 million to complete the renewal of public housing in Rochedale south.

The Beattie government is also committed to improving services for Mansfield families, ensuring that as Queensland and Mansfield grow all residents will have the best services available. This budget's investment of \$9.2 million for the refurbishment of the Belmont substation, and \$3.7 million to replace high voltage switchgear at Upper Mt Gravatt is proof that the Government is committed to providing the best services for Mansfield, now and in the future.

The allocation of \$1.5 million to Brisbane City Council to build the new public pool at Mt Gravatt East State School. I congratulate the council for taking up my suggestion of the location of the new pool.

Education

But the Beattie Government is committed to more than just physical infrastructure, it is also promising investment in the most important assets in our state; our children. As I said I am the very proud father of three beautiful girls, and I know that like myself all families across Queensland can be sure of seeing their kids get the best start in life.

With a more than \$500 million investment to build and upgrade schools across the state, all Queensland children will be receiving the very best in education, ensuring that the Queensland education system is among the very best in the world.

The decision to ensure teachers at TAFE and our schools to assist in their professional development and delivery of their programs to be allocated a lap top is a great initiative and I congratulate the minister for this.

All Mansfield residents, families and school leavers can look forward to the investment in their futures. I applaud the Minister for Education for his allocation to Mansfield.

School leavers can look forward to a fantastic investment of \$366 million for 23.2 million hours of vocational education and training in Mansfield. This will give the working people of Mansfield the opportunity to develop and upgrade their skills.

Mansfield families will be very pleased to know that the Beattie Government is continuing its long term commitment to upgrading and developing our school system. The ongoing investment in our schools is a win for the families of my electorate. I am a proud supporter of the fantastic job done by the schools in my electorate, and as a member of a number of P&C's I welcome the investment in education that this budget will deliver to Mansfield. Teachers, families and student will all benefit.

Families in Rochedale will be pleased to know of the nearly \$2 million commitment to Rochedale State School to build a new administration centre and complete development of the oval and the associated works. This is a great school, in a great area, and I am sure families with children attending this school will be glad of this investment.

The children and families of Rochedale State School will also see benefit with a \$506,000 investment for Rochedale State School to complete development of the sewerage disposal system, and \$50,000 through the Triple R maintenance program for reticulation at Rochedale South State School.

Mansfield's high schools will also benefit from this investment in education. Both Rochedale State High School and Mansfield High School will benefit particularly from this budget. Together with long term commitment in development of education policy, Rochedale State High School will receive \$9,000 for targeting maintenance of hard external surfaces, while Mansfield State High School will receive a grant of \$8,000 for 2 hire buildings.

Jobs

Together with providing our kids the best start in life, the Beattie government is also committed to ensuring that workers can upgrade their skills. I am a great believer of skills development, and I am pleased to support the government's \$3.63 million invest for Greater Brisbane as part of the \$24.42 million QLD Skills Plan. This plan will provide 6,630 additional training places by 2010, reducing unemployment, and developing the long term skills of all Queenslanders.

Disadvantaged workers and unemployed in Greater Brisbane will receive \$4.64 million.

I am also very proud of the \$22.84 million investment in the 'Skilling Queenslanders for Work' program, which will create 2,930 jobs in 2007-08. I am sure the people of Mansfield will be pleased to know of the long term development in reducing unemployment and improving skills that this represents.

This budget is a serious, long term commitment for real Queenslanders. It will be the people who will decide the success of this budget. I will continue to work hard to ensure the very best for the residents of Mansfield, to get the best possible outcome from this budget, and this state government.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—NPA) (4.43 pm): In rising to speak to this year's budget, I seek leave to table a press release that was issued by the Premier's office on Thursday, 17 August.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Press Release, dated 17 August 2006, issued by Premier, relating to increase of beds at Bundaberg Hospital, expansion of the emergency department and upgrade of rehabilitation services

It was this document that I was thinking of when the Treasurer handed down this year's budget. It states—

A re-elected Beattie government will begin work immediately to add 30 new beds at Bundaberg Hospital, expand the emergency department and upgrade current rehabilitation services by early 2008.

Premier Peter Beattie said the upgrading would cost \$41.4 million over four years to 2009/10 and would improve patient care and ensure the hospital is meeting current and future demand.

The plan includes:

A new 20-bed medical ward will be built in the redeveloped rehabilitation section of the hospital by early 2008 (\$24.2 million)

An upgraded emergency department with 6 new beds and six new assessment bays will be operating by early 2008 (11.1 million)

An upgraded rehabilitation ward with 4 new beds operating by early 2008 (5.7 million)

Further down the press release it states—

Construction will then begin to relocate the 16-bed rehabilitation unit to that vacated space. This will provide four extra 'general purpose' beds in addition to the current 16-rehab beds.

All in all, in August last year the Premier was promising by early 2008 30 new beds for the Bundaberg Base Hospital. Members could imagine my shock and, I would have to say, profound disappointment when I examined this year's Wide Bay-Burnett budget. Under the heading of 'Total estimated cost', there is \$41 million. Under the heading of 'Expenditure to 30.6.07', there was a zero—no dollars—and then the budget for 2007-08 was \$2.3 million. The Premier has not kept his promise. He has punished the people of Bundaberg and Burnett for revealing the truth about just how badly he and his government ran down our public health system.

I think it is ironic, that because of the disaster that occurred at the Bundaberg Base Hospital, health services all over Queensland have seen a 12 per cent increase but Bundaberg and the Burnett have hardly seen a cracker of that money. There will not be one extra bed available at the Bundaberg Base Hospital.

Right now, terminally ill patients are being kicked out of the public hospital because there is not one public palliative care bed in Bundaberg. Already, my office has been contacted by two families about this issue. Today I received library research on this matter. An estimate that I received from one doctor working in the area was that there are approximately 35 palliative care beds funded in public hospitals in Queensland. Of these, the majority are located in rural and regional areas. There is not one in Bundaberg. I was informed that in Brisbane, of the 900 beds at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, none are available for palliative care. Of the 750 beds at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, none are available for palliative care. There are four palliative care beds at the Logan Hospital and the Mount Olivet Hospital has 18 public palliative care beds and 15 private beds.

This situation in Queensland where we have such a minimal amount of public space for palliative care patients has to be addressed by this government and it should be done so in very short order. People who require palliative care and their families should be looked after by a government that purports to look after the battlers.

The Premier has not kept his election promise to the people of Bundaberg and the Burnett. He promised \$41.4 million a year ago and 30 beds and did not spend one cent in the lead-up to the election. He had no intention of keeping his promise. This year he has promised to spend only \$2.3 million for an upgraded accident and emergency ward and zero beds. At this rate it will take 16 years for Peter Beattie to keep his promise and deliver the full \$41.4 million, or more.

Extra hospital beds were announced for hospitals at the Sunshine Coast and Cairns, but none in Bundaberg. I heard that extra beds were announced at the Redland Hospital. Good luck to them, but Bundaberg Base Hospital deserves more beds. There are 1,200 births in Bundaberg each year, reflecting the unprecedented growth in the region, and that is placing pressure on our public health system. The only private hospital in the area has stopped delivering babies. The public hospital now delivers an extra 350 babies each year on top of the 850 babies that used to be born each year at that hospital. We desperately need more beds and doctors and nurses to care for those extra patients. Excluding the mental health in-patient beds, Bundaberg Hospital has only 120 beds for surgical, medical, paediatrics et cetera to service a population of 120,000. That means that we have only one public hospital bed available for every 1,000 people. There was nothing for dental health in the budget—nothing to reduce the six-year waiting list. Bundaberg deserves the best public hospital system in Australia.

This budget shows that Peter Beattie has forgotten and does not care about what happened at our hospital. He has forgotten and does not care about the 87 deaths and the 2,000 people who were illegally dealt with by Queensland Health—that is, ex-Patel patients. He has forgotten and does not care that our children will still be mixed with adults in the paediatrics ward. This is incredible and shows just how desperate the hospital is for beds: children are being mixed with adults. There is no medium-term planning in this budget. This budget is not even a bandaid solution to our problem; it is a nod and a wink and a pat on the head.

Two years and two months after Patel fled to the US on 1 April 2005 on a Beattie government funded flight the victims of the worst health disaster and the people of Queensland have lost all hope of justice being delivered. No-one believes this Labor government has the will or the ability to properly manage the charging and extradition of Jayant Patel. I well remember the day that the Premier flew into town and promised the people of Bundaberg and Burnett that he would fix the Bundaberg Hospital. I welcomed him at the airport with a megaphone. I asked him two specific questions that were not given all that much publicity: 'Why did you fly Patel out of the country and why haven't you flown him back?'

At the time the Premier walked straight through the gates of the Bundaberg airport, and as I asked him those questions he was part of a dirty little secret. He was only one of a handful of people in Queensland at that time who knew that Patel had just been made an offer to come back and face trial in Queensland. Even though the DPP had recommended that it was a good deal, the Premier's Attorney-General at the time rejected that advice without even consulting Patel victims. So one can imagine what the Premier was thinking when I asked him: 'Why haven't you flown Patel back? You flew him over there in the first place.'

No wonder the Premier did not come back to Bundaberg again in the whole of the election campaign. He did not show up at all. It was a marginal seat and he did not show up to support his candidate one little bit. I think he got scared. Imagine if that information had become public during the election campaign and we did not have to rely on the media to expose the truth after the election. How would the people of Queensland who demand a fair go and justice have voted if they knew of that scandalous cover-up? We would have had a very different budget being handed down for the people of Bundaberg and Burnett.

Today, the Attorney-General made some statements regarding the mediation and compensation process. It is up to the government to explain why almost one in five claims for compensation for former Patel victims have been knocked back. The government has to prove that they were not victims rather than the other way around. How can the Attorney-General say that 66 people do not deserve compensation? From the moment that this supposed doctor touched them it was assault.

This health department allowed a fraud—an unregistered, incompetent person—to experiment on at least 2,000 people at the Bundaberg Hospital in two years. There is still plenty of evidence in two royal commissions and one novel that Patel did not honestly fill out medical records. Did the Attorney-General rely on Queensland Health records to determine victim eligibility, because if he did then does he not realise that they could be false or fraudulent for two important reasons? One, Patel lied when he altered and falsely filled out medical records—we all know that.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Darling): Order! Member for Burnett, just be careful of anything that is before the courts. Keep it to the compensation side of things.

Mr MESSENGER: Thank you for your direction. Two, Queensland Health bureaucrats covered up, lied and altered medical records. There needs to be an independent judicial review of the mediation and compensation process. Each Patel victim should be given an immediate payment of \$10,000 and then the mediation process could have decided, or should decide, if and how much extra compensation payment should be made. It is time to come clean and tell us how many compensation payments have been made to victims. The Attorney-General did not say that today. The government should not cover up the total amount. I want to be able to work out how much the average payment to each victim has been. What has the government got to be ashamed of? The last public figure that we could calculate showed that each victim was getting on average around \$21,000. It must be remembered that this person was operating illegally from the first second he arrived at Bundaberg Hospital.

In the budget there is a category of expenditure called infrastructure. This is a new category for the budget papers. They say that within the Wide Bay-Burnett statistical area \$270,850,000 is going to be spent. That is a large amount of money. I assume that the money is going to be spent on the Traveston Crossing Dam. The government plans to complete a draft environmental impact statement by the end of 2007-08. This is crazy stuff. If this government were fair dinkum about completing this project by the end of 2011, this would have been carried out by now. Even though we are in the worst drought ever, if a conservative government had been in power for the last nine years we would have had enough water. Conservative governments would have built dams and made sure that we had enough water and basic infrastructure to provide for those 1,500 people moving to the state each week.

Elaborating on that point, I want to tell members about a trip that I made to Fred Haigh Dam, which is north of Bundaberg just outside the Burnett region. It supplies the majority of our water for the irrigation scheme. I did not realise who Fred Haigh was. On a plaque overlooking Lake Monduran, Fred Haigh Dam, it said, 'Fred Haigh—Water Commissioner 1955 to 1974.' So for 19 years this very loyal civil servant was in charge of building dams. There were 12 major pieces of water infrastructure built between 1955 and 1974. In 19 years, 12 dams were built. Fast forward to 1989 when the Goss Labor government came in and then add 19 years and that brings us up to next year, 2008. How many major pieces of water infrastructure have been built in that 19-year period, when 17 of those years were under Labor rule? I will tell members. One—one dam, the Paradise Dam, which was built out the back of Burnett. In order to get that dam we had to drag this government kicking and screaming the whole way. That shows the absolute lack of planning by any Labor regime. Labor cannot plan to build for infrastructure for the people of Queensland. It has absolutely been proven beyond doubt.

We would not have worried about the few trees that would have been drowned so that Brisbane and the south-east corner could have been drought proofed. We could have put up with the screams from the trees as the life-giving water filled the new dams at Wolffdene, Wyaralong, Glendower and Amamoor Creek and the raising of Borumba Dam.

In the time I have left I will briefly speak to the Police and Corrective Services budget. There has been no mention of funding towards a new police academy in this year's budget—200 new police is a reduction in numbers from last year's budget of 350. Labor was singing its praises, 'Hallelujah, we have 200 extra police.' That is 200 new police—that is, 150 fewer police than last year—being trained. From 1 July 2006 to 1 March 2007, there were 181 separations.

If we take this figure into 2007-08, we will see a net loss in police numbers. No wonder when people ring 000 police are slow to respond. It is because we do not have any front-line police. There are police stations out there that will not be manned. There will be one-person patrols. The QPRIME stage 2 rollout has been given no extra money for extra training and a major complaint of police is that they are not getting enough training. QPRIME is the new computer reporting system for police. It has caused major problems and difficulties. Front-line police are being reassigned to computer jobs so that they can sort out the problems of QPRIME. Two police took seven hours to enter the details of one road accident. That is how many problems there are with this computer system.

The Fortitude Valley station announcement is nothing new, with the Beattie Labor government setting aside \$8 million to upgrade the station two years ago, although nothing happened and the project cost has now blown out to \$13 million. The money for the Caboolture and Coomera projects is simply money that was not spent last year that has been rolled over, while the \$1.3 million for the new police station at Wujil Wujil was also announced last year, albeit at a cost that was \$100,000 lower.

In addition, the minister promised \$3.1 million for a new police station at Sippy Downs last year, but nothing happened. This year there is only \$1.6 million to design and plan for the Sippy Downs station. Would it not have made more sense to design and plan first? Overall capital works expenditure was underspent in 2006-07 by \$42,027,000. This has been rolled over. Land acquisitions in 2006-07 blew out by almost \$6 million and only \$1,100,000 has been allocated for 2007-08. Despite continued calls for watch-house upgrades around the state, this government has slashed the watch-house upgrade budget to \$500,000 for the whole state.

There is no extra money whatsoever set aside for pay rises for police and Corrective Service officers. We have an exodus of police from the Queensland Police Service. They are leaving hand over fist because their pay and conditions are deteriorating when compared with the rest of the states. They

are being poached. Eight SERD officers resigned en masse. Just like that they are gone. Another eight are on standby. Corrective Services are not in all that much better a position. In Corrective Services we have jails that are awash with drugs. The minister does not know what is happening in her jails. She does not know how much water is being used for her prisoners. Prisoners are hooked on drugs. People are going in clean and coming out with a habit and hemp seed. Despite the expected growth in community corrections into 2007-08 the government has only increased community supervision service staff by two. There is no mention of increased pay for Corrective Services staff. A measly \$1.86 million increase has been allocated for 2007-08 to manage dangerous sexual offenders in the community. There is money for a monitoring program that has been thrown out by the courts. There is no mention of budget increases for prisoner rehabilitation programs—the list goes on and on.

Time expired.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (5.03 pm): I am pleased to be able to carry on where the previous member left off. What a great contribution from the member for Burnett. I am pleased to be able to speak to the budget today. The budget cannot be analysed very quickly. The way I sum it up is that we have an economy that is very strong Australia-wide. That has helped every part of the nation. It is wonderful. Many people say that unemployment has been brought down due to the work of the government on the other side of the House, but the reality is that unemployment has gone down in every state, including Tasmania. I understand why those opposite say it; it is just politics.

The reality is that in my lifetime we have never had a more stable economy Australia-wide. There has never been a better economic time for all of us. It has been wonderful. We survived the Asian crisis. Debt levels have been reduced dramatically in the states and in the Commonwealth sphere especially. But one can see where we are heading when one looks at the Whitlam government era. Its debt started when it spent and spent. Bit by bit the Labor government debt built up in the federal scene to about \$93 billion. The Howard government had to find \$8 billion a year in interest to pay that debt off. That has been paid off and that money is available for us throughout the states. I am not saying that a government should not borrow. There are times when a government has to borrow, but there are times when a government borrows and times when it does not.

Ms Bligh: You have a loan with QRA, haven't you? You have four loans, in fact, haven't you?

Mr HOBBS: I have no problem with borrowing, but a government has to ensure that it can pay it back. I can remember when Whitlam got hold of the budget figures and was throwing money everywhere and inflation was out of control. I remember one could buy a LandCruiser in those days and sell it three years later for more than it cost. One had to pay more for the new one, of course. At the end of the day money dries up when a huge debt has to be paid off.

Whether members believe it or not, the reality is that with the GOCs and the debt of the government we are looking at a likely debt of nearly \$51.73 billion by 2010-11. That is a significant amount. For the government to pay off a debt of nearly \$20 billion will cost \$1.14 billion in interest per year by 2010-11. That is equivalent to three 200-megalitre desalination plants or one 700-bed hospital per year. That is what the government will not be able to build. Where is the government going?

Government members interjected.

Mr HOBBS: I do not think that the government does know where it is going because if it did it would not suddenly have done this. The government can throw money at a problem but that does not necessarily always fix it. One has to make a business operate. Those opposite do not seem to understand that throwing money at Health has not fixed it.

Ms Bligh: You would take money from Health? You would like to take it from Health, would you?

Mr HOBBS: No, I am not saying that. The government is throwing money at these problems but not managing them. There are better ways of doing it. At the end of the day the budget surplus is more by accident than design. Look at the enormous amount of money coming in from the GST. In 2006-07 there was nearly \$8 billion, in 2005-06 there was \$7.65 billion, and in 2004-05 there was \$6.9 billion. There has been enormous growth. Any fool can make the books balance to a certain degree if there is that sort of money rolling in. They say in relation to farming that anyone can make money if it rains. The reality is that it has been raining rivers of gold. Those opposite are very lucky that that has occurred. There has been \$3.5 billion in asset sales as well and, of course, a dramatic increase in taxation and duties revenue.

There are a number of issues that I will cover. I will leave much of the departmental issues to the estimates hearings. One of the important issues that has been raised with me in my electorate is the patient transit scheme that has had a modest increase recently from 10c a kilometre to 15c. That is certainly welcome. We have been lobbying for a long time for that to occur and that is very welcome. However, it is still nowhere near enough. When people have to travel from far-flung rural areas to get specialist care they need as much help as they can possibly get. The price of fuel is very expensive. We understand that the overall cost is enormous to the government, but the reality is that there are people out there who need medical attention and they certainly should be entitled to reasonable assistance.

Doctor shortages are major issues in all of our areas, and certainly in mine. We are five doctors short overall. We need one doctor at Tara, one at Surat, one at Injune and two permanent doctors in Cunnamulla. Cunnamulla has not been able to attract doctors. There have been 41 locum doctors there over the last two years, and members could imagine that the broader community is getting a bit sick of that. I do know that a lot of effort has been put into trying to attract doctors to the area. The district health service has worked very hard on that, and I take my hat off to those workers for their efforts. More work is being done now in relation to some private consortiums, and let us hope that is a winner.

I want to talk about the Injune situation, which is very unsatisfactory. The doctor had been there for about seven years; he is a wonderful doctor who was greatly supported by the community. There were some most unsatisfactory workplace issues there that I believe the government did not have the courage to address. The government should have addressed those issues, because the situation is that the doctor persevered for quite a long time but in the end left. The challenge will be to find somebody who is prepared to go to Injune and look after those good people there.

We certainly hope we can get someone half as good as Scott Ferguson. If we do, I am sure the community will be very happy, but they are very disappointed at the moment that they have lost him over what they see as a workplace issue. That situation is probably a result of this government's attitude that it supports the union movement more than doctors, and I do not think that is fair at all.

I want to talk about the stamp duty problems that have been around for quite a long time but which Treasury has not been pursuing. When someone sells a business, the person who buys the business pays the stamp duty. After the person sell the business, away they go. What we are finding is that some people who buy a business and who are supposed to pay the stamp duty do not pay it. Then several years later—say, four, five or six years later—the person who sold the business is being tapped on the shoulder and told, 'You owe us \$24,000' or 'You owe us \$16,000' or whatever the case may be. But the people are unaware that they owe the money—well, they do not owe the money. The reality is the person who bought the business should have paid that stamp duty and did not.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr HOBBS: That is absolutely right. They should have done all that. That is the situation. That is what happens. We have two cases of that at the moment. People have shot through and then they have to chase the person who has sold the business. It is most unsatisfactory. I think Treasury should put a bigger effort into chasing the person who has not paid, rather than trying to find the easy target—the good person who has sold the business.

We need to improve the operation and levels of subsidy available under the state government drought support schemes. We have had lots of unsatisfactory situations there. In particular, when people have had stock away on agistment and had their stock forced out from agistment on to a stock route, they find that when they come back from the stock route to home they are not eligible for assistance. It is just not reasonable. They are still 500 kilometres from home, or whatever the case may be, whether they are on a stock route or whether they are agisting on someone's property. I think the guidelines are a bit too severe and there is no common sense here. I certainly encourage the department of primary industries in particular to look at that with a bit of heart to ensure that those people who do find themselves in those situations are eligible for that assistance.

We need to increase the subsidies paid to air service operators on regulated and subsidised routes—and also coach services. In some areas, we have had great success in increasing the capacity of some of those routes, particularly out my way where activity in the gas industry has meant that a lot more people are using those air services. That is great, but the reality is that subsidised services are still required for airlines and buses and there seems to be a hold-up at the moment. We certainly hope new contracts are delivered as soon as possible for these new air service operators on regulated and subsidised routes.

I spoke to the minister about this the other day. There is a problem with one of the routes out there and I ask the minister to talk to some people in relation to that issue. There are some safety concerns and we hope to resolve those issues. Then in due course when the government does announce those contracts there will be a good service.

Mr Lucas: Are you talking about the airport or the operator?

Mr HOBBS: The operator. I understand that the time before the contracts for the air service operators are approved has been extended so they have to wait another couple of months before they get approval.

Mr Lucas: I am not aware of any safety issue. You give me the details.

Mr HOBBS: All right.

We need to ensure that electricity providers like Ergon reduce connection times. There have been some very big delays with connection times and that is not satisfactory. Whole new developments are starting up, but they are being told that there will be a 12-month delay before the power can be put on. The building sites are there ready to go. They are sewered and the bitumen is down but they just cannot get the power there. So we have to try a bit harder, and I believe there are ways.

Energex has a better method than Ergon. It uses private contractors to hook up a lot of its work, provided they do it correctly—and I am sure they do. Then there just needs to be an inspection, or it could even be certified by the contractor and that would be okay. But we cannot have blocks of land being developed and ready to go but then people having to wait a long time for that connection.

We have a really serious situation with trying to retain the flying obstetrician and gynaecology service based in Roma. It is my strong belief that that service will be dramatically cut—in fact, it will probably be wiped out completely. It has been a wonderful service. Those planes have travelled over the whole of western and northern Queensland. They did service two areas—Roma and Longreach—but the one in Longreach was moved to Mount Isa. It was basically a failure up there and did not work—as everybody knew would happen. It was only moved there for political purposes at the time.

Bit by bit, the specialists from the Roma service have had to reduce the number of towns they go to. Of course now the government says that, because the number of towns they go to has been reduced, the service is not viable. The reality is that there is plenty of work out there. The specialists along the coastal strips cannot meet the needs of these people. There would be one hell of a fight out there if that service were taken away. Lives would be lost.

In education, the government has promised to support chaplaincy services. We are having a bit of difficulty getting money through for those. Even though we have had a commitment from the government at different times, we need to make sure that occurs.

Mr Lucas: What about the wheelchair accessible taxis I have made available to places like your electorate? What about a view on that?

Mr HOBBS: As a matter of fact, I do have something here on that. I did start to talk to you about this the other day when we got interrupted.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Perhaps the member could direct the view he has through the chair.

Mr HOBBS: I would be happy to do that, Mr Deputy Speaker. As a matter of fact, I was talking with Keith Southern at St George. Towns with a population under 3,000 or 4,000—and I have forgotten the figure—do not seem to be able to get that full subsidy. I think the minister was saying that they get the full amount of money, and I think it is \$40,000 or whatever the case may be—

Mr Lucas: \$80,000.

Mr HOBBS: I think these guys get less than that. The reality is that they cannot get a new vehicle. Because they are part of a smaller population they have to pay more. The minister said that that was not the case. I have to follow that through, which I will do. I will come back to the minister on that one.

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr HOBBS: The Roma one is going okay as far as I am aware. Keith Southern has a problem in St George. We will look more closely into that.

I mentioned before the issue of housing. Obviously there is a problem across-the-board with housing—community housing, public housing, crisis housing, government employee housing, disability housing and aged-person housing. We all want more. I know that the minister always tends to blame the Commonwealth government and the Commonwealth government tends to blame the state government. At the end of the day, the houses are not being built. We need to work a bit harder to ensure that those areas of the state that have a backlog catch up. I put in a plug for my area that we need a bit of a catch-up in terms of housing.

The funding for roads is another issue that is particularly important. There is a road in the eastern part of the electorate—the Kogan to Warra Road—that certainly needs upgrading. We have had a lot of serious accidents and some deaths on that road. Auburn Road, the Tara-Surat Development Road and many others need upgrading. There never seems to be enough road funding. We have to try harder. We seem to have been able to do more with less when we were in government. I think the government has to try to spread that money a bit better.

There is a need for assistance for regional airports. Roma airport comes to mind. A huge amount of traffic is coming into there now. Those airports have been virtually given over to the councils by the Commonwealth government. The state government does provide some assistance to airports occasionally. We have to keep those airports at a high standard. In airports that are situated in blacksoil areas the tarmacs tend to move. We need to try to assist them in some way. We need to work out where the money is going to come from. Money is certainly required for that purpose.

The increase in the stamp duty on the sale of vehicles that the Treasurer announced is pretty unfair. Obviously we do not think it is a good idea. I am not sure what the figure is likely to be for trucks. It may mean another \$12,000 or \$24,000 or whatever the case may be. It adds up. I know the government put the spin on it that this revenue is going to help mental health patients. We all want to support those people. I do not think we should try to rip people off. I think that is what is happening in this particular instance.

We need more Child Safety staff in Roma and a new building out there that meets workplace health and safety standards. This is an important area. I am sure they need more staff to cope with the need that is out there. There are child safety issues in most areas. Rail freight has increased—

Time expired.

Ms LEE LONG (Tablelands—ONP) (5.23 pm): I rise to speak in the cognate debate on the appropriation bills and the clean coal bill. The 2007-08 Queensland budget of some \$32 billion includes some positive projects in my electorate. These include new infrastructure, progress on existing projects and a range of statewide initiatives which will also benefit the tablelands.

Possibly the single largest new project for the tablelands in this budget is the planning for a massive upgrade at the Lotus Glen Correctional Facility which is expected to begin this financial year. The planning alone will cost an estimated \$3 million, which, I believe, is an indication of just how big this project will be when it is underway. Not only will this be a massive construction job for the tablelands but there will also be a significant number of jobs once the expansion has been completed.

There is also funding for two new fire stations—one at Malanda of \$600,000 and the other at Yungaburra of \$601,000. The existing stations are old and in poor condition and fall far short of current requirements. I thank the Minister for Emergency Services for his continued support for the tablelands.

I also take this opportunity to remind the minister of his commitment for a new fire station in Mareeba by 2012. I urge him to bring that date forward because the present station cannot cope with the large new engines stationed there and growing staff needs. More importantly is its location, near a T-junction on an increasingly busy main street. Every time a fire engine has to park in the station it has to reverse across two lanes of traffic right next to a T-junction with no trained stop and go personnel to control traffic. I am advised that there have already been a number of near misses and this spot is certainly an accident waiting to happen. I believe that there is a duty of care in this case.

Probably the only building in Atherton which still has tarpaulins over the roof due to damage from Cyclone Larry is the Atherton Fire Station. I understand that the whole roof needs to be replaced and this should be done urgently.

There is ongoing funding in this budget of \$700,000 for the early stages of the \$10.2 million project to build a new police station and watch-house at Mareeba. It will be good to see this project get underway, but a concern that has been put to me about this project is that the proposed new watch-house is no larger than the existing one, which is inadequate and already too small to cope with the current requirements let alone cater for future needs. Perhaps this could receive some consideration before works actually commence on the project. This is being done jointly with the new courthouse project to create a justice precinct. The courthouse has funding in this year's budget of \$3.808 million. The total project cost is \$5.3 million. This is a major project not just for Mareeba but for the entire tablelands area and we thank the ministers for their support.

With regard to education, there are budget allocations for my electorate. There is \$300,00 for the rectification of the Mareeba State School oval which will be welcome. There is also \$300,000 for the Malanda State School for replacement of soakage trenches and a new treatment plant and \$608,000 for the Mareeba State High School for oval maintenance and completion of its covered stage assembly area. These are all very welcome and I thank the minister for this support.

I would like to mention that a number of high schools on the tablelands are working hard to better meet the future needs of their students by addressing vocational needs not only through TAFE but also by specialising in certain areas. The Ravenshoe High School has a dairy facility which has, for many years now, been able to teach its students not only the finer points of the dairying industry, such as animal husbandry, but also pasture management, water efficiency in irrigation, efficiency in the application of fertilisers, fencing and aspects involving machinery and so on. These are all extremely valuable skills being passed on to these students.

This budget should have enough flexibility to address the pressing need to replace Ravenshoe High School's dairy, which has been in use since about 1935. As members can imagine, it is badly in need of replacement. In the same vein, Malanda High School is aiming at developing a veterinary science stream, while Atherton High School is going down the engineering track. I believe it is to the credit of these schools that they are so proactive. I urge the minister to capitalise on the enthusiasm of these school communities and fund them appropriately. There will be a tremendous return on such an investment.

In the Budget Strategy and Outlook paper there is recognition of the need to ramp up vocational education and training. This is true, as there is an urgent need for trades training, including apprenticeships. We are not training anywhere near enough tradespeople across all trades. There need to be more incentives for qualified tradespeople to take on young apprentices. When an employer can get a \$4,000 subsidy for a 12-month traineeship as opposed to \$4,000 or \$5,000 for a four-year apprenticeship it is easy to see how unfair the system has become.

In the area of health, it is disappointing that there is very little by way of specific allocations for the tablelands in this budget. There is \$47,000 to complete an \$800,000 refurbishment at the Mareeba Hospital. That is the funding despite there being a number of needs on the Atherton Tableland which are becoming more and more pressing as time passes and as the population grows. These include the urgent need for a new hospital at Atherton. The existing one is decades past its use-by date. Some buildings are heading for a century in service, including the old morgue which has been in a disgraceful condition. Recent revamps and overhauls are simply bandaid solutions. The time has come for a large new facility with more doctor positions and better equipment which will in turn attract more specialists to the area.

The Health portfolio has increased in this budget by 12 per cent to \$7.15 billion. With a total figure of that magnitude, one would think that further funding could have come to the Tablelands electorate. This would have, for example, capitalised on Atherton Hospital's fortunate position regarding access to specialists. There are doctors in its local community who are qualified above and beyond what might be expected for a hospital of Atherton's size. It is one of the main reasons it has been able to serve such a strong role as a training hospital in cooperation with James Cook University. It is essential that this specialist level of service is protected and continued, and the time has come for that to take place via a new, more efficient, purpose-built facility. More immediately, a clear need has been identified for at least a four-slice scanner for diagnostic and other purposes. Also with the budget surplus the government should explain why it has not done more to address the growing problem of aged and frail patients occupying acute care beds in our hospitals. For example, the Herberton Hospital serves extremely well as an aged and frail care facility. I have urged the minister to fund its expansion so that the acute care beds in Cairns Base, Mareeba and Atherton hospitals which are occupied by people awaiting placement can actually be freed up.

Atherton will also share in funding of \$2 million over the next three years for an initiative aimed at nursing and allied healthcare staff working with elderly people accessing emergency departments at Atherton, Cairns and Mackay hospitals. This program is intended to boost the confidence of older people and their families in managing chronic health issues. In the Capital Statement Budget Paper No. 3 under renal services I note there is financial provision for a three-chair dialysis unit funded for the Redland Hospital at just \$200,000. A recent community campaign for a similar sized dialysis facility at Mareeba Hospital which raised more than \$160,000 from the community was advised by Queensland Health that it would not go ahead. This does not seem fair. In the Health MPS on page 1-38 there is discussion about health technology funding for which some \$53 million is allocated. Ophthalmic surgery at Mareeba was stopped after the health department refused to replace an \$80,000 machine. Surely in that \$53 million there is room to replace this device and restore ophthalmic surgery to the tablelands and once again take the burden off Cairns.

The difficulty caused by a lack of Australian trained doctors and other medical specialists continues. In the Health Ministerial Portfolio Statement details are given on page 1-10 about medical scholarships and additional medical graduates. While we have some overseas trained doctors who are helping to fill the acute shortfall, the only real long-term solution is to train more of our own youth in those vital fields. It is not only doctors who are in short supply but also public dentists. In Atherton the waiting list is in the order of seven years and in Mareeba it is around four years. That is horrific! In this budget the Innisfail Hospital, which services a large part of my electorate, is funded this year to the tune of \$3.67 million to complete its \$41.7 million redevelopment. This redevelopment has been ongoing for some years now and it will be good to see it completed.

A major amount listed in the budget for roadworks is an allocation of some \$9.3 million to be spent this financial year on widening, to a minimum of an eight-metre sealed cap, of the Kennedy Highway south-west of Mount Garnet. There is a further amount of another \$1.5 million for work in the next financial year. The widening of this road is particularly important due to the growth of mining in the area, which has placed a much larger number of heavy transports, including triples, on to the road. Their size and weight means that it is physically difficult, if not impossible, for them to manoeuvre easily on a single-lane bitumen highway to make room for other traffic. This is enough of a problem for locals, but it is even worse for the increasing number of tourists from the south or overseas who often have caravans and have no familiarity with sharing narrow roads with extremely large heavy transports. For example, if a driver of an average sized four-by-four towing a caravan thinks that slowing down and pulling off the road to make way for a truck is difficult, try to imagine how much more difficult it is for a truck to do that—to slow down up to 100 tonnes or more of mass and to control up to three trailers stretching back 40 metres or so. The existing situation is reportedly causing many close shaves and a duty of care to widen the roads is badly needed for everyone's benefit, and I thank the minister for this funding.

Tablelanders are anxiously awaiting the start of construction work on the upgrade of the Kuranda Range Road which cannot happen soon enough, but we are still waiting months after the due date for the latest federal approvals. There is no question about the urgent need for this upgrade. It is needed to cope with the phenomenal growth rates of the far north, both in Cairns and on the tablelands. As Cyclone Larry demonstrated, an all-weather escape route from the coast is required, and this was then reinforced recently by the tsunami scare. Given the size of the Main Roads capital expenditure budget of \$3 billion, I would have liked to have seen further funding for a number of other important road projects

which are also critical for my electorate. These projects include the completion of sealing of the Mareeba-Chillagoe Road, the completion of sealing of the Herberton-Irvinebank Road and the completion of sealing on the Upper Barron Road. Rural and regional areas are keen on taking up options such as cycling for as many transport needs as possible. However, on already narrow roads with rough edges, poor shoulders and increasing amounts of heavy traffic you are taking your life in your hands by trying to cycle from one town to the other. Additional cycle lanes would make this healthy green option a far more attractive option for many Tablelanders.

I now turn to public housing, an area where this year's budget includes \$500 million to build 1,700 new public housing units. This is an area which should never have reached the level of crisis which it is now at, and I urge the minister to recognise that public housing problems are especially acute in the tablelands and in the far north where some people are waiting up to eight years. There are the specific needs of the Indigenous Australians in my electorate and the needs of the wider community, both of which need to be addressed.

I now turn to areas of primary industries and fisheries. The budget allocation for DPI&F for 2007-08 is a paltry \$332.5 million. It is a 4.4 per cent increase over the previous year, but it is a pathetic level of investment in a part of our economy that produces a major portion of our export earnings. According to the latest prospectus update on the DPI&F web site from March this year, it indicates the estimated gross value of production for primary industries for 2006-07 at a massive \$10.62 billion. This is near enough to a third of the state's entire budget and is second only to the booming mining sector. Despite the impact of drought, Cyclone Larry, Cyclone Monica and corrupt international markets, our primary producers have increased production by two per cent. They are decent, hardworking Queenslanders who deserve much more support and respect than they are given. I also note that the budget papers include as a biosecurity case study the rapid response to sugarcane smut. It is a challenge to understand why this was used as a case study as it was an abysmal failure. Smut is now expected to affect the entire sugar industry and strip some \$400 million from the production of sugar over the next seven years, yet the department uses it as a case study into rapid response. That highlights how pathetic this government's support is for primary industries. Its entire departmental budget is less than the amount one industry will lose from a disease which this government was incapable of keeping out of Queensland.

Dairy farmers continue to leave the industry, mainly because the Dairyfarmers Organisation continues to pay them a pittance of around 32c per litre, which is equivalent to what they were being paid around 15 years ago but costs of course have increased far beyond 1992 levels. What wage earner would work today for 1992 wages? None, I dare say. Also detailed in the budget papers is a particular issue facing DPI&F which is the review of the east coast inshore fin fishery, including fisheries in the Torres Strait. This review will have widespread impacts on the availability of some of our most popular species of fish, including mackerel, and the impact will not be confined to trawler operators but will flow downstream to fish wholesalers, handlers, processors right through to the local fish and chip shops.

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Ms LEE LONG: We get our mackerel from up in the Torres Strait thank you very much, but not for too much longer I might add.

Mr O'Brien: Rubbish!

Ms LEE LONG: I was up in the Torres Strait just recently and I was going to have a fish and chip meal because I thought it was going to be local produce. I said, 'Is this caught locally?' They said, 'No, we import it from down south.' Can you believe that?

Mr O'Brien: Why didn't you catch your own?

Ms LEE LONG: I would have loved to have caught my own, but we just were not there long enough. I know that people in my electorate are concerned that many will be forced to use poorer quality, imported substitutes. I urge the minister to ensure that all Queenslanders and Queensland businesses do not suffer as a result of this review.

The Energy budget papers outline ongoing allocations of some \$10 million for a range of upgrades, minor works and modifications at Barron Gorge, Kareeya, Koombooloomba and Windy Hill power generation facilities. However, the desperate shortage of water and the resultant likely shortage in electricity generating capacity in the south-east has highlighted the longstanding hydro-electric generating options of the Tully-Millstream project. This project would produce some 500 to 600 megawatts of clean, green hydro-power that could be fed into the statewide grid, and there would be no need to burn one ounce of coal, clean or otherwise.

The potential of the tremendous rivers of the far north goes further than that, however. Members may be surprised to learn that hydrological, civil engineering and cost estimate works were carried out on a huge hydro-electric generation scheme on the mighty Herbert River way back in 1962. Since then, governments from both sides of politics have just dropped the ball. Instead, there is a never-ending appetite from the royalties delivered by the coal industry, despite its continual pouring of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. Indeed, we have just heard how our next baseload power station will, yet again, be coal fired, which will put more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

My electorate contains the Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Area, which is fed by Tinaroo Dam. This year's budget includes an allocation of an ongoing \$798,000 to Sunwater for refurbished and enhanced water supply schemes.

The north has higher and more reliable rainfall and many large perennial rivers. Among those who support the climate change theory, there is an expectation that while we may get fewer rainy periods they will be more intense. The end result will be that we will remain the wettest part of the country. Whether that happens or whether our rains continue in their traditional patterns, we have a growing need for more dams. Fresh rain that runs into creeks and streams and straight out to sea does no-one any good. The lessons from the south-east are clear: catch it, store it, and use it wisely.

In that vein, I am glad to see work beginning on the Nullinga Dam study, which was announced in last year's budget. This project needs a commitment to construct. As Brisbane and surrounds have learnt, any delay in putting water storage in place can be catastrophic.

I welcome the development of the MaMu canopy walk in my electorate. As detailed in this year's budget papers, a \$10 million construction contract has been let and the first sod turned. This is another means of capitalising on the natural resources of the Tablelands electorate. This project is anticipated to bring an estimated 200,000 extra tourists annually up the Palmerston Highway and on to the Atherton Tableland.

In relation to Child Safety, the new offices in Atherton are now open. However, I have been advised that some areas of the tablelands that have high proportions of Indigenous families have special needs and require more intensive support. I urge the minister to examine the establishment of 'support spokes' from the service hub in Cairns.

In this year's budget there is funding of \$77,000 for the Mareeba Transition Centre. This is proving to be a success, with no adverse impact on the local community. The redevelopment of the Lake Eacham day use area is also listed in this year's budget, with \$562,000 allocated to complete the \$1.052 million project.

In this year's budget we have received significant commitments in some areas, but there is always a need for more funding across a range of needs.

With the time that I have left, I will briefly speak on the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill 2007. This bill is locking Queensland into an agreement based on a technology that does not exist to protect an industry that is pouring some \$1.5 billion in royalties into its coffers each year. It is of great concern to hear a government say that significant public money is to be spent coping with carbon emissions, greenhouse gases and global warming.

We are regulated and legislated in every aspect of our lives to try to save the planet from this supposed global warming. The same government that forces all of these impositions upon us then turns around and spends our money on keeping the coalmines open and the power station smoke stacks pumping.

Time expired.

Interruption.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS; ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. RJ MICKEL (Logan—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (5.43 pm): I advise honourable members that the House can continue to meet past 6.30 pm this day. The House can break for dinner at 6.30 pm and resume its sitting at 7.30 pm. The order of business shall then be government business followed by a 30-minute adjournment debate.

CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed.

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (5.44 pm): I am delighted by the intervention of the Minister for State Development.

Congratulations to the Treasurer and Deputy Premier on an excellent budget for Queensland, which will help build Queensland's future. This will benefit all Queenslanders and, in particular, residents in the Ferry Grove electorate.

Schools and other vital infrastructure to help Queensland cope with unprecedented population increases are the central feature of the state government budget for the Ferny Grove area. The government has allocated more than \$500 million to build and upgrade schools and training facilities across the state. That is vital if we are to keep up with the increasing numbers of people who are moving to Queensland each week.

Education is particularly pertinent to an electorate like Ferny Grove where many new families are choosing to settle. I am pleased to announce that, in this year's budget, over \$600,000 has been allocated to the Ferny Grove electorate for important school building maintenance work such as reroofing and repainting, traffic improvements in and around schools, classroom upgrades and the provision of school bus shelters.

Education funding for schools in the Ferny Grove electorate includes: \$75,000 for reroofing at Samford State School; \$65,000 for traffic improvements to set-down areas at Samford State School; \$50,000 for reticulation at Patrick's Road State School; \$50,000 for repainting at Ferny Hills State School; \$46,000 to provide before and after school care and vacation care for school-age and under school-age children at eight local schools; \$45,000 to establish enhanced physical activity and healthy eating opportunities at St Andrews catholic school; \$40,000 for repainting at Mitchelton State School; \$39,000 to Mount Nebo State School for the provision of a multifunctional learning area; \$35,000 for reroofing at Ferny Grove State School; \$33,000 to Ferny Grove State School for the Feeling Great Activity Centre; \$30,000 to Mitchelton State High School for the hospitality kitchen; \$20,000 for maintenance at Ferny Grove State High School; \$20,000 for repainting at Mitchelton State High School; \$20,000 to remodel pedestrian signals at Ferny Hills State School; and \$10,000 for repainting at Mount Nebo State School.

Training

Within the greater Brisbane area, \$3.63 million has been allocated to provide additional training places to meet skills shortages in the region, at a total cost of \$24.42 million. Depending on demand, 6,630 additional training places can be allocated to the region by 2010.

Family members living in the Ferny Grove electorate will also benefit from the following: \$22.84 million on the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, targeting employment assistance specifically at disadvantaged Queenslanders living in Brisbane and creating 2,930 jobs in 2007-08; and \$4.64 million to provide training for disadvantaged Queenslanders living in the greater Brisbane region to improve their skills and employment prospects, at a total cost of \$13.92 million over three years.

Health services

A record budget of \$7.15 billion will continue to drive the reforms of the Health Action Plan that are improving Queensland's health system. This means better mental health services, more hospital beds, and record numbers of doctors and nurses. In addition, \$635 million will be spent building world-class infrastructure that will take our health system into the next decade. A sum of \$50 million across the state has been allocated to purchase new health technology equipment, including patient monitoring systems and other life-saving apparatus. A sum of \$2 million has been allocated to operate a 24/7 statewide Health Contact Centre for health information, referral and triage services, at a total cost of \$8.76 million. A sum of \$69,000 will be provided to community organisations under the Home and Community Care Program, which provides support and maintenance services for eligible people at home to prevent early admission to residential care.

Police and emergency services

In 2007-08 across Queensland, the government will be recruiting 250 new ambulance staff as part of a \$50 million injection to the Queensland Ambulance Service to meet growing demand for services.

Public safety is very important. The budget includes provision for 200 extra police officers. This brings the total number of sworn officers in the Queensland Police Service to a record 9,928 by October 2008. This will maintain Queensland's police to population ratio at better than the national average.

A sum of \$510,000 will be provided to continue the work of the Australian Child Offender Register, which is a national database for the management of offenders who commit serious offences against children. A sum of \$15.65 million is allocated for the commissioning of over 140 new ambulances across the state to replace older vehicles.

If we get the correct infrastructure in place today, we will not be struggling to accommodate our residents' needs tomorrow. In the area of Transport and Main Roads, the state government has commenced a detailed study into the future transport network needs of western and north-western Brisbane in the areas surrounding Ipswich and Caboolture. The total cost of the project is \$16.17 million and \$7.39 million has been allocated for concept planning in 2007-08.

Work is continuing on the Ferny Grove railway line duplicating the track between Mitchelton and Keperra, constructing new stations at Grovely and Oxford Park and noise reduction barriers. That work is part of an allocation of \$274.78 million to upgrade the Queensland Rail network as part of the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan, at a total cost of \$702.57 million.

Over \$2.2 million has been allocated for maintenance work on main roads in the Ferny Grove electorate. That includes \$900,000 to complete the installation of a guardrail on Mount Glorious Road—15.61 kilometres—at a total cost of \$1 million funded from the Queensland government's Safer Roads Sooner program. There is an allocation of \$687,000 to complete the bitumen chip reseal between Browns Road and the Pine Rivers shire boundary on Mount Glorious Road at a total cost of \$1.17 million. There is an allocation of \$470,000 to complete drainage improvement on Mount Glorious Road—12 kilometres—at a total cost of \$500,000 also funded from the Queensland government's Safer Roads Sooner program. Finally, there is an allocation of \$40,000 to construct bikeways at various locations in the Pine Rivers Shire, with a total state government contribution of \$355,527.

The government is undertaking an unprecedented expansion of urban water infrastructure with the \$9 billion south-east Queensland water grid. Once completed, the water grid will not only secure more water for the region but also enable water to be moved to areas of most need. There is \$81 million for the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme, which offers rebates for water-saving devices such as rainwater tanks, washing machines, shower heads, dual-flush toilets and pool covers across south-east Queensland and the Darling Downs at a total cost of \$175 million. Additional infrastructure funding in the electorate includes \$1.79 million to establish a new high-voltage electricity feeder to Samford and \$225,000 to assist with the Samford parkland stage 1A development.

More support than ever is being provided to help Queensland families and their communities. This year's budget announced a record Queensland housing assistance package of \$719 million, including a massive \$479 million house building program. In addition, more support than ever before is being provided to help Queensland families and communities. The Ferny Grove electorate will benefit from \$651,000 allocated to libraries across the Pine Rivers area, \$482,000 to assist people with a disability and their families to live and participate in the community, \$286,000 for supporting young people through the education system and \$263,000 to implement a program that addresses the needs of Indigenous young people.

This is a fantastic budget that helps to build a stronger Queensland. Although I look forward to serving the people of Queensland through my new role as Minister for Mines and Energy, I will continue my strong advocacy for the people of the Ferny Grove electorate. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy—ALP) (5.53 pm): It is a pleasure for me to rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill which is now before the House—a bill that delivers the 10th budget of the Beattie government and a budget that again is focused on those issues that are important to the people of Queensland. This budget keeps our state economy strong, providing job security, quality hospitals and medical services, quality education for our youth, housing for those who cannot afford to buy their own home, assistance for those with a disability and those one in five adult Queenslanders who have a mental illness. Yes, it is a good Labor budget.

Given the time allowed to me to speak to this Appropriation Bill, it is an impossible task for me to cover in detail all of the budget papers. The best I can do for the people I represent is to identify those parts of the budget papers that I know would be of interest to the people of Fitzroy and central Queensland. It does not matter where central Queenslanders work or live, each and every one of them understands that quality infrastructure is essential to economic growth and job creation. State government expenditure on capital includes building new facilities and upgrading facilities to meet the increased demand created by population growth and other demographic influences.

Capital outlays also have a significant impact on employment, contributing directly to the provision of jobs. In this budget, capital spending will exceed \$14 billion. That is up by about 15 per cent on last year. But most importantly, around 101,000 Queenslanders have a full-time job. More than 50 per cent of capital expenditure will occur outside the Brisbane statistical division. It is important for people in regional and rural Queensland to understand that, because too often they say, 'It all happens in the south-east corner.'

Of the \$3.049 billion allocated for programs funded by the Department of Main Roads, I have identified around \$130 million in the budget papers that covers expenditure on projects that are yet to start or projects that are currently underway and some that may have already been completed but, as yet, the bills have to be finalised. Whatever the case, the dollars are there in this budget for expenditure including \$3.86 million to repair and overlay a section of the Burnett Highway just south of Dululu, with another \$5 million to be provided; \$165,000 to commence the sealing of shoulders to improve road safety between German Creek Mine and Middlemount; and \$275,000 for the reconstruction of a section of the Dysart-Middlemount Road south of Dysart.

Although annually millions of dollars are spent on upgrading roads in and around central Queensland, I have received some calls from constituents expressing disappointment at the lack of a budget commitment for the provision of overtaking lanes on the Capricorn Highway west of Rockhampton out to the coalfields. While the Department of Main Roads in central Queensland is aware of the traffic volume on this highway and the high number of crashes, there seems to be no support from within the department's central office in Brisbane. Given that we have put a lot faith in the system to deliver what are common-sense road improvements and nothing has been offered to improve traffic flow

and road safety, I want to put the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Main Roads on notice. The workers of central Queensland and their families are not impressed. There will be a concentrated effort put into lobbying for a funding commitment for six to eight sets of overtaking lanes between Rockhampton and Emerald, with priority locations between Westwood and the Leichardt Highway intersection as well as between Blackwater and Comet. I have had discussions with Main Roads officers in the region and understand that the cost of each set of overtaking lanes is around the \$2 million mark. The risk factor on this road determines the need for better overtaking opportunities for general traffic as well as catering for increasing heavy vehicle or wide load movements of mining equipment and housing units.

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

Leave granted.

With the sons and daughters of Fitzroy electorate constituents attending as many as sixty schools in the area, I have a good understanding of the difficulties facing teachers and students in the small isolated schools to the larger schools in the more populated areas.

No-one would deny that individuals who complete school are more likely to find employment than those who do not.

So we have an obligation to our youth to provide them with the best opportunity to get a quality education.

This budget has allocated more than \$400,000 for targeted school building maintenance, playground equipment and sporting facilities.

Blackwater State High School, Blackwater North, Bluff, Dysart, Middlemount, Mount Morgan Central, Ridglands, Valkyrie, and Baralaba schools have all been named as recipients of budget dollars.

Every permanent teacher working two days or more per week in state schools and TAFE institutes will be provided with a laptop computer to assist them in lesson planning, the digital presentation of lessons, student assessments and reporting.

A concern for people living in rural and regional Queensland is access to health services and I am pleased to be a member of a government which is seeking to ensure that the high standard of health that exists today can be maintained into the future.

There is no hiding from the fact that our government took its eye off the ball and allowed health services to slip below a standard that meets the expectations of the community.

Despite the huge problems that we were facing in government, we did what a Labor Government would be expected to—rolled up our sleeves and put in place an action plan that is delivering to Queenslanders quality health services and facilities.

The health budget for the 2007-08 financial year has a 12% increase on last year and gets \$224.9 million new funding as well as \$132 million capital funding.

This means that the State's health budget has now increased to \$7.151 billion.

Between June 2005 and April 2007 the following have joined our health workforce:

- nine-hundred-and-ninety-nine additional doctors
- 3,157 additional nurses
- 1,126 allied health professionals

This budget package commits \$215 million additional funding to improve wages and conditions, \$5.9 million as addition funding to create more positions for medical graduates.

The budget papers confirm a \$1.31 million allocation to complete the construction of the new Private Practice clinic in the grounds of the Moura Hospital to support two medical officers in providing a private practice and service the hospital.

I understand that tenders were called on 16th May and close 13th June. The tender review ends 4th July, with construction to begin soon after. Completion of the project is scheduled for March or April 2008.

I am looking forward to this project getting under way without further delay and I say to those managing this project that I, and the community of Moura, don't want any more excuses.

Rural Fire Brigade members play a major role in the protection of property and lives during the bushfire season, so I welcome the ongoing commitment of Labor Governments to improving equipment and training for our valuable dedicated volunteers.

I will be talking to the Emergency Services Minister, Pat Purcell, to make sure that all brigades have access to the \$2.1 million to be spent on the development of skills-communications and other safety equipment.

\$3.9 million has been set aside for thirty-six new rural fire fighting vehicles and fire fighting trailers across the State.

The people of the Fitzroy electorate are aware of my grassroots connection with them and my commitment to workplace health and safety, in particular coalmine health and safety.

After years of talking to mining Ministers in Government, I was absolutely ecstatic to hear the current Minister, the Honourable Geoff Wilson, announce a series of unannounced audits at a range of coal and metalliferous mines across the State.

Having worked in the industry, underground and open cut, I was well aware of the bad practice of the Mines Inspectorate in giving mine operators a week's notice before turning up for a safety inspection—or audit as they now call it.

It was nothing more than a joke to have mine operators put more effort into safety because the Mines Inspectorate was to come on site.

In this year's budget, extra funds have been allocated for mine safety rehabilitation and exploration.

\$830,000 over three years, \$3 million over four years, will go towards the continued implementation of recommendations from the review of the Queensland Mines Inspectorate.

The rehabilitation of the Mount Morgan open cut mine and surrounding lease area is an important issue for the State and the community of Mount Morgan.

\$4.6 million has been allocated.

The funds include the construction of a second lime dosing water treatment unit which will complement the existing treatment plant and boost the treatment rate of the mines contaminated water.

I thank the Mines Minister, Geoff Wilson for responding so quickly to my representations and the representations of the Wowan Dululu Land Care Group and Mount Morgan Shire Council.

The water treatment facility will treat contaminated water from the open cut pit through the process of lime dosing and release treated water into the Dee River, lowering the level of water in the open cut, reducing the long-term probability of an uncontrolled spill event or failure of man-made walls within the mine site.

This new money is a significant investment in the future of Mount Morgan and surrounding area and eases concerns of a potential uncontrolled release of high levels of metal contamination into the Dee River and will play a significant role in the rehabilitation of the Mount Morgan mine site.

The State's Police Service numbers continue to grow under the Labor Government's leadership, with the Queensland Police Service operating budget to rise \$137 million, or 10.5% on last year's allocation.

This Government has increased police numbers each year since coming into office and the funding for 200 additional police officers will see police numbers increase to 9,928 sworn paid positions by October 2008.

This means that Queensland police numbers to population ratios are above the national average as promised.

An additional 167 civilians will be employed to perform administrative and support functions, releasing sworn police officers to do police work.

Mount Morgan is yet again a winner with \$1.1 million allocated to complete an upgrade of the town's police station, which will, in total, cost around \$1.28 million.

I understand that cost may be higher because of the heritage values of the building, but I can say that I have been advised that tenders will be called toward the end of July, with works expected to be finished by the end of this year.

Again, I would suggest that those in control of this project need to get on with it, as the upgrade was promised prior to the 2004 election for completion by the end of the term. Funds were allocated on the last budget, but progress has been slow and we really do need to complete this project.

One of the real achievements from this budget for the battlers of Queensland has been the allocation of a \$500 million five-year funding injection from the Queensland Future Growth Fund for social housing.

This means that over the next four years, Queensland will benefit from \$1.1 billion worth of housing for those who struggle to find affordable housing.

I congratulate Housing Minister, Robert Swarten, for his efforts in winning this new money for housing. We all on this side of the House know how passionate and committed he is on the matter of public housing and I know that we can look forward to some of that housing coming to our region.

In closing, I will make a quick comment on a number of budget factors which are important to us all.

For example, Queensland's AAA credit rating and persistent sound financial management is what the Beattie Government is about and because of our sound management of the State's finances, business investment is estimated to grow by 18%.

State taxes per head in 2007-08 are:

- Queensland: \$2,226
- NSW: \$2,510
- Victoria: \$2,229
- All states (excluding Queensland) \$2,357

The Queensland Ambulance Service collects \$128 million from the Community Ambulance Cover. This is 31% of the total budget of just over \$400 million for the first time.

We can expect an additional 250 ambulance officers, 140 new and replacement vehicles, 135 new defibrillators, 17 stations to be upgraded and three new stations to be built.

With this increase in funding for 250 new officer positions, the Minister can expect a renewed lobbying campaign for a service to be put into the Gracemere station.

Disability Services Queensland has, for the first time, passed the \$1.082 billion being allocated. This year's disability services budget is \$717 million, up 13% on last year, 371% in ten years and now provides funded services to 18,000 people with a disability, including a number in the Central Queensland region.

The state will provide an additional \$21.3 million over the next four years to enhance diversionary services to reduce the incidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people coming into the justice system.

\$3.77 million this year to expand youth justice conferencing.

Mr Speaker, housing is much more than a roof over your head and a safe place to store personal belongings.

With a booming economy and low unemployment and cashed up consumers looking to purchase new housing, it creates a high demand environment where people are prepared to spend to get what they want, which means land and housing prices rise substantially, often reaching unrealistic, inflated prices.

That is good for the people who want to sell and who can afford to buy, but one of the consequences of market-driven environments like housing is that it can and does put home ownership out of reach for people on low to medium incomes.

In fact, despite a booming economy, the great Australian dream of owning a home has never been more expensive.

We know that first home prices have skyrocketed over recent years with affordability being at the lowest levels for probably two decades or more.

Our Government recognises that it must be proactive in finding ways to ease the cost burden for first home buyers.

This year will see the first full year of implementation of the transfer duty cuts for first home buyers, which kicked off in January this year.

Building on that assistance in this year's budget is a fifty percent reduction in mortgage duty from 1 January 2008 and the complete abolition of this duty tax from 2009.

It may not seem a big deal to individual home purchasers, but across the state it will return \$435 million to home buyers. That is \$435 million in the pockets of Queenslanders.

Mr Speaker, Queensland is, in fact, Australia's prosperity and our future lies in water.

The good health of our population, food supply and environment depend on the good management and wise use of our water resource, given the potential for prolonged drought and long term climate change.

The future of Central Queensland in the medium to long term is dependant on the availability of water and that is why the community is looking to our Government to move with determination and commitment in bringing new water storages on line.

I welcome the funding allocated to progress water projects in our region, including Eden Bann and Rookwood Weirs and a dam on the Connors River.

While the funds are not significant this financial year, it will provide for planning and identification of the characteristics important for the siting of a water storage facility.

Hon. KW HAYWARD (Kallangur—ALP) (5.57 pm): It is an honour to rise in the parliament tonight as the member for Kallangur and speak to the Appropriation Bill 2007. This budget has real benefits for the residents of the Kallangur electorate, which is one of the fastest growing areas of Queensland. I am pleased to see that representations made by me on behalf of the residents of my electorate have been met. During the last state election I committed to work for a fire station to be located in Burpengary. That fire station will improve response times in the fast growing Burpengary and Narangba areas. I am pleased to see that \$2.32 million has been set aside to undertake the construction of a new fire station at Burpengary.

This year, a commitment was honoured with the opening of a new ambulance station at Narangba. I am pleased to note that the government will be recruiting 250 new ambulance staff across Queensland as part of a \$50 million injection to the Ambulance Service to meet growing demands. That recruitment will have a positive effect on the Kallangur electorate.

During the state election I also campaigned for the need for a police station at Burpengary to service the Burpengary and Narangba districts. An amount of \$2.5 million has been set aside to begin the construction of a new police station in Burpengary. I am pleased to see that work will commence. I am also pleased to see that funding will remain for the school based police officers at Morayfield State High School and Dakabin State High School. That practical policy promotes positive relationships between the school community and police.

As I have said before, the Kallangur electorate is a population growth area. An amount of \$1.85 million has been set aside to finalise stage 1 of the new Burpengary Meadows State School and to commence stage 2 planning of that school. That school had a successful opening at the beginning of this year. I congratulate the staff and the new parents of the school.

Funds have been set aside for classroom and building structures maintenance at the Dakabin State High School and the Dakabin State School. An amount of \$75,000 has been provided for a new school hall at Dakabin State School. Funds have been set aside for targeted maintenance at the Morayfield State High School and the Morayfield East State School. An amount of \$1.73 million is set aside for the Narangba Valley State School to complete stage 3 construction. That stage will have a total cost of \$2.57 million.

One of the major issues in the Kallangur electorate has been the need to upgrade the Bruce Highway to six lanes. That work commenced about seven years ago and has continued since. Many times during that period I have urged road users to show patience while using the highway. This is a massive project, mainly funded by the federal government and administered by the state through the Department of Main Roads. This budget provides \$98.688 million towards six-laning from Uhlmann Road, Burpengary to Caboolture, with a total budgeted cost of that project of \$183 million. Again, I urge road users to be patient while the construction is underway.

In the address-in-reply debate last November, I spoke of an election commitment to upgrade Morayfield Road from Gaffield Street to the Bruce Highway at Uhlmann Road connection. I am pleased to see that \$1.8 million has been set aside for the planning phase for the duplication of this piece of road from two to four lanes. Other projects on local roads funded in the budget include over \$196,000 for traffic signals on Station Road, Burpengary. Over \$43,000 in funding has been provided to fund pedestrian improvements at Burpengary Meadows State School. Over \$19,000 has been provided for intersection improvements on Oakey Flat Road, Morayfield, with a total state government contribution of \$50,000.

I have spoken about the upgrade of the Bruce Highway bordering the electorate of Kallangur and acknowledged the support for the project by the federal government. This budget recognises projects jointly supported with local councils in my electorate. Accordingly, \$24,000 has been provided to the Caboolture Shire Council to assist with the construction of public amenities at Harris Avenue, Narangba;

\$23,000 to upgrade public amenities at Buchanan Park, Burpengary; and \$651,000 allocated to libraries across the Pine Rivers area as part of an ongoing commitment to improve the stock of books in public libraries. These libraries are administered by the Pine Rivers Shire Council.

In an electorate like Kallangur, with its population growth, family support and child-care services are very much needed. Accordingly, \$28,000 is provided to support before-school, after-school and vacation care for school-age and under school-age children; \$351,000 to provide counselling and support for young people at risk of homelessness in Caboolture; and \$29,000 to provide parents limited hours of child care. Further, \$110,000 is provided to the Narangba Sport and Recreation Association to extend soccer fields, install lighting for soccer and Rugby League and fencing for baseball under the Minor Facilities Program, at a total cost of \$165,000.

The budget measures I have spoken about directly benefit the electorate of Kallangur. The Kallangur electorate is a great place to live. Thousands moving there can attest to that, and the result of the 2007 budget is that it is an even better place to live. The Kallangur electorate has been able to benefit from a strong Queensland economy. In fact, the budget papers report that growth in our economy is estimated to strengthen to a rate of 5.5 per cent compared to a national rate of 2.5 per cent. Importantly, Queensland will exceed national growth for the 11th successive year. This demonstrates that Queensland is the powerhouse of the Australian economy. The Queensland economy is forecast to grow by five per cent next year and again exceed growth nationally. Our state has a AAA credit rating, and the year average unemployment rate is estimated to fall to a 33-year low of four per cent this year and remain steady next year. Astonishingly, today the unemployment rate for Queensland is now 3.5 per cent.

This is a great budget—a Labor government budget strong on infrastructure development and focused on our state now and in the future. I commend the budget to the House.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.04 pm): I rise to speak in support of the appropriation bills and the clean coal technology bill. Having seen a number of budgets pass through this place and having seen the transition that Queensland has been through since I first came into this House, I can stand back and look at what this budget really is about in terms of continuing that process of transforming Queensland.

On page 12 of the Treasurer's budget speech I see the heading 'Investment in intellectual infrastructure'. I stand here very proudly as a member of a government that has a budget with that heading. It really does represent what we are about in this state now and how far Queensland has come, being so obviously and deliberately out there creating this investment in intellectual infrastructure because that is our future. Indeed, that is what I tell kids at my local schools. I say to them that they are not just in one little classroom, sitting out there in Coorparoo or Holland Park or Wellers Hill, but part of one big classroom—the global classroom, the classroom that connects them to the wider marketplace, jobs and value creation in the world today.

This is an element of this budget that really underpins everything that we are doing in this state and what this budget is about. We see in a macro sense that this is the way we are proceeding in this state. We see it transformed in a micro sense right back through to each of our own electorates. We see it in a macro sense, for example, in the focus on the prep year and the professional development of our teachers. As we know, prep year is now approaching its full age cohort, and \$50 million is provided in this budget to support that cohort coming through the system. With that, 192 new teachers and teacher aides will be employed across the state.

This is accompanied by the very significant commitment of \$70,000 to ensure that every Queensland state school teacher is wired to the future via a laptop computer that will accompany the teacher at school and at home and will provide the requisite range of support mechanisms to assist in their professional development and their capacity to research directly in their workplace by having online access wherever they are. This is an amazing development for Queensland schools, one which not long ago we could not have comprehended let alone see the reality of that today. Non-government schools will share in the benefits of this program with funding of \$7 million.

Skills development is such a key plank of our strategy that we also see the \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan starting to deliver results, with an increase in apprentices and trainees of 7.9 per cent compared to a decline in the rest of Australia of 1.8 per cent. These figures speak for themselves. In this year we will allocate \$17 million under this plan to create 4,250 new trades training places. This is one of the most significant needs that we have in this state.

One only has to travel to the regional areas and speak to anyone involved in industry to realise the skills shortages that are being experienced in the critical trades that support not only the mining industry but also the ancillary industries that are arising as a result of this mining boom. It is tremendous to see this very concrete flow-on to the rest of the industrial sector from this boom. We need skilled people to fill the positions.

All of this is indeed a fundamental construct of the Smart State Strategy. We see the results of this bearing fruit now. Half a billion dollars has been committed to date for that Smart State Strategy. In this budget a further \$100 million will be put into the Smart State Research and Development Fund. This, indeed, is enhancing our capacity not only in our traditional areas but also in our new areas and strengths—areas such as information technology, aviation, creative industries and biomedical research. These are areas that would not have even been contemplated when many of us were at school, but are now fields of endeavour that every school leaver is being advised by their careers officers within schools that they can train and get jobs in. We see our children now eyeing the jobs and benefits of these particular industries. Innovation and creativity are the keys to these changes.

That is one of the major macro areas that I will touch on. This cannot occur unless we also maintain the fundamentals in this state: a healthy economy with growth at 5.5 per cent in 2006-07 and a prediction of 5 per cent for 2007-08 compared to the rest of Australia at 2.75 per cent. We are certainly part of the engine, the powerhouse, for Australia and we will continue to be that here in Queensland. Unemployment consequently has remained low; the lowest indeed for 33 years. Queensland's AAA credit rating is being sustained and business investment is estimated to surge 18 per cent in 2006-07 and, indeed, the state's taxes per head in 2007-08 are still being maintained at a low level of \$2,226 per capita and it is pleasing to see that that is still lower than New South Wales and Victoria.

These are the main settings that are healthy and that will allow us to drive not only our old industries but also our new industries so effectively. As I said, these macro settings translate clearly and effectively into the micro settings of our electorates with more than \$500 million being allocated to build and upgrade schools and training facilities across the state. In my electorate of Greenslopes, this translates into \$366 million being invested over 23.2 million hours of vocational education and training in the region in 2007-08. Further, in relation to schools \$15,000 is targeted for maintenance of hard external surfaces at Cavendish Road State High School, \$30,000 is for high priority maintenance related to flooring at the Coorparoo State School, \$35,000 is for the RRR Program for repainting Holland Park State School and, similarly, \$35,000 is for the Marshall Road State School. I am pleased especially for Marshall Road State School. It was the subject of strenuous representations from myself and the school community. I am very glad that the government listened to our representations and that we are getting results. That flaky paint will be sorted very shortly, I hope. The amount of \$10,000 has also been allocated for priority maintenance related to flooring at Wellers Hill State School.

Police and emergency services is always a fundamental interest to our communities. I go around the Neighbourhood Watches with pleasure these days to hear on a continuing basis the reports from our very capable local police officers of the low crime rates in our areas. This can only be due to our Police Service becoming more effective. Each officer has more arms, more legs, more eyes and more brain power because of the technology, the intelligence systems and the equipment that they are using et cetera. We are keeping up with the allocation of police officers and facilities to do that.

The government will be recruiting 250 new ambulance officers in 2007-08 across Queensland which is part of a \$50 million injection into the Queensland Ambulance Service to meet growing demand for services. The budget also delivers an additional 200 police positions, taking the number of officers in the Queensland Police Service to 9,928 by October 2008. Part of this allocation is \$76,000 in continued funding for the South Brisbane Tactical Crime Squad, which is very effective on the ground and targets known crime hot spots with an emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences.

An amount of \$2.5 million is allocated for the completion of the Camp Hill-Carina Police Station and \$1.6 million for the continued redevelopment of the Holland Park Police Station, which will be a total cost of \$6.9 million. This will be a major centre for the area. There will also be \$15.65 million for the commissioning of over 140 new ambulance vehicles across the state to replace older vehicles.

Transport in the Greenslopes area has again been well catered for with \$50,000 in state government funding for construction of a bikeway and footpath at the Holland Park State School. In addition, \$65,000 is allocated to construct an indented bus bay at Cavendish Road State High School. There is nothing better to spend our money on than the safety of our kids around schools.

The other big project that we will see unfolding in the Greenslopes electorate area in the coming years is the magnificent eastern busway, which will be part of this new bus network that will have tentacles across the city. An amount of \$46.7 million has been allocated to continue planning of the eastern busway. That will be money well spent. I am very pleased with the activities of the transport minister, Paul Lucas, in ensuring that as this busway unfolds every opportunity will be taken to regenerate the suburbs that it moves through in both a commercial and social manner. This is a great initiative and we see the continuation of funding for it.

There are a range of other initiatives, including \$5.5 million to complete construction of the new electricity zone substation. Again, this emphasis on major infrastructure across the state is being transformed to the local areas, to the local suburbs.

There is funding for the following: \$2.67 million to increase transformer capacity at the Camp Hill electricity substation; \$245,000 to coordinate a range of practical counselling intervention services for children and young people; \$10,000 for Career Employment Australia to deliver a healthy lifestyle

program; \$34,000 for the Queensland Association of School Tuckshops to offer healthy food and drink options; \$1.4 million to complete construction of eight public housing seniors units; \$1.4 million to commence construction of six public housing apartment units for low-income earners; \$39,000 for the magnificent Eastern Suburbs Rugby League Football Club to install lights; and \$419,000 to establish support networks and future planning for families caring for a person with a disability. I have continued to highlight this last area as I encounter individuals who reach a very mature age but still have a person at home they are caring for. This is an important issue that we encounter in our electorates, and we all know it will require very astute attention to look after these people in the future.

There are many more things that I could speak about in this great budget. I commend the Treasurer, Anna Bligh, for this very responsible budget. It is a balanced budget but also a budget with a vision for Queensland. It is a vision that shows we are looking at the main game in terms of essential infrastructure, and it also shows that we have the macro settings in place transmitting right through to our own electorates in a very responsible and intelligent manner. I commend the bills to the House.

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (6.21 pm): In speaking to the Appropriation Bill 2007 and the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill, I can certainly say that this was no election budget for my electorate. However, we would have to welcome the \$7.15 billion to be injected into Queensland Health. Encouraging is the annual funding increase to the Royal Flying Doctor Service from \$16.5 million to \$29.3 million. Also encouraging is the investment of \$18.3 million over four years to fund five rural generalists—a type of specialist doctor able to carry out advanced skills such as delivering babies, administering anaesthetics and performing some surgery.

I would like to raise serious concerns regarding the closure of maternity services in Moranbah. It is unbelievable that a booming community with a population of over 10,000 that produces billions of dollars for the Queensland economy has lost its ability to deliver a critical part of health care for patients. In the last 18 months, the state government has denied local women the ability to have an uncomplicated delivery surrounded by their family in their local surroundings. We would like to know why the government has allowed it to get to this stage.

The greatest gift a family and a community can have is to welcome a newborn baby into this world. For the parents, it is unparalleled to anything else in their lives. Nothing in this world could measure the depth and joy that a newborn child brings to a family. The state government is denying local women the ability to have an uncomplicated delivery surrounded by their family in their local surroundings. It is unacceptable to compel pregnant women to travel hundreds of kilometres away from their home town to major coastal cities to give birth to their babies. This is an unnecessary financial burden. It puts personal strains on people and separates mothers from their families for periods of up to three weeks during a very precious time of their lives.

While we must understand it is not the mothers' fault that the maternity service in their home town has closed down, it is vitally important to recognise the financial strain on families who need to pay the cost of travel and motel expenses. These pregnant mothers are booked in to these motels and wait for periods of up to three weeks before giving birth, and these are uncomplicated pregnancies.

Many families are usually not informed or are completely unaware of the patient travel and motel subsidies they can claim for the time they are away. I believe it is paramount that at all times Queensland Health provides information packs to advise all patients of what they can claim to help alleviate the financial cost which is no fault of their own. Could members imagine the outcry in Brisbane if mums to be had to be separated from their family, travel hundreds of kilometres and stay in motels for up to three weeks before giving birth? So why should this burden be placed on Moranbah families?

This is a vital issue and needs to be rectified. I call on the Minister for Health to support the community of Moranbah, recognise that there has been no service for the past 20 months and provide funds out of the \$7.151 billion Queensland Health budget to restore maternity services in Moranbah. This is a very critical part of health care for us all.

Mr Finn: What do you want?

Mr KNUTH: The maternity service restored in Moranbah. There is no service now. It was closed down 20 months ago.

I also acknowledge that the state government finally increased the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme from 10c to 15c per kilometre. This still falls way short of the Nationals' commitment to increase the scheme to 30c per kilometre. The subsidy has been 10c per kilometre for the last 15 years. As fuel prices skyrocket, it is costing patients—especially the elderly—an arm and a leg to travel long distances. For all the red tape they go through to get access to the subsidies, they still get only a pittance.

I would like to acknowledge the extra funding for Disability Services, with a total operational budget of \$717 million, which is up 13.1 per cent from last year. This will help boost access to accommodation support and community services. However, we need to ensure that the funds are managed so that the net benefit to disabled Queenslanders is maximised and not lost through bureaucracy.

There are many families who are still struggling to get access to occupational therapists, speech therapists, social workers, respite care and available respite facilities. These are all so desperately needed. It is concerning that funding for respite services was less this year, down from \$80 million to \$56 million. This is a very important issue for the electorate of Charters Towers, which has one of the highest numbers of people with disabilities in this state.

In road funding, almost \$7.9 million was provided to upgrade the Gregory Development Road from Charters Towers to The Lynd Junction. While hoping for more funding, this is by far the biggest injection of funds ever to this dangerous section which is referred to as a death trap. The extra funding to this single-lane highway will no doubt help reduce the road risks and benefit the region.

Also welcome is another funding injection of \$5.9 million to upgrade the Flinders Highway between Torrens Creek and Hughenden. This funding should almost complete the worst section of this highway, which means that the highway from Townsville to Hughenden will be almost fully upgraded.

In education, Millchester State School received \$187,000 to complete construction of the play area. It was disappointing that there was no funding for teacher aides in prep classes. There is growing concern among teachers and parents about the lack of support provided to prep teachers who have to supervise and teach up to 25 young children with little or no assistance. I would like to welcome the \$112,000 to reseal the runway and install pilot-activated lighting at the Charters Towers airport.

I welcome a program developed by the Charters Towers police to divert young people from criminal and antisocial behaviour. The program is designed to help young people become involved with team sports. I support this, but I would like to bring to the attention of the House that the system in place now is not working and that this program and other stronger punishment regimes need to be put in place to distract juvenile criminals from committing crime.

Recently, juveniles appallingly smashed headstones at the Charters Towers cemetery. This caused distress and shock across the town, especially in families who had the graves of loved ones violated. This kind of senseless destruction and vandalism was almost unheard of in previous generations, and this generation has to find the voice and backbone to stand up and say, 'We will not tolerate this kind of devastation.' Pussyfooting will never arrest this behaviour. Each destroyed headstone represented a life—someone's wife, husband, grandmother, grandfather or friend, someone who lived and died in our community. Each headstone also represented a significant chunk of local history which can never be rewritten or relived. History must be honoured and preserved, and each generation has a responsibility to pass on the heritage of the past to succeeding generations.

There is a rising demand in our community for outbreaks of vandalism to be dealt with severely. I ask that incidents such as this vandalism be viewed not as minor crime but as serious crime and that the perpetrators be forced to face the full extent of their actions. Just a few years ago, within a three-month period there were 223 offences committed in Charters Towers, with 68 offenders charged only to receive a slap on the wrist. There are reports of children as young as 10 roaming the streets late at night in Charters Towers. Put simply, having these children roaming the streets at night is a recipe for disaster. Residents are sick and tired of their cars being smashed, their homes being entered and shop windows being smashed and spat on. It is time the government stopped ignoring this problem because these young criminals are becoming more and more brazen in their acts of theft, wilful damage and violence. They have no respect for the law or authority.

I am not talking about kids out at night watching a movie. I am talking about juveniles who are breaking into homes and terrorising people and who are out there to deliberately inflict and cause serious bodily harm on other people. Our communities have lost their right to feel safe in their own homes. It has got to the stage where people will begin taking the law into their own hands and they are the ones who will inevitably end up being sent to jail. I call on the state government to take action and do something about the crime problem. Through the police minister, I call on the government to provide more police on the beat to combat crime and introduce stronger laws to ensure an ongoing crackdown on youth gangs.

We need to investigate the Cleveland detention centre. It is known as 'Camp Cleveland' because it provides good food, games and new track shoes. Spending time there is regarded as a badge of honour amongst gangs. The Cleveland detention centre should be a deterrent for juvenile offenders. However, this centre has become a place where juveniles are prepared to steal and destroy property, become public nuisances and inflict serious bodily harm on people to get into it.

I believe there is too much pandering to non-productive groups, the do-gooders and the bleeding heart brigade. The only way to stamp out juvenile crime is to add to the programs we have in place and introduce American-style boot camps and the shaming column in newspapers where juveniles who commit a crime have their faces splattered over the newspapers. Members may feel this is a little harsh, but they would not think that if these criminals committed a crime against them. Residents need a guarantee from the state government.

I seek leave to incorporate the rest of this speech and my speech on the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

It was disappointing that little funding was made available to seal the Hughenden to Lynd Road or Kennedy Development road the Kennedy Development road, the road that the media have called the worst road in Australia".

We keep hearing this myth that that because limited number people use this road it does not justify an upgrade".

Mr Speaker this is a Myth. If the government had the foresight or vision to seal the Kennedy Development road, it would open up the west for transport to southern markets increase tourism and the safety of the residents in this region?

Hundreds of thousands of cattle were to be trucked out of this area last year and the road condition is deteriorating.

This road of regional significance, it is the future inland highway from Cairns to Melbourne and a north-south link from the Atherton Tablelands to Hughenden and centres south and west.

It will alleviate traffic congestion on the coastal routes, provide increase tourism, economic benefits for transport companies open up southern market. breath life into communities and help alleviate the infrastructures problem the South east corner face from large influx of people moving into the area each month.

The significance of the Porcupine George alone gives good reason the government should consider this a priority.

Mr Speaker the Cairns and Hughenden Chamber of Commerce the Richmond and Flinders Shire Councils and the general public are behind this project and are calling on this Government to seal this road.

Mr Speaker in speaking to the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill 2007 I commend initiatives to look at all opportunities for clean coal technology as Queensland is the world's largest exporter of coal and coal is our most important export commodity.

Last year Qld produced over 226 million tonnes of coal from 43 open cut and underground mines earning almost \$18 billion in export revenue. At least \$1.5 billion are paid in royalties to the Queensland Government.

The coal industry directly employs over 13,000 people, with many more thousands employed by services supporting the coal industry.

This bill will establish the representation and the functions of a clean coal council. Basically it will allow the council to make recommendations to the Premier on the allocation for the research, development and demonstration of clean coal technologies.

The questions for the Premier that need to be addressed are:

1. What has happened to the Clean Coal Technology Board
2. Why have they not reported publicly
3. What were the recommendations of the Clean Coal Technology Board regarding ZeroGen?
4. What is the difference between the two bodies

What is also important To ensure transparency and accountability in regard to the decisions the Premier makes, regarding Council recommendations and the Premier's resultant decisions.

All advice, assessments, recommendations and reports of the Clean Coal Council to the Premier and his Department should be tabled in the Parliament within 30 days of their delivery to the Premier and/or his Department or other Minister as he may delegate.

The Coalition believes that the best opportunities for the development of clean coal technology should be explored and I hope the council will not have to make recommendations that pander to the Premiers ego.

It is perhaps ironic that the Premier is pushing through this bill in an attempt to be seen to be doing something while crisis after crisis threatens the coal industry.

It is disappointing that at a time of record demand for coal exports, inefficiencies in Queensland Rail means we are exporting less coal than two years ago and in the process losing royalties of at least \$150 million per year based on royalties of \$8 to \$10 per tonne.

While I acknowledge and support clean coal technology we must also be very careful that an industry that provides billion to our local economy is not place in jeopardy by chasing shadows and possible myths especially if the initiative of clean coal technology in the end proves to fail.

There seems to be a competition going on amongst members of 'the global warming industry and environmentalist' to see who can make the most outlandish doomsday statements.

According to a top level report prepared by former World Bank chief economist Sir Nicholas Stern, the Earth in the next 50 years "will experience floods, famine, mass migration s and the destruction of species if the Earth's temperature continues to rise which will result to the lose of agricultural land, reduced power generating ability and plummeting rainfalls droughts..

All this they says is the result of human activity by our burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, gasoline) which they say produce greenhouse gases.

But Mr Speaker I would like to no what caused all the deserts like the Sahara, Kalahari and the Gobi and Simpson plus the drying up of Lake Eyre. They cannot blame the industrial revolution on this one.

Also doomsayers predict that the Greenland glacier plus the polar caps and polar ice will melt due to global warming.

"This will raise sea levels about 6m causing widespread coastal flooding. But they don't mention the million of gallons of water flowing and flooding every day in the oceans from the millions of creeks and rivers around the world.

The Amazon alone pumps into the sea a million gallons every second and the fresh water can be drunk 200 miles out to sea and much of this water comes from the ice capped mountains yet the sea levels still does do not rise.

Eric the red

Then there was the "hole" in the Ozone layer caused, they say, by refrigeration gases aerosol cans and some scientists even blamed the cows'

Yet the interesting the "hole" was never over countries that use these products?

While some of these scientists and environments blame many for greenhouse gases they avoid any mention of the pollution from volcanoes and out of control bush fires.

The latest catch phrase is from intergovernmental ICCP report that unless greenhouse gas emissions are reduced, biodiversity within the Great Barrier Reef will be drastically reduced within 20 years.

Just on the local news recently representatives of the conservation movement not happy with John Howard's policy on climate change and greenhouse gas emission stated the Great Barrier Reef within the next 10 years will be in dire straight. What a load of rubbish.

I will read you the words One of the world's leading tropical coral reef scientists, Townsville-based Dr Walter Starck (who has been studying coral reefs for more than 50 years and the GBR for the past 30), stated in a paper published by the Institute of Public Affairs a year or two ago, that the big problem with the GBR was that it was largely inaccessible, it is underwater and it is vast: 'So anyone can claim anything and who's to know the difference?'

He went on to state the most likely effect of a rise in water temperature would be to expand the area suitable for coral growth, southwards.

It would also cause weaker El Nino patterns and less coral bleaching (you can find his paper on the Institute's web site: ipa.org.au and search for it by author).

The Reef

Mr Speaker in acknowledging the value of our great Coal Industry and the push for clean coal technologies and the further need to meet electricity demand.

There are many Warnings of coming demand/supply imbalance and urgent need for a base load power station in north Queensland.

It is really time this government stops talking the talk and build the thing.

Mineral development and investment in North and Western Queensland have been put on hold because of lack of reliable power sources. And the further you transmit power the more cost are associated with that transmission.

It is logical to identify Pentland as the alternative sight for a base load power station.

"Major stakeholders have already done extensive investigations into the feasibility of building a power station at Pentland, including a \$2 million drilling program completed by the Owners of the Pentland coal reserves Xstrata who confirmed the ore body is a good enough quality for an economically viable 600-800MW power station for the next 35-40 years.

This site "It is commonsense as we have one of the biggest river systems in Queensland with a plentiful supply of water, a nearby rail facility, a rural environment, and a potential power station that sits on unlimited coal reserves and Pentland is a vital link to North and Western Queensland.

This proposal has the support of Federal and State Members, Charters Towers Chamber of Commerce, City and Shire Councils, Townsville Enterprise, visitors and investors.

Sitting suspended from 6.31 pm to 7.30 pm.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (7.30 pm): I rise to speak in the cognate debate on the appropriation bills. I say from the outset that it is a very interesting budget. The government has stuck its neck out to borrow \$14 billion to undertake capital works. It is a wonderful program, but we need to look at the ramifications down the line.

Thank God we have a federal government in power at the moment that certainly has the management strategy of this country right. Huge dollars are flowing to the states through GST payments. The GST has been a wonderful asset to the economy of the nation as a whole rather than just to the economy of Queensland.

There are many aspects of the bills before the House that I want to touch on. Huge amounts of infrastructure will be put in place in the south-east corner of the state. No-one denies we need it. We thank the Lord for the good rain we have had over the last 24, 48, 72 hours. I make the point though that we certainly need a lot more before pressure is taken off the water infrastructure and water grid issue.

I think we all recognise and understand that the government has huge pressure on it in relation to water. At the same time, poor planning can create the environment that we are in now. There is no doubt that there has been poor planning. As many speakers on this side of the House have said, this is why the government is in the predicament it is in in relation to the \$9 billion water infrastructure program.

As the Leader of the Opposition rightly said this morning, there are issues in relation to the contracts that have been let for the pipelines, the way the pipelines have been built, the carriage of materials et cetera. The machinery, plant operators et cetera—and we know this from the mining boom in this state—are a big cost factor. That type of heavy construction taps into our talented pool of resources, our tradespeople. That is a problem we face right across Queensland at the moment. In the area I represent we are losing people out of our industries. They are going to the mines. We cannot take that away from them. At the same time, we have to give people opportunities.

Last week my colleague the member for Mirani and I visited the Hay Point-Dalrymple Bay coal terminal, which is in the member's electorate just south of Mackay, and also the Jilalan rail yards. We saw the problems that the coal industry is confronted with. It is all very well to blame our overseas trading partners and say that they have to be patient with us getting the coal out. We certainly have to do some planning in terms of getting that coal out. This is a multibillion-dollar industry. It is a \$17 billion

industry. This government reaps \$1.5 billion dollars a year in royalties out of the industry. Look at the wealth that that area of Queensland has generated and will continue to generate probably over the next 100 or 200 years. That brings me back to the issue of Queensland Rail.

There are 22 rail sets that carry that coal into the port of Dalrymple Bay-Hay Point. I urge the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the Treasurer, as the shareholding minister, to look at the situation concerning QR. There are anomalies that are affecting the carriage of the goods in question—and here we are talking about coal—to the port of Dalrymple Bay-Hay Point, the port of Gladstone and the port at Abbot Point. I will talk more about Abbot Point later.

We cannot tolerate this situation. A train went into Hay Point-Dalrymple Bay recently with 70 empty wagons. Those trains usually have about 102 wagons. The reason was that the coal at the mine was damp and could not be loaded in the scheduled time. When they have schedules to meet the train has to move on. I support the Premier's proposal for a joint industry-government inquiry into how to correct some of these anomalies. At the same time, Queensland Rail management has to take control of the agenda and make certain that these wagons going to the coal dumps on the coast are not empty. We have to turn that situation around. It is absolutely ludicrous to think that that is happening. BMA and Babcock and Brown are trying to do great work at Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay. At the end of the day, we have to have industry working with industry and government working with industry to make certain we maximise the outcome for the industry.

I urge the government as a whole to look at the future of Queensland and have a vision for how we can grow north Queensland in general and in particular the region in question. The emphasis over a long period has been the south-east corner. Everything has happened in the south-east corner. We know the capital is here. We know the Gold Coast is here. We know the Sunshine Coast is here. Toowoomba is not far away. It is 120 kilometres to the west. It is a regional city and a very integral part of the economy of south-east Queensland and western and north-western Queensland. For all the years I have lived in the west—Quilpie and now Longreach—I have done my business in Toowoomba. This is where I saw accountants, solicitors and whoever else. We educated our children there because it is the regional centre for people in the west. It is a very big regional centre.

There has been too much emphasis put on people wanting to live in the south-east corner. I think that culture has to change. I urge the government to have the vision to change that. Along the coast there are plenty of places where people can live. They are great places. Even the inland areas like where I live are great places to live. The federal government has to play a big role in this, too, through taxation incentives. What I mean by taxation incentives is encouraging businesses to go into those regions and encouraging people to go to them and take their families there. They can educate their children there. I am talking about places like Longreach, Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Charters Towers, Biloela, Charleville, Blackall, Barcaldine, Kingaroy—as close in as that—and the list goes on. They have high schools and hospitals, and they are damn good places to live and rear a family and get ahead.

It is important to look to the future—the next 20, 30, 40, 50 years. A lot of us are not going to be around then, but I think we are acting irresponsibly if we do not look to the future and consider how we leave this place for our children and our grandchildren so that they can enjoy an economy and a quality of life that many of us hope they will have. A long time ago when Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and Lang Hancock were in positions of power in Queensland and Western Australia there was talk of a railway line across the top end between Port Hedland and Townsville.

That railway line would be a wonderful idea. There has been talk about a north-south railway line from Melbourne to the port of Gladstone and out through Mount Isa to Darwin. When I was Queensland's minister for transport and main roads I opposed that railway line between Alice Springs and Darwin because I did not think that it would be of significant importance to that part of Australia and I questioned what its freight would be. In terms of the amount of money injected into it and the number of trains that run on it, I think those questions are still being asked. But I think it is before its time. When one looks at the rich resources of Western Australia and Queensland, there is coal on this side and iron ore on the other side and both have low populations in the north—Western Australia certainly has low populations in the north—but in north Queensland there are beautiful places where people can live. There are many good cities and towns along the coast which are adjacent to industries. One only has to look at the opportunities that exist in Townsville, but many people do not realise the untapped capabilities of Townsville in terms of what is happening there.

Mr Wallace: And good people, too!

Mr JOHNSON: We will not go there. This is serious business that we are talking about and the responsible thing to do is to engage, to embrace and to take people with us in order to think outside the square. I do not say this lightly: I urge the Treasurer, I urge the Premier, I urge the Queensland government and I urge all members of this parliament to show some leadership to bring about some of that change.

Earlier today the Premier introduced the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Bill 2007. That is a wonderful initiative in many ways. It is about engaging the Indigenous people in north Queensland. For many years we have heard how we have failed Indigenous people. It is now our opportunity to engage those people and engage the whole of north Australia to start making a difference, because that is what we are lacking in this country—that is, making a difference. That is north Australia, and north Queensland is a part of north Australia. I look forward to debating the legislation introduced by the Premier today when it comes before the House, because there have been many injustices in the past in relation to Indigenous people. At the same time it is now our opportunity to right some of those injustices and take those people with us. That is why I am saying we need to develop infrastructure in north Queensland.

With regard to the huge infrastructure package that the Deputy Premier announced in the House on Tuesday, I am a firm believer that if we are going to develop anything there has to be infrastructure to go with it. However, there has to be responsible spending, responsible input into policy and we have to ensure that we cross our t's and dot our i's when it comes to the bottom line—the adding up and the subtraction. I know that the interest bill will keep rising and by 2010 it will be about \$1.14 billion, but it is important to build that infrastructure in north Queensland and the associated infrastructure in order to take the burden off the resources in the south-east corner. Every day we hear the minister for transport say that there will be another multibillion-dollar road built somewhere to move people through Brisbane or outside Brisbane such as western bypasses and the like. Yes, that has to be done. However, at the same time we need to put incentives in place in order to encourage some of the population to move into places such as my electorate and further north in Queensland in order to spread the population. We are a diversified state and I think it is about time we started to recognise the importance, the roles and the responsibilities we have as politicians and elected representatives of the people to put good policies and vision in place.

During debates such as this we hear all members in the parliament talk about their own electorates and the issues that are failing in their electorates which have to be addressed. In that regard, the minister for education has \$77 million in the budget over the next four years to give each teacher in the state school system a laptop computer. Nobody disagrees with trying to improve resources in schools, but about 25 per cent or 30 per cent of children in our state are educated in the Catholic system or the private system. As responsible leaders and a responsible government we have to look at getting computers into some of those private schools, especially those smaller private primary schools. The Catholic Church has done great work over a long period of time in educating children in remote areas and other parts of the state. I myself am a product of a Catholic convent in Quilpie where I spent my early days, and that convent is still going.

Mr Malone: I bet they belted you, too!

Mr JOHNSON: By geez they did belt me, but I am not too bad a bloke though, am I?

When I was minister for transport there were many old computers left over in government departments, and this happens in every government agency. I say to the member for Thuringowa and minister for natural resources that many of those computers are stacked away in rooms and are not utilised properly. Those computers could go into those places or to Indigenous communities or to those smaller schools that do not have those resources. They are of no value elsewhere, but they can be utilised in a responsible way. At the ICPA conference in Mount Isa last year—and the honourable member for Mount Isa is in the House and no doubt she will agree—I raised the issue of those computers.

The other issue I want to touch on tonight relates to biosecurity, and I note that the budget contains \$82 million for biosecurity. This is a very important function of government today and something that is paramount if we are going to be genuine about protecting the farmers and graziers of not only our state but also our country. On 1 July—a couple of weeks away—the 2PH organisation at Emerald, the Pressler family, will start again by planting the first of 250,000 trees that were removed because of citrus canker. Those 180,000 trees that they will start planting on 1 July are the beginning of the most sophisticated, upmarket and high-tech horticulture orchard in the world. John Pressler tells me that even the fertiliser will be put through the watering system so that the trees all get even amounts of fertiliser at the appropriate times. We have to think about things a bit, but out of everything bad comes something good. All I can say is that I hope that the Pressler family and the other orchardists at Emerald will never again be subjected to the trauma, the hurt and the anger that arose because of that situation, as well as the townspeople and the couple of thousand people who move through there each year to pick fruit.

The federal government through AQIS has a big role to play when we talk about biosecurity, and I have spoken to the minister for primary industries about this. In that regard, I refer also to stock inspection services, especially at Alpha where there is talk about having a full-time stock inspector. Many people do not realise the importance of this issue in terms of the tick line. During the dry seasons ticks are not going to move, but we need inspectors there to keep an eye on things in terms of scratching cattle when people want to move cattle through there. There will always be the person who

will run the gauntlet and think, 'There's nobody here so we'll move through the line,' in order to move those cattle somewhere else. What happens then? If there is a wet season the tick line will move south and move west and that will only devalue our great livestock industry. As I was saying, we do not want instances like the citrus canker outbreak at Emerald to occur again because of the huge costs, the huge imposts and the worry that the citrus industry had to endure during that time a few years ago.

Another issue that I want to touch on this evening is the Flying Doctor Service, which has been allocated \$3.2 million in the budget. My colleague the member for Mount Isa is in the House and probably other members in this House have also had something to do the flying doctors over a period. I certainly have. Only three weeks ago, one of my little granddaughters suffered a fractured skull and was flown to Townsville by the flying doctors.

The most sacred thing we in the bush have is the Flying Doctor Service, and what a great service it is. I thank the government and the minister for that \$3.2 million. I say to everybody in the House this evening: the flying doctors, the flying obstetricians and the flying surgeons provide the most sacred service we in this state can have. In some places people can only dream of such medical services, especially those provided by the flying obstetricians and flying gynaecologists. Right across the state, our women can access those professional services, as well as services provided by flying paediatricians, ophthalmologists, gastroenterologists and other specialists who come out from Brisbane and the coast. I say to the Minister for Health that it is absolutely paramount that we keep those services operational. It is also important that we make certain that they are enhanced.

I thank the Minister for Police and Corrective Services for coming to Longreach last week and saying that she will upgrade the Longreach Police Station. I am also grateful for the \$5 million allocated to the upgrade and replacement of the Charleville Police Station. I hope that, in a short while, the minister will see fit to fund a full replacement of the Longreach Police Station.

Time expired.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (7.53 pm): Tonight it is a pleasure to rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill and the clean coal cognate bill. Firstly, I would like to talk a little about the amalgamation of shires. While most members in the parliament may think that that has nothing to do with the budget, I can assure them that it has.

The budget makes no allocation for the resources that local governments provide throughout Queensland. I know that some members in this House come from urban Queensland, so I assure them that the councils of the area that I represent—between Rockhampton and Mackay, and out to Moranbah—are doing a marvellous job in addressing the concerns of the people who live in those areas. They do not just collect rates and provide minimal services such as filling potholes and collecting rubbish.

Shire councils in my electorate and across Queensland, particularly in rural areas, provide funding for projects such as attracting tourists to their areas. They provide funding for community groups such as the progress associations along the shore and the SES and rural fire brigades, which they organise.

There is 400 kilometres of highway in my electorate. Little places like St Lawrence would be almost wiped out if the administration of the Broadsound shire disappeared. In the small town of St Lawrence, the workers from the Broadsound Shire Council make up the rural fire brigade, the SES and the ambulance brigade. The person who looks after the ambulance brigade is an employee of the council. When there is an accident—and there are many, I have to tell the House—on the highway between Rockhampton and Sarina, the people who help those involved or who just put the fires out are not necessarily volunteers but are people employed by local government. Therefore, when looking at the whole plan of amalgamations, let us hope that common sense prevails. We must realise that there will be a cost back to the government through the budget. Somehow or other, those services will still have to be provided, although certainly it will not be by local ratepayers. I hope that we see some common sense in that process.

I turn to the highway that runs along the coast between Rockhampton and Mackay. In this chamber I have always advocated seven-day-a-week, driver-reviver sites. When those driver-reviver sites work, people actually spend time there and I believe that the road is far safer because of that. However, the project is underfunded. The volunteers who man the station work under very difficult conditions, and it needs to be upgraded. In addition, the highway has very few overtaking lanes. While that is a federal government initiative, we need the cooperation of the state government to improve the situation. Something should be done about that as quickly as possible.

With the new regulations for heavy vehicle drivers, there is also the need to upgrade facilities for truck drivers so that they can take time out and do not have to push themselves to get either to Marlborough or Sarina, which is about a two and a half hour drive. Many drivers have come into my office to express concern about the new regulations. On the night that the legislation was passed, the member for Fitzroy and I had a little yarn across the chamber. I was concerned about the fact that some

of the transport infringement officers would take umbrage at slight infringements in the logbook calculations and the filling out of the logbook. I have to tell the member for Fitzroy that that is happening and a number of drivers have come into my office to tell me about it.

One man was fined \$600 and six points for not actually adding up hours, and also because he did not designate where he started from, even though every third day he started from the same place in Sarina. After two such fines, that person has shifted to Western Australia and left his family in Sarina. He can no longer drive on the road because if he gets another fine he will be out of the game. He cannot afford the fines, so another very good and experienced driver has left the industry. That is happening on a regular basis. Something has to be done fairly quickly about it. I know the shadow minister is right across the deal. Let us hope we get some sense out of it.

Many times I have advocated the bypass on the Peak Downs Highway through Walkerston. Unfortunately, the budget did not provide money to even look at some protocols in relation to that project.

The health issue in Mackay is becoming very difficult. The Mackay Base Hospital is a reasonably old hospital. Certainly, areas towards the back of the hospital and the older part of the hospital look like Third World stuff. Unfortunately, the *Mercury* in Mackay did not really do the minister any favours by pointing out that no money has been allocated towards either a rebuild of the hospital or improvements to the hospital.

This is a big issue in Mackay. As members would know, the area around Mackay is growing very substantially. For specialist appointments, people have to travel either to Townsville or to Brisbane. Even though the patient subsidy system has been increased slightly, it does not even cover the cost of fuel. I would like to see a hotel or motel room that charges \$30 a day. There is a huge financial cost to people who have to travel with their family or relatives. They may have to leave their jobs for a period. Quite often, they get to Townsville or Brisbane and find that the appointment that they have made has been cancelled. They have to go back again and again and sometimes again. This is a big issue and sooner or later it has to be addressed.

Many years ago a certain amount of land was donated to the hospital board. When the Goss government came to power, it was sold off for residential use. It would be very handy to have that land right now so that we could build a new hospital on it.

In terms of education, with up to 2,500 blocks of land being developed in the Pioneer Valley, the Mirani High School is growing at a tremendous rate. Certainly over the next few years we will see a huge increase in numbers. As far as I am aware, the Mirani High School has never had a school renewal program, which most of the 1960s-plus schools have gone through. I know that the Sarina school received funding for that some time ago. Certainly there needs to be some upgrades at the Mirani High School. It is a great school with great teachers and great students—as there are right throughout the valley.

Sarina High School is forging ahead with its school centre. Through funding for school renewal they were able to buy land for an agricultural centre. With another \$450,000 from the federal government, that school worked towards creating a skills centre with welding equipment and lathes. Trainers from TAFE have come down to put the students through this skills centre, which is quite magnificent. As those students leave school they will be able to go directly into an apprenticeship. They would be trained to the stage at which they could probably skip a year in their apprenticeship.

More importantly, with 60 per cent of the school students going through the skills centre, the teachers are telling me that issues such as discipline and the attitude of students at the school have changed dramatically. The students are actually complaining that they have to go back to the school to attend parade for one hour every two weeks. They are rebelling against going back to school for that parade as that means they will miss an hour at the skills centre at Sarina High School.

The prep year got off to a reasonable start, except that in most of the 30-odd schools throughout my electorate there were real problems in terms of the resources that were available for the young ones. Most importantly, from conversations that I have had with teachers, resourcing issues relating to teacher aides has been a huge impost on them. The P&Cs and the parents of students in a couple of schools in my electorate have banded together to look at raising some money to put towards employing a part-time teacher or teacher aide to help out, which really is not their role.

We have a beautiful new police station at Sarina. I had been advocating for that new police station since I entered parliament, which is quite some time ago now. Unfortunately, we do not seem to be able to get enough police to fully man that station, and that is a real concern. As with all the other small rural towns in my electorate, Sarina is growing dramatically. The police station there needs to be fully manned all the time, as should the police station at Nebo where there is only one police officer. There are something like 3,000 single men staying in accommodation at Nebo at any one time. The police officer at Nebo is also trying to do the pilot work and the filling out of forms for the transport of

wide loads through the Peak Downs Highway. It is almost an impossible task. There really should be a two-man station at Nebo as there should be in the Pioneer Valley. I will be writing to the minister asking her to consider putting in extra resources in that region in my electorate.

Within the portfolio of Emergency Services one has to be really concerned about what is happening in relation to the QAS. The front-line paramedics are fighting for their survival, with imposed rosters that do not work and with stations being closed because there are insufficient staff to man them or remaining open but under the control of a junior trainee. If paramedics speak out they could be fined up to \$3,000. I have had grown men—paramedics who have seen the worst of the worst accidents—crying about the fact that they are under such pressure.

The staff talk about a union but, because of its close association with this government, it has worked hand in hand with the government to implement policies that are not necessarily in the best interests of its members. But suddenly in the last few months the union representative, Steve Crow, and his boss, Ron Monaghan, who is also the Queensland ALP state president, have woken up to the fact that their members are under huge stress and that highly trained and experienced paramedics are leaving the QAS in droves or, alternatively, working part-time. That is not really the best outcome for the QAS.

As the loony left's control of the government increases, we are seeing a continuing policy—

Ms Male: Loony left? Where did you get that from?

Mr MALONE: It is not as much as I could say. We see a continuing policy of, 'If there's a problem, print a glossy brochure and throw money at it.' We have seen this policy in operation in matters relating to health, electricity, water and the many other disasters that have been presided over by this government. As with those problems, the problems within the QAS have drawn the same predictable response—throw money at it. Indeed, in this budget the government is throwing \$50 million. Quite frankly, that money is needed but, unfortunately, at this stage that is about all that can be done to overcome the problem, because this government and its members sit by idly and allow this to happen around them.

For the sake of the hardworking paramedics and the people of Queensland, the minister has to take control of the situation and get rid of the bloated bureaucracy in the department. If he cannot do that, the Premier should step in and put somebody in charge who can. All members would be aware of the hard and dedicated work that is carried out by our paramedics and firefighters throughout Queensland.

The problems with the QAS began in 1998 when the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Beattie, was looking for an incentive to win government. At that time a free ambulance service for pensioners, Seniors Card holders and their dependants sounded pretty good. It is interesting to note that at the time the coalition did not match it, because it was aware of the resources that would be required to deliver it. Consequently, as history will show, the coalition lost that election.

As a result, the Beattie government introduced the ambulance tax to cover the soaring cost. As shadow minister, during the debate on the introduction of the ambulance tax I predicted that there would never be enough resources to deliver the outcomes. Unfortunately, I was right. The Premier said that with the introduction of the new ambulance tax on our electricity accounts—a tax that stands at around about \$100 right now—we would have the best ambulance service in the world. What a hollow promise that turned out to be. Many property owners are paying the tax many times over. As I have predicted during debates in this chamber, the government was never going to be able to keep up with demand and, again, I have been proven to be correct.

Unfortunately, under pressure to respond to callouts from the commissioner down, the management has put unrealistic pressure on paramedics who, in return, are taking sick leave and stress leave at record levels and, unfortunately, are resigning in increasing numbers from the department.

No amount of money will fix the problem until the government gets the basics right. The response of the minister and the government is to throw more money at the problem. I have mentioned the \$50 million and the promise of more paramedics. But the problem is that any new paramedics will, in turn, be exposed to the harassment and bullying that is endemic in the QAS.

As has been proven by the department's inability to progress the development of infrastructure with most of the capital works planned for last year not delivered and, worse still, reannounced this year, the department is in crisis. A major emergency services complex developed in North Mackay in my electorate was opened almost two years ago and has had serious structural problems which, to this day, have not been fixed completely. Major roof leaks have caused extensive mould, making the building almost uninhabitable. That is only one of the building's defects. Under those circumstances it is hard to understand how the bureaucracy within the department took ownership of this building.

There are plenty of other examples of such problems. They have been highlighted by the trend of the department to use dongas and Titan sheds as stations and replacement buildings. Cronyism, jobs for the mates and jobs for the mates of the mates is another serious problem within the department.

Concerned, experienced and long-serving officers have raised these issues with me. They are fed up with trying to raise serious management issues only to be ignored, or told to be quiet, or threatened for speaking out.

Management by bullying has led to enormous staff unrest. Morale has never been lower and, as I have mentioned, it is reflected in the findings of a major staff satisfaction survey and also by the disturbingly high levels of sick leave and stress leave. I know the minister is frustrated by the high staff attrition rates, but he needs to realise that nothing will improve unless he and his government tackle the underlying problems within the department and stop pretending that cash alone will fix the problems. It is really interesting that the department is charging forward, trying to overcome the problems that are endemic within the department without realising that there are serious management concerns and that they have to be fixed as soon as possible not only for Queensland but also for the wellbeing of very dedicated and concerned paramedics within the system. With those few words, I support the bills.

Ms van LITSENBURG (Redcliffe—ALP) (8.10 pm): In speaking to the appropriation bills and my first budget as a new member, I am pleased at the wide variety of funding Redcliffe has received. This is the result of Queensland's strong economy and the Labor government's effective management that has delivered a healthy surplus. From the time I was elected I have been working hard to deliver better outcomes for my constituents, and the strength of the Queensland economy and the Treasurer's good management has enabled me to do this.

This is a balanced budget that is looking to the future—that is, delivering the infrastructure Queensland needs to meet the expanding demands of our growing population. This budget is strong in much needed and high-profile infrastructure for Redcliffe, beginning with \$55 million towards the duplication of the Houghton Highway and \$4 million for the construction of a pedestrian bridge for the Redcliffe State High School over Oxley Avenue. There is also \$16.27 million to continue the upgrade of the emergency and specialist outpatient departments at Redcliffe Hospital, \$262,000 to the Redcliffe City Council for the redevelopment of the Margate urban village, \$1.3 million also to the Redcliffe City Council for the renewal of the Woody Point jetty and foreshore redevelopment and \$2.65 million to complete upgrades to the Duffield Road substation at Redcliffe. But these are not the only infrastructure items in the budget for Redcliffe. Our Transport and Main Roads infrastructure includes: \$123,000 for asphalt resurfacing on Oxley Avenue between Griffiths Road and Klingner Road, \$837,000 for asphalt resurfacing between Hornibrook Bridge and Anzac Avenue and \$140,000 in traffic safety improvements on Oxley Avenue between Beaconsfield Street and Duffield Road.

Our schools have also been winners with funding for maintenance of infrastructure including: \$37,000 for Redcliffe State High School to complete development of the furnishing and engineering workshop. Repainting funding through the Triple R Maintenance Program was allocated to three schools: \$25,000 for Clontarf Beach State School, \$37,000 for Redcliffe State High School and \$25,000 for the Scarborough State School. The amount of \$51,000 was allocated for targeted maintenance of hard external surfaces at Clontarf Beach State School, \$35,000 for targeted maintenance of building structures at Kippa-Ring State School and \$82,000 for priority maintenance related to classrooms at Woody Point Special School. The amount of \$10 million in funding statewide over four years has been set aside for literacy and numeracy support for Indigenous students. I am certain teachers will be pleased with the laptops that will give them access to professional development at their own pace instead of competing for limited spaces in seminars.

I am pleased that Redcliffe will share in the increase of 200 police positions across the state, including \$68,000 in continued funding for the Redcliffe Tactical Crime Squad. There will also be over 140 new ambulances across the state and 250 new ambulance staff, so that will improve our local services.

The record statewide budget of \$7.15 billion to continue the Health Action Plan reforms will include increased doctors, nurses, better mental health services and more hospital beds. There is \$13.37 million for initiatives to reduce waiting lists for elective surgery in Redcliffe and Caboolture; \$4.9 million to community organisations under the Home and Community Care Program to provide support services for eligible people at home to prevent early admission to residential care; and \$215.4 million to improve working conditions for Queensland Health staff statewide including medical officers, clinical staff and administrative staff. I am pleased this Labor budget is delivering for hospital staff who work so hard to provide the quality service we expect from our hospitals.

This budget also delivers good outcomes for job seekers. There is \$22.84 million in the greater Brisbane area for Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs, \$4.64 million for providing training for disadvantaged Queenslanders and \$366 million for 23 hours of vocational education and training in the region.

The people of Redcliffe will be pleased to know that, as well as setting up the \$9 billion South East Queensland Water Grid, the state government is making \$81 million available for continued rebates for water-saving devices such as rainwater tanks, washing machines, shower heads, dual-flush toilets and pool covers.

The state government has taken into consideration the desperate need for affordable housing, and the budget eases the situation with \$660,000 for 10 public housing apartment units for low-income earners, \$1.2 million for 25 community managed studio units of accommodation for low-income earners and \$1.35 million for 14 public housing apartment units for low-income earners.

Redcliffe public housing tenants will share in \$30.6 million for the greater Brisbane region for upgrading housing including kitchens, bathrooms and disability modifications. This is vital for electorates such as Redcliffe as its economy is based on tourism. Because tourism operators and the hospitality industry rely on a skilled workforce who are, by and large, on casual wages and in part-time positions, in today's market they cannot afford to buy but they are also unlikely to drive from places like Woodford for a two-hour shift. Homebuyers have also had a win with a cut in stamp duty on mortgages.

I am pleased to see that Redcliffe will be sharing in the \$2.81 million in ongoing funding for the provision of cycle networks across south-east Queensland. The sum of \$91,608 will go to the Peninsula and District Soccer and Sporting Club to upgrade the surface of the playing field at AJ Kelly Park under the Minor Facilities Program.

Social programs have not been ignored either, with \$335,000 for the Redcliffe Home Assist/Secure Program which provides free information and referrals regarding home maintenance, falls prevention, repairs and modifications and home security, as well as financial assistance to eligible, mostly elderly, people. The budget provides for \$4 million in funding over four years for child safety for a range of initiatives, including the One Chance At Childhood funding aimed at keeping babies and toddlers safe; \$69,000 to provide support services for older people including enhancing safety and wellbeing; \$88,000 for youth justice programs to increase the capacity of the Redcliffe community to develop local responses that prevent and reduce youth offending; \$966,000 to provide post-school options for young adults with a disability and their families as part of an ongoing commitment; a share in \$253,000 as part of an ongoing commitment to improve the stock of books in public libraries; and \$11,000 for the Redcliffe City Council to produce physical activity and healthy eating resources through the Community Partnership Grants Program.

Moreton Island is a unique environment that needs to be developed carefully to maintain its fragile ecosystems with increasing usage and tourism. The state government has provided \$25,000 to complete the Eagers Creek Indigenous shelter in the Moreton Island National Park and \$10,000 to begin construction of the Cape Moreton boardwalk and viewing platform in the Cape Moreton Conservation Park.

This truly is a budget for the future. The Beattie Labor government has presided over the most extensive infrastructure program for many years with borrowings of only \$3.5 billion in the general government sector as part of a total capital works budget of \$5.5 billion. The Treasurer has still produced a net operating surplus of \$2.393 billion. Redcliffe has had a good share of this budget and many constituents will be very pleased with these initiatives. But we will also benefit from many other aspects of the budget, such as the water initiatives, other transport infrastructure projects such as the upgrade of the Gateway Bridge and the Gateway Arterial and other major arterials throughout the state, renewable energy initiatives, research into clean coal technology and health initiatives. I commend the 2007-08 budget to the House.

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (8.22 pm): It is a great pleasure to rise and support the state budget for 2007 and the three bills that are currently before the House. I have said a couple of times before, and I hope I get to say it a couple of more times, that the cost of providing services and infrastructure in a seat like Cook is much more difficult and much more complex than providing those services and infrastructure in other electorates. When you have over 30 disparate communities spread over an area the size of Victoria, the cost of putting in health clinics, schools, police stations and other services grows exponentially compared to when you provide those services in a city or a provincial city where there are much greater economies of scale.

The electorate of Cook always seems to get its fair share of the funding, especially since 1989, but the reality is that it costs a lot more to provide those services. This is a fact that seems to be lost on the federal government with its attempts to cut back funding to Queensland through the horizontal fiscal equalisation system of grants that the federal government provides to the states. It came under pressure from New South Wales and Victoria to cut back Queensland's share of funding to provide these services. In acquiescing to those demands it shows that it really does not understand the reality of providing services in rural and regional Queensland where, as I said, there are small towns spread over a wide area. It is simply not possible to provide schools in one location and expect young students to travel hundreds of kilometres to those schools or people to travel hundreds of kilometres to get to hospital facilities. That is something that the federal government needs to come to grips with when it does its own budget.

The state budget this year has provided a number of important allocations to the seat of Cook. Those people who have been in this place for as long as I have know that the thing I talk most about in this place is the Peninsula Development Road. That road is the lifeline of my electorate. It is the spine

that runs up through Cape York Peninsula to provide access for the Indigenous communities in the electorate. It is important for getting economic products out, such as cattle, into the markets in Mareeba and Cairns. It is also important for getting tourists into the area efficiently and effectively so that they can enjoy the many pleasures that await them in Cape York Peninsula. This year the road has received fantastic support from the state government.

There are a number of improvements worth over \$10 million that will be undertaken on the Peninsula Development Road this year funded wholly and solely by the state government. It is important to note that this financial year the federal government has not committed any funds to the Peninsula Development Road or to the people of Cape York Peninsula. It has taken an election to see the federal government finally come to the table and commit to the Peninsula Development Road. Well over a year ago the Premier committed an additional \$10 million, on top of the \$10 million that we spend normally, to seal particular sections of the Peninsula Development Road north of Lakeland. That was a commitment that the Premier put on the table over a year ago waiting for the federal government to match that commitment. The federal government had been silent for well over a year in terms of matching that commitment and it is only the fact that we are in an election year and close to an election that it has finally come to the table and decided to match that commitment that the Premier had had on the table for quite some time.

Its commitment, though belated, is welcome. It will see a very rough section of the road north of Lakeland sealed. It probably will not be able to be done this dry season, but certainly will be able to be done next dry season. It will be most welcome by motorists who use the Peninsula Development Road. I want to see the Peninsula Development Road sealed between Lakeland and Weipa. That is a distance of about 550 kilometres of road. There is probably 480 kilometres left to do. I hope to have it completed in my time in this House. It is certainly one of my personal goals. If we can get an ongoing commitment from the federal government that goal will be achievable.

The problem is that the federal government's piecemeal approach of just putting in money when it is electorally convenient means that an enormous amount of equipment has to be moved in and out of the area—graders, bulldozers, rollers and so on—and that is very expensive. Moving that equipment in and out of the area means that the ability to seal more road is lost. We need an ongoing commitment from the federal government to the sealing of that road so that we can plan ahead and capital is not being wasted by constantly moving equipment in and out of the area.

There are a number of other important initiatives. The child safety initiatives announced by Minister Boyle are fantastic. They will see Child Safety officers placed in the cape and on Thursday Island where they are needed. This is the first time those officers will actually be based on the ground. These officers perform a particularly difficult job. Taking children away from their parents is devastating for some families. It is particularly hard from a policy sense, but now that these officers are on the ground we will hopefully see a greater capacity for them to work with the families and the people. Also, we should hopefully see them being more proactive in their approach to child safety in the Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait.

I was very pleased to see the allocation towards a police plane in the Torres Strait which will also help service Cape York Peninsula. This is something that the Queensland Police Service has been calling for for some time.

A government member interjected.

Mr O'BRIEN: It is a fixed wing plane, yes. People do not realise that it is about 1,800 kilometres from Cairns to Bamaga and then there are another 300 or 400 kilometres of Australia left after that, and there are 17 inhabited islands in the Torres Strait. Getting police into those areas to service those people is difficult. My constituents complain that it takes police some time to get out there and deal with their complaints. With this resource now, hopefully those concerns can be addressed and the police will be much more proactive in their approach to policing in that area.

It is worth noting that there is a great deal of crime in that area between Bamaga and the Papua New Guinea border. There is an international border and there is one federal police officer in that area. It is no great secret that all sorts of things come down from Papua New Guinea into the Torres Strait and mainland Australia. The reality is that the Australian police are not doing enough to counter the contraband that is coming into Northern Australia from Papua New Guinea. They simply do not have the resources. The fact that the Queensland government has taken the step in this budget to put in this fixed wing aircraft certainly means that we are pulling our weight by providing policing services to the region.

I could talk all night and all day about the benefits in this budget for my electorate. There are benefits for education. Weipa in particular has received some capital works. Weipa is an expanding area; the mine in Weipa is expanding and other activities are seeing Weipa's community develop. There are tourism enterprises and fishing enterprises. A lot more young people and young families are moving into Weipa and we are keeping up with the facilities there.

We are building a new \$40 million hospital in Weipa to meet the demands of that growing community. We are putting new classrooms and facilities into the state school to meet the demands of those young families who are moving in. That school, the Western Cape College, is starting to advance those people who live in that region. Not long ago that school did not have any students who were OP eligible, but there are now students graduating from that school who are OP eligible, who are undertaking training and who are work ready for the mine and the wider workforce.

I do not intend to take up too much more of the House's time. I have issued media statements about the budget and I believe that is the best way to get most of the good news out about my electorate. I would certainly like to thank the Treasurer and the government for their continued support of the Cook electorate. I commend the bills to the House.

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (8.33 pm): This 10th budget of the Beattie Labor government is, in my estimation, its finest. It provides record funding for the most vulnerable in our society—the sick, the homeless, those with a disability and those who are struggling to secure stable and affordable housing. I have seen the need for extra funding for mental health recognised, and I know consumers and carers in the community will feel a sense of relief that this funding is forthcoming.

The mental health system has attracted a record increase of \$528.8 million over four years to assist Queenslanders with mental health issues. Together with the money already allocated in the Health Action Plan, a total of \$895 million has been committed. The most important issue for those with a mental illness is being able to get help when they need it. The budget announcements will make it easier for those consumers and hopefully take the pressure off families who are already struggling to cope with the effects on loved ones of mental illness.

Non-government organisations provide support and accommodation to those in the community with a mental health condition. The \$35.64 million in increased funding will allow these organisations to help individuals lead a life outside the health system and help people live independently in the community.

With house prices at an all-time high on the Gold Coast, affordable housing is now at a premium. The Department of Housing is boosting the supply of social housing with an injection of \$719 million in 2007-08. This means an extra 714 housing units will become available in the next 12 months. Over and above this, \$500 million has been committed over the next five years to ensure assistance is provided to Queenslanders with the greatest need. While public housing waiting lists grow, the federal government continues to pour billions of dollars of taxpayers' money into the rental assistance scheme—money which goes into the private rental market and the pockets of investors.

Over the past eight years, the federal government has spent approximately \$4 billion on rent assistance in Queensland. No thought has been given as to how these funds could be directed to boost public housing stocks on the Gold Coast. Often the recipients of rental assistance are not the most needy within the community.

With a focus on obesity in children, I was particularly pleased to see funding go to many smaller sporting groups in the electorate who train and encourage our youngsters to participate in sport. Some of that funding included: \$39,225 to the Burleigh Cricket Club, \$28,810 to the Burleigh Heads Junior Rugby League, \$31,870 to the Gold Coast Albert Junior Tennis Club, \$100,000 to the Palm Beach Touch Association, and \$12,035 to the South Coast Netball Association.

The redevelopment of the Fleay Wildlife Park will continue with an injection of \$250,000. The wildlife park is a favourite place to visit—an oldie but a goodie, one might say—and its breeding program for native animals is something staff are very proud of, and rightly so. Of course, funding for an upgrade to the walking tracks in the Burleigh Head National Park, for dune erosion fencing and for the provision of a boulder wall at Mermaid Beach, will be welcomed by all residents of the area.

Transport and Main Roads funding in the Burleigh electorate amounts to in excess of \$26 million. Residents will be relieved to hear that many troublesome intersections will be improved and the bus priority works will continue.

This budget provides funds for real assistance to individuals and families and for resources that will enhance quality of life in our communities. I congratulate the Treasurer for her fiscal responsibility and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (8.38 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the Appropriation Bill. The Waterford electorate, which I am proud to represent, is a growing area with many young families. As an outer urban area, we are reliant on local roads, schools and hospitals—all important government responsibilities. This budget delivers many new initiatives to support our community as well as continuing to deliver strong government services. These government services can only be delivered on the back of strong economic management. The Beattie government has again delivered a budget for economic growth and prosperity.

In the 2006-07 financial year, the state's finances showed a very healthy surplus of more than \$2.3 billion. At the same time, Queenslanders paid less in taxes than the national average. For this same period, Queensland's economy grew at 5.5 per cent, which is more than double the national average. This growth has provided more and more job opportunities, with Queensland's unemployment rate at a 30-year low of 3.5 per cent.

On 11 October 2006 I rose in this place to make my first speech and put on the record those issues that would be the priority for my time in parliament. At that time I said—

There is no more important challenge in managing this growth than ensuring that our community has access to affordable housing.

Affordable housing is not just about roofs over people's heads; it is about an opportunity to move forward to meet the challenges of daily life.

I am delighted to be able to stand here today, only eight months later, and say that the Beattie government has made the most significant investment in social housing in this state's history—\$719 million for housing, including a \$500 million allocation from the Future Growth Fund. Put simply, this will mean 1,700 more units of accommodation to meet the demands from growing housing waiting lists. This massive investment will mean real improvements in the Waterford electorate.

This budget will see 77 public rental houses and 29 public rental units in Loganlea go through urban renewal upgrades at a cost of \$6.85 million. As well \$1.73 million will be spent on completing the construction of eight seniors units in Gray Street, Beenleigh. Two units of accommodation will also be built for severely injured persons as part of the spinal injury initiative. Those in private rental and home ownership will also receive great benefits from the budget. Mortgage duty will be halved in 2008 and will be abolished for 2009. The tax-free threshold for land tax will also be increased to \$600,000.

For those at risk of homelessness this budget provides the Waterford electorate \$466,000 to provide targeted short-term support and case management to keep people in private rental. Also included in the budget is more than \$800,000 to provide counselling and support for those at risk of homelessness, particularly young people. I congratulate the Treasurer and the minister for housing for this important investment in housing affordability. I wish the same leadership could be shown by the federal government. Under its watch housing has become less affordable than ever.

This budget will also continue the strong track record of promoting policing and community safety in the Waterford electorate. As a result of funding in last year's budget I am delighted to attend the official opening of the Edens Landing Police Beat later this month. This police beat is ideally located in Loane Drive and will provide a great resource to deal with antisocial behaviour.

Beenleigh Police Station, which houses the Logan district communications centre, is a big winner from this budget, with a \$2.3 million upgrade for the police station in Kent Street. This will provide a refurbished police station to support the hard work done by our local police officers. The Logan police district will also have its own Tactical Crime Squad with 14 officers to target known crime hot spots.

These proactive measures will also be accompanied by the continuation of the successful school based police officers at our local high schools—Beenleigh, Loganlea and Marsden. This program is important not only to establish positive relationships between young people and our police officers but also to support our teachers and schools in dealing with the challenges they face. Our community will also be made safer with funding going to the Logan City Council for security lighting at Moffatt Road, Waterford West, and for the completion of the wireless safety camera network in Logan train stations and other hot spots.

The communities within the Waterford electorate are growing outer urban areas with a need for transport infrastructure. This budget has delivered important transport infrastructure for the residents of Logan and Beenleigh. In the 2007-08 financial year almost \$15 million will be spent on completing the duplication of Beenleigh-Kingston Road from Kingston to Beenleigh. The final stage, from Fletcher Street, Bethania, through to the Boundary Street roundabout at Beenleigh is on schedule to be completed early in 2008. I must thank residents for their patience while this project has been carried out in recent years. However, I assure residents that traffic improvements will make the inconvenience worthwhile. To deal with the extra traffic demand from the duplication of Beenleigh-Kingston Road, Boundary Street will be widened, repaired and strengthened between George Street and the Soccer Club Park.

When I read the budget I was very excited to see that the initial stages of construction for an additional lane at the intersection of Loganlea Road and Kingston Road will commence in 2007-08. Growth in recent years has put significant pressure on the right-hand turn lane from Kingston Road into Loganlea Road during the morning peak hour. This project will relieve pressure during the morning peak by providing for two right-hand turn lanes into Loganlea Road.

Kingston Road will be upgraded in Slacks Creek, Kingston, Loganlea and Waterford West with the completion of intersection improvements at Jacaranda Avenue and Jeurs Street, resurfacing between Compton Road and Baldarch Street and from Queens Road to Chambers Flat Road, commencement of traffic signal improvements at Clare Road and improvements to the intersection of Paradise Road and Kingston Road.

I am sure those living in my electorate, particularly those who live in Loganholme and Tanah Merah, will be happy to see the state government continuing with the Pacific Motorway transit project. This project will improve public transport times and traffic flow between Eight Mile Plains and the Logan Hyperdome. This budget will see planning and consultation for section C, from Daisy Hill to Loganholme, commence in 2007.

The M1 motorway has previously been funded on a dollar-for-dollar basis with the federal government. The Beattie government could not sit by and wait for the federal government to pledge its \$400 million so has allocated \$400 million and commenced planning, design and resumptions. Along with the honourable member for Springwood, I will be making sure that federal election candidates, whether Labor, Liberal or National, commit to the funding for this project so that construction can commence.

This budget also continues the Health Action Plan reform of Queensland Health, with a record health budget of \$7.15 billion. This will mean more hospitals, more mental health services and a record number of doctors and nurses. The loyal staff of Queensland Health will be further recognised in this budget with \$215 million allocated to improve working conditions for staff in 2007-08 as part of a total package of \$3.48 billion over three years.

The Logan Hospital will also see more than \$400,000 of capital upgrades. More than \$338,000 will be spent to complete the \$7 million upgrade to the Logan Hospital emergency department. Some \$100,000 will be spent as the first stage of an upgrade for elective surgery at Logan Hospital. Logan Hospital has a proud history of providing quality mental health services. However, mental health services everywhere have found it hard to meet ever-increasing demand. This budget will provide more support than ever for those with a mental illness—a record increase of \$528 million over the next four years. This will mean 140 new mental health beds and the upgrading of wards, including 130 mental health beds.

Importantly, support for mental health services in our community will be improved with \$176 million over the next four years to employ more than 360 mental health professionals. Mental illness is one of the greatest challenges facing our community. Mental illness will affect so many people and their families. This is a great initiative for which the Minister for Health, Stephen Robertson, should be congratulated.

The Beattie government should also be congratulated on the recruitment program that will deliver 250 new ambulance staff in 2007-08 to meet increasing demand for ambulance services. This budget will see a massive \$50 million injection, including \$15.65 million for the commissioning of over 140 new ambulance vehicles across the state and the replacement of older vehicles. This massive funding boost will mean that the ambulance officers in Beenleigh and Logan can continue to provide quality responses to local residents.

One of the key roles of modern government is to support stronger communities and assist those community organisations and volunteers who build the capacity of the community to be inclusive and supportive. This budget will see more than \$2 million for the opening of an early childhood education centre in Beenleigh. This will see the old preschool used to support child-care services in our area. We are a community with many young families. This initiative will take pressure off families caring for children.

This budget will also see the state government deliver on its promised contribution to the community and sporting centre at Tudor Park, Loganholme. This financial year will see \$800,000 spent on the construction of an indoor multipurpose recreation centre, with a total state government contribution of \$1.4 million. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

At this point, I must also recognise the strong advocacy of Councillor Pam Parker in having the Logan City Council contribute the remainder of the funding for this project, despite opposition from some other Councillors.

Mr Speaker, the Budget will also see the continuation of Community Renewal in Beenleigh and Logan. Community Renewal has been a flexible program providing funding to projects that are tailored by and for local communities.

Community Renewal has seen millions of dollars in community facilities, programs and celebrations invested in our area. This program has seen tangible changes to communities that have faced challenging social issues.

The Budget will also continue to support the Referral for Active Intervention services in Beenleigh, Eagleby and Loganlea. Through this program, St Vincent de Paul has been funded to provide families in crisis with support before they come to be the subject of intervention from the Department of Child Safety.

This program ensures that the Department of Child Safety can refer families for support if the Department believe that, while children should not be removed, families can be supported to ensure that they do not return to the attention of the Department of Child Safety in the future.

This Budget will also continue to provide almost \$300,000 in the 2007-08 funding for community centre-based development and support services.

At this point I must declare my interest as a member of the management committee of the Beenleigh District Community Development Association, the organisation which runs the Beenleigh Neighbourhood Centre and the Beenleigh Supported Housing Service. This organisation is one of the three community centres who will continue to receive funding under this program.

The Neighbourhood Centre provides great community services. I encourage Beenleigh residents to pop in to the Neighbourhood Centre, located behind the Police Station, to take advantage of this service.

Schools

Mr Speaker, the schools in the Waterford electorate will also be winners from this budget, with significant money for facilities upgrades.

Since my election in 2006, I have been working with Lou Ware and Cheri Doherty of the Waterford State School Parents and Citizens Association to improve the traffic and transport safety at the Waterford State School.

This Budget delivers on improvements at the School with \$100,000 for the State Government to upgrade the bus set down areas on Nerang Street.

This will mean better visibility and traffic flow for parents and teachers trying to leave Jordan Street of an afternoon.

I was also excited to see that the Beattie Government will invest \$70 million over the next four years to provide every school and TAFE teacher with a laptop computer.

This will mean that teachers will be given the resources needed to teach the children of the twenty-first century. This will also make it easier for teachers to prepare lessons, the hard work of teachers that is unseen and often goes unrecognised.

School facilities in the Waterford electorate will also benefit from the more than \$500 million to build and upgrade schools and training facilities across the State.

There is a long list of projects including, to name but a few:

- Repainting at Loganholme State School, Loganlea High School and the Mabel Park State Pre-School Centre; and
- Re-roofing at the Mabel Park State School; and
- High priority maintenance at Mabel Park State School, Loganlea High School and Waterford State School.

I must thank the Minister for Education and his Parliamentary Secretary, Bonny Barry for Bonny's recent visit to the schools in my electorate.

During her visit we discussed with local schools and parents and citizens the Tomorrow's Schools for which this Budget has allocated \$733 million in coming years.

I will be working hard with local schools to ensure that the Waterford electorate gets its fair share of this funding in coming years. Many local schools are aging and will benefit greatly from this massive investment in Queensland's schools.

Sporting Groups

Finally, Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate two local sporting groups for their success in receiving funding to upgrade their facilities.

This Budget will see the City of Logan Sporting Association receive \$133,665 for an upgrade to the Meakin Park, Slacks Creek facility. As well, Springwood Little Athletics, based at Meadowbrook, will receive just under \$47,000 to construct a high jump apron, long jump run up, sand pits, javelin pad and a discus and shot-put cage.

Mr Speaker, these groups play an important role in promoting healthy and active lifestyles, particularly amongst the young people of Logan.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, I would like to conclude by congratulating the Premier and Deputy Premier on this great budget. I think the Deputy Premier said it all when she said in her second reading speech "in a Labor Budget, no one will be left behind".

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (8.48 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the appropriation bills and the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill before the House. I want to commence by congratulating the Deputy Premier and Treasurer on the delivery of her second budget. This is an outstanding set of figures and initiatives for all Queenslanders and indeed for the electorate of Stafford.

This budget is firmly in the proud tradition of Labor budgets in Queensland. The budget is squarely focused on state development with a \$14 billion capital program led by an outstanding infrastructure program. Equally, this budget has a heart and a commitment to the needs of those who need the support of government. However, it is where both traditions are interwoven that this budget is at its best. The best example of this is the \$500 million injection over five years from the Queensland Future Growth Fund into social housing. As a result, this year's budget has a record Queensland housing assistance package totalling \$719 million, including \$479 million for the building program for public housing in 2007-08. This measure responds to a crying need in our community to provide affordable and secure accommodation for more Queenslanders. It includes more than \$8 million of funding for 37 public and social housing units in the electorate of Stafford.

Of course, as the home of Queensland Housing Commission developed homes—the first government built public housing estate was started in Lutana Street—Stafford has a significant number of public housing dwellings. Importantly, more are needed, but what is particularly needed is a greater range of housing options in the local community. The further construction of seniors units and apartments on the north side is welcome to address this great need. I congratulate the government on the extra funding for services for Queenslanders living with a mental illness. Over half a billion dollars of

new money for clinical and community services will address a dire need in our community, and this is a tremendous addition to the Beattie government's \$10 billion Health Action Plan which is providing a wider range of quality services to northsiders at the Prince Charles Hospital.

Further, the investment being made in education and training is very welcome and indeed is an investment in the economic and social future of Queensland. Through a \$562 million Capital Works Program in the education and training area, there is a commitment to \$800 million over four years to modernise vocational training and to the Queensland Skills Plan through to the embedding of the latest learning capabilities with \$70 million set aside over four years to provide laptops to teachers across the state school system. This is a truly welcome education and training budget. I also acknowledge the increased commitment to disability services—a budget that has grown since the election of the Beattie government in 1998 by over 200 per cent. Residents in the Stafford electorate will also welcome the increased funding for the Queensland Ambulance Service which will provide an additional 250 officers and upgrades of equipment and facilities. The Chermside Ambulance Station is indeed the busiest station in the state and I know that a commitment of more staff and support to the service will be welcomed by my local community.

A budget is about much more than expenditure entailed in this appropriation. That is why I want to acknowledge the sound economic management of the government. I note the continued strong economic growth and employment growth in the state. But as I mentioned earlier, to maintain this economic activity it is important to seriously invest in infrastructure for a more robust economy and a fairer society. This budget entails judicious borrowings to efficiently and effectively fund the vital economic infrastructure in the Capital Works Program. Investment in this infrastructure—the water grid, roads, ports, rail and public transport—is sound economic management well recognised and acknowledged by the business sector in this state.

Unfortunately, over the last few days it has become apparent that the opposition in this place is against this sound strategy. In debates various members of the opposition have attacked the Treasurer as an unreconstructed socialist on the one hand and as a relentless economic rationalist on the other. Members opposite claim to support the infrastructure program—with the exception of the vital water grid—but reject the strategic borrowings that will deliver it. So it begs the question: how do they propose to do it? The only conclusion I can come to is that the National and Liberal Parties are not professing to adopt socialist economic policies, nor are they professing to adopt traditional Tory budgeting. It appears that they are willing to adopt a 21st century adaptation of Douglas Social Credit. They want the infrastructure. They do not want to borrow. They criticise the revenue mix. Logically, they will just print the money. But honourable members may ask how a National-Liberal state government is going to print this money. Well, this is where the Liberal Party steps into its own. Willprint presses are standing ready to print some dodgy Flegg dollars to pay for Queensland's future. I warn Liberal members against this course, as the AFP might return to knock on their door. But I am proud that the Beattie Labor government is a sound economic manager, investing in the future of our state as a growing economy and a fair community.

In concluding my contribution to this debate I also want to make a brief reference to the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill, which is a key revenue measure to the revenue components of the overall budget. That is why I want to praise the changes to the land tax regime. Increased thresholds and the very important innovation of a 50 per cent cap on land tax increases are not only part of a proper response to the housing affordability problems being experienced across the state, but they also address important elements of the nature of our economy. These changes are also contributing to the economic wellbeing of the state and of all those working Queenslanders, including many in my own electorate, whose retirement incomes rely upon the performance of their superannuation fund.

Of course, key investors in Queensland's property sector include these superannuation funds. This is the reason it is so very important that this element of tax relief applies to the so-called absentees. During debate on the revenue bill members of the opposition acknowledged this as somewhere between overdue and not good enough. But on this matter we have an opportunity to judge what the opposition members would do rather than what they say. Members will recall that my electoral neighbour, the honourable member for Clayfield and member of the shadow cabinet, served ratepayers as a Brisbane city councillor. Indeed, Lord Mayor Campbell Newman thanked the now member for Clayfield for his 'contributions' to the delivery of his BCC budget for 2006-07. In that BCC budget—the Newman-Nicholls budget—the cap on property tax increases was not extended to companies and absentees. So property owners, especially owners through superannuation funds, should congratulate the Treasurer and take the member for Clayfield and his coalition colleagues' protestations with more than a grain of salt. On that note, I commend to the House the widely recognised sound economic management at the heart of this budget and its traditional Labor agenda of state development and community fairness.

Mrs KIERNAN (Mount Isa—ALP) (8.56 pm): I am thankful for the opportunity to make my contribution to the budget, which, in my opinion, is a strong budget focused firmly on the future. There can be no doubt that Treasurer Bligh has delivered an outstanding budget. This is a budget that has its priorities right and that aims to share the benefit of a strong economy and the 'once in a generation'

income from the resources boom. As the member for Mount Isa I am mindful that a lot of the state's current wealth is generated from the resources of my electorate, and it is only fitting that the budget contains many initiatives, projects and programs specifically for our region. I will detail the highlights of funding for the Mount Isa electorate shortly. However, there is a general comment I want to make in respect of the vital issue of climate change.

Uppermost in the minds of all is concern over what climate change means for our continuing quality of life coupled with what proposed counteracting measures will mean to the resource industry in our area. In conjunction with budget funding, our government has released ClimateSmart 2050, a strategy for a low carbon future. This strategy, together with funding initiatives such as the \$50 million Queensland Renewable Energy Fund, will provide valuable support to leading-edge renewable energy technologies. This funding will allow emerging technologies such as geothermal technologies and this will mean the resource sector, especially in our region, will play an even more important role in securing Queensland's sustainable future.

Much focus will be on exploring new ways to generate energy. New technology and the use of geothermal resources like those found at Julia Creek will play a critical role in our future, to the benefit of not only Queensland but also Australia and beyond. Of course, to ensure that we are able to tap into these new resources and improve technology for our current resource extraction, there is a need for vital infrastructure.

This budget continues to contribute to infrastructure with \$18.51 million to complete the upgrade of the Mount Isa rail line, including concrete re-lay, re-rail and associated works. The total project cost has been \$63 million, and there is little doubt that this line contributes greatly to the economy of our state.

The budget allocates \$12.17 million in ongoing improvements to the Mica Creek power station to improve reliability and efficiency. Mining giant Xstrata is further investing in a \$36 million power station in Mount Isa. This may well be a short-term solution to meet our region's growing power needs. This construction is well under way and should be operating by October.

Continued water expenditure will provide \$12.70 million to upgrade the Mount Isa terminal reservoir pump station and \$1.74 million to upgrade and replace sections of the Lake Moondarra pipeline.

This year, \$3.85 million will be spent redeveloping the Cloncurry Police Station. Needless to say these works will contribute to further development in our region.

I am very sure that the people in my electorate will welcome the increase of \$3.2 million to the RFDS. I thank the doctors, nurses, pilots and the many staff who work for the RFDS and the many community members who support this organisation. Their contribution to our region is invaluable.

In this budget there is a real commitment to providing additional training places to meet skills shortages in our region at a total cost of \$3.06 million. Four hundred and thirty additional training places will be created in the region by 2010.

Two areas that are contributing greatly to our region are the Queensland Skills Plan and the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program targeting employment assistance specifically for disadvantaged people in our region. Industry, non-government agencies, community organisations and local business are all committed to continuing the success. I also commend the work of the small but dedicated staff in the office of the Department of Education, Training and the Arts for their efforts.

The investment that our government has made under the Queensland Skills Plan and Skilling Queenslanders for Work has been and will continue to be a great asset. There is little doubt of the extent and quality of the skill training and job creation when, just recently, two organisations in the north-west and gulf have demonstrated this by taking out major awards in the 2007 Reconciliation Awards for Business. These organisations are setting a high benchmark and I take this opportunity to acknowledge their great work.

The Employment and Training Award was taken out by the Lawn Hill Riversleigh Pastoral Holding Company. The Lawn Hill Riversleigh Pastoral Holding Company is responsible for the management of the Lawn Hill and Riversleigh cattle stations, covering more than 1.6 million acres. Those properties are in the Gulf of Carpentaria, with traditional ownership of the land belonging to the Waanyi people. The company provides training and personal development programs for Indigenous youth from lower gulf communities who have suffered personal problems associated with physical and sexual abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, and other issues. Its training and development program provides accredited technical training, as well as professional counselling, and personal and social development assistance. The program is aimed at empowering Indigenous youth with the skills to make informed life choices.

The Partnership Award was taken out by the Split Rock Inca Alliance, that is, Myuma, Seymour Whyte Constructions and the Department of Main Roads. The alliance was created to complete the final stage of the Barkly Highway upgrade between Mount Isa and Camooweal. It was an alliance between

civil construction company Seymour Whyte Constructions, Myuma which is a young company owned and managed by the Indjilandji-Dhidhanu people, the Aboriginal traditional owners of the Camooweal region, and the Department of Main Roads.

The alliance was commissioned to undertake the highway upgrade, which involved construction of 35 kilometres of new highway and three new bridges. The alliance formed between Seymour Whyte Constructions, Myuma and the department generated major employment, training and business development outcomes for Indigenous people, and it has promoted cooperation and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to successfully achieve project outcomes. The group also took the overall Premier's Reconciliation Award for Business. This award is bestowed by the judging panel on the business considered to have made the most outstanding contribution to reconciliation. I am exceptionally proud of these groups of people.

Last Friday, I travelled across that fantastic road to Camooweal to attend the graduation of the Camooweal-Dugalunji Mining Skills Program. All 10 participants have secured positions across the north-west. Four of the participants came from Palm Island to do the course. In speaking to them, I could see that they have a great sense of achievement and look forward to working with us in the north-west.

This budget provides \$1.51 million for Spinifex State College to complete a major upgrade to support multimedia initiatives and, of course, all of our teachers will benefit by receiving a laptop computer over the next couple of years. The Spinifex State College is going from strength to strength. The residential boarding facility is full to capacity with a continued wait list. Students are accessing a quality state school education from right across the region.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge our district staff, led by the champion of champions for all bush kids Alan Baillie, principals, teachers and school staff who do a wonderful job on behalf of the students of school communities right across my electorate. I thank them all.

The Mount Isa electorate is booming, north to south and east to west. It is the right time to plan for the future, while we deliver for today. I will continue to fight hard for the people in my electorate. This budget delivers for Queensland and I commend the Treasurer on her second budget. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech.

Leave granted.

I am further delighted that a number of schools across the electorate will also benefit through upgrades and capital works in this financial year.

- \$740,000 to Doomadgee State School for replacement amenities
- \$55,000 for high priority maintenance at Mount Isa Central State School and Spinifex State College, Mount Isa
- \$33,000 for targeted maintenance of building structures at Camooweal State School
- \$132,000 for flooring maintenance at Doomadgee and Happy Valley State School
- \$12,000 through the Triple R Maintenance Program for reticulation at Mount Isa Central State School
- \$29,000 for targeted maintenance of building structures at Spinifex State College, Mount Isa junior campus
- \$240,000 for maintenance spread across Barkly Highway State School, Cloncurry State School, Doomadgee State School, Mornington Island State School and Winton State School

Key roads within my electorate will receive funding:

- \$503,000 for widening of the existing road on Burke Developmental Road, Cloncurry to Normanton
- \$2.95 million for widening, repairing and strengthening of the Flinders Highway, Julia Creek to Cloncurry
- \$2.61 million to complete widening, repairing and strengthening on Burke Developmental Road, Cloncurry to Normanton
- \$531,000 to complete widening of the existing road on the Kennedy Developmental Road, Winton to Boulia)
- \$2 million to complete upgrading of the floodway at Deadman's Gully, on Burke Developmental Road, Normanton to Dimbulah
- \$697,000 to complete paving and sealing Doomadgee intersection, on Wills Developmental Road, Julia Creek to Burketown
- \$1.5 million to commence paving and sealing between the Gregory and Doomadgee turnoff
- \$577,000 to complete construction of a dirt road between Gregory Downs and Camooweal
- \$524,000 to complete widening of the existing road at South of Dajarra, on the Diamantina Developmental Road, Boulia to Dajarra.

During the next 12 months we will continue and remain committed to a coordinated approach to regional development, to meet future priorities, needs and expectations of our communities.

We will continue in partnership with councils to consult and engage with the community and stakeholders and work together to achieve clear and strategic plans for all of our key planning areas. These plans are: the Gulf Regional Development Plan, covering the Shires of Burke, Mornington, Carpentaria, Croydon and Etheridge.

The North West Regional Development Plan, covering the Shires of Cloncurry, Flinders, McKinlay, Mount Isa and Richmond; and the Central West Queensland Regional Development Plan, covering the Shires of Aramac, Barcardine, Barcoo, Blackall, Boulia, Diamantina, Ilfracombe, Isisford, Longreach, Winton and Tambo.

These plans will identify, detail and define land use, infrastructure, development, innovation and productivity across a diversity of industries from our fishing in the gulf, the vast pastoral holdings and of course the valuable mining industry and the many emerging industries into the future.

I congratulate the work of the Regional Planning Advisory Committees for their continued work.

Through this hard work I am confident that the future priorities, needs and expectation of our communities will be met and I will continue to work with local government, to consult and engage with our community and key stakeholders to ensure all needs are considered.

Further investment in the communities of the Mount Isa electorate includes:

- \$750,000 to the Mount Isa City Council to assist with the Mount Isa City CBD Renewal Stage Two
- \$323,000 towards construction of an aquatic facility at Burketown, incorporating a lap pool, kids pool, wading pools and amenities under the Major Facilities Program 2007
- \$103,000 in ongoing funding to improve the stock of books in public libraries in Mount Isa
- \$250,000 to the Winton Shire Council to assist with the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum of Natural History, Stage 2
- \$225,000 to the Croydon Shire Council to assist with the Croydon True Blue Tourist project
- \$5,085 to the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, Boulia, to construct a storage shed and water tank
- \$77,050 to the Winton Bowls Club to upgrade a lawn bowling green to a synthetic grass surface
- \$44,000 for boundary fencing in the Bladensburg National Park
- \$21,000 towards the construction of shade structures and access for the disabled for shooting at Winton.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (9.06 pm): I rise to speak to the budget 2007-08 and acknowledge that there have been allocations to my electorate. I thank the Treasurer for that. However, in a number of areas there is still a great need. In the time that I have available to me, I would like to raise those issues as much as possible.

The community in Gladstone incorporates the Gladstone City Council area and the Calliope shire area. Through the industry that is established in the electorate and through the skills and effort of the people who live in the electorate, the community contributes much to the state's coffers and, indeed, the federal coffers. Because of the growth in relation to industrialisation and new industries coming into the district, there is a constant demand on services for the growing population. It is those needs that I wish to raise.

Health is an issue that is very squarely in focus for many in my electorate. This morning I asked a question without notice in relation to the raised levels of incidents of leukaemia. Certainly that is very much in the minds of people who live in the electorate.

I put on the record a quote from one of a number of emails that I have received in relation to this. I will not give names because I have not spoken to the lady concerned, but I believe that she would be quite happy for me to relay her general circumstances. She and her husband have a 20-month-old daughter who has been diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. This lady and her little girl have relocated to Brisbane to receive treatment. Her husband still works in Gladstone, as all families need an income stream. I am sure we all understand that. She says—

During the time we lived in Gladstone I too asked the same questions as other residents featured in the article. On arriving in Brisbane, one of the parents in the oncology ward commented that 'there seems to be heaps of us from Gladstone.' When—

her daughter—

—was diagnosed I thought about the possibility of it being a Gladstone thing. Was it because we lived near the power substation in Toolooa? Was it from the coal dust? Or other industrial emissions? Due to the fact that there is little known about the cause of leukaemia, we will probably never know why or how she got it. Was she genetically predisposed? Was it a virus that caused a mutation of her blood cells? Was it just bad luck?

She goes on to say—

I wish to express my support for an investigation. If nothing else, the findings, whether they be positive or negative, will put my mind at ease. And if the investigation proves that mine and other residents fears are warranted I hope that something is done and no more children or adults are put at risk.

So the people in my electorate are rightly looking for a proactive investigation and not a watching brief. I again ask the health minister to institute an investigation into the causal factors for the heightened incidence of some types of illness in my electorate.

The budget also allocated \$5.4 million to complete the relocation of community health, oral health and mental health services to the Gladstone Hospital precinct. This is a budget line item that has been in at least the last three, maybe four, budgets. The construction of the renewed community health facility and mental health facility is in train at the moment. Oral health was to be incorporated into the pre-existing hospital buildings, but it has been found that the mix cannot be accommodated. Dr Bill Beresford has said that the setting up of the oral health facility is going to be delayed so that some funding could be added so that a stand-alone facility can be co-located in the hospital precinct. That is a wise move, although not only will the community of Gladstone be disadvantaged with a substandard oral health facility, as it currently is, but also it means that staff will still work under fairly difficult conditions in quite an old building that was built for a completely different purpose.

Omitted from the budget was any recognition of the need for a full renal dialysis unit at Gladstone. There is a satellite unit there, but still we have families who have to travel to Rockhampton three days a week, which effectively becomes a lifestyle, or those families move away from the region altogether to access more conveniently renal health services.

Many speakers have talked about mental health and I would like to raise the same concerns. For some time now I have been calling for at least a small secured mental health facility at the Gladstone Hospital so that patients who can easily be stabilised but who need special care can remain in Gladstone. I know of one family, and they are not an isolated case, who have a young son—he is in his 20s—who is having difficulty with his mental health and who is currently living at the facility in Rockhampton. His mum travels up to Rockhampton on a Wednesday and then again on the weekend to keep that social and family continuity with the lad and also to enhance his healing process. That means not only that the family is dislocated but also his mum is at risk by travelling so much. She is tired. She also works full-time. Certainly, the ability to treat people who need that special care within the Gladstone area would be greatly beneficial. At the moment, we have mental health services in communities, and I believe they need to be enhanced as well.

I went along with many others to the White Wreath Day. It was tragic indeed to listen to the families who have lost loved ones to mental illness. One family who had lost their son only six weeks earlier said, 'He just needed more direct care.' Their grief is evident. Their daughter found her brother and she herself is in a very fragile emotional state. So certainly my thoughts are with that family. That circumstance highlights the need for mental health care within the Gladstone district.

In this budget there have been a number of allocations to schools, particularly for maintenance at schools. I thank the minister for the construction of the new library block at Calliope State School—\$700,000. It is certainly much needed. There was also the allocation of \$165,000 to Toolooa State High School to complete the development of an independent living and education centre. There are a number of other allocations that are really for maintenance for the various schools in my electorate. I commend all the staff in our schools—both private and public—and teachers and support staff. They do a brilliant job, often under trying circumstances.

I have a question for the minister and I would appreciate an answer either verbally or in writing in relation to the rollout of the laptop computers. I would be interested to know the time frames. I know that there are first, second and third stages or tiers of the rollout. The first phase starts in July 2007, the second phase starts in July 2008 and the third phase starts in July 2009, but I have not been able to identify the geographical areas. I would certainly be interested in knowing that. Perhaps the minister for education is the one to whom I should be inquiring as to when that rollout will occur. I believe that teachers will benefit greatly from that personal access to knowledge and, I think as an obvious flow-on from that, so will the students.

I have had a question asked of me by some constituents in relation to the teachers who had been allocated to the Reading Recovery Program. It is my understanding that that program will cease in the very near future. I was asked whether the extra 192 teachers will be those teachers from the Reading Recovery Program who will be redeployed. Education has been recognised as being critical to any community. It is the training and development for our future. So resources that are spent in education and training are never lost. They are an investment. Every single one of us here who has children would echo that sentiment: education and training are an investment in our future.

With one-teacher schools in small communities, with the introduction of the new prep year there is still an arbitrary line where a second teacher can be introduced. If a small, one-teacher school has a broad range of needs, the demands on that teacher in terms of workload can be quite onerous. I am not for a second undermining or calling into question the dedication of teachers in small schools. I think those teachers are incredibly dedicated. But there has to be a recognition of the needs mix at the school. One school in my electorate is a single-teacher school. There are some teacher aides there. There is a prep year, but there are two children at that school who have very high needs. One of them is a little girl who is clinically blind. She is blossoming beautifully under the tutelage of the principal/teacher. However, I know that that places a great deal of demand on that teacher's time and energy. Whilst the time that teacher spends with that little girl is showing great results, it would be wonderful if there was a recognition of the high needs at that school and, therefore, an allocation of additional resources. I am not saying that that school does not have extra teacher aide hours, because it has, but I am talking about qualified teaching. I think that school is only two or three students short of qualifying as needing a second teacher.

Development in my electorate is regular and important. A lot of that development impacts on the community. I would say that over the past 10 to 15 years there have been significant social, emotional and family impacts on the community. Areas such as Targinni have been bought out by the government, which has caused incredible social and economic dislocation. I have raised in this chamber before the issue that at times the delegates of the ministers who visit members of the community exercise poor discretion in the way in which they treat them.

The latest example is the proposed duplication of the railway line into the RG Tanna facility. There was going to be a significant duplication. It was going to affect a lot of RAP landowners at Beecher who had bought out of town. They live on small acreage, but the light and noise impacts of the railway line would completely decimate their quality of life. The announcement was made that there was an

alternative being investigated up at Aldoga. I think many of the residents, including me, took the announcement to mean that the high-impact proposals were going up to Aldoga. As it turns out, it is proposed to move the maintenance yard up to the Aldoga industrial estate, but I believe a significant rail loop and some unloading facilities will be retained in the Calliope River basin area, which will impact on people at Beecher quite significantly.

The reaction of the community was to say, 'We support development,' and the community generally does, but there has to come a time when development is not constantly at the cost of individual families in the community. There have been significant tracts of land set aside for industrial development and that has been with the support, both vocal support and more covert support, of the community. But the government faces that very finite position that if it is not very careful then that support will start to diminish in terms of the impact on families that are seeing it happen on a regular basis.

The Aldoga industrial estate is a significant parcel of land. The consideration that has been put to me is that the rail loop should be retained in either the industrial corridor, the Aldoga industrial estate or the port precinct to avoid impact on the residential and rural community. I have raised it with the minister's office previously, but I bring it to the attention of this chamber because it would be tragic to see a diminution of support in the community for industrial development for the want of sensitive and appropriate planning.

The office of child safety in my electorate continues to have a number of staff vacancies. The allocation is there but the staff are not available to fill those vacancies. That, in turn, places considerable stress on those staff dedicated to working as hard as they can for family unity and, where family unity cannot be maintained, the safety and protection of children and then the development of parenting skills for those parents who have their children removed. I place on the record again my appreciation for the tremendous work that is done by Charmaine and the CSOs and other support officers at Child Safety, but they desperately need additional funding to ensure that their staffing levels can be maintained and that their workload can be retained at an acceptable level. Child safety is a high-demand area of work. It is one of the main portfolios in any government where the stressors for those employed by the department are as high as the stressors for the families that they are dealing with. It is a relatively thankless job in many instances. They see a lot of sadness and a lot of tragedy. The workload is intrinsically linked to their ability to maintain their objectivity and their emotional health in the face of some of the difficult things that they have to adjudicate on.

The budget gives allocations—and it does not actually specify the services—in relation to providing places for young people aged 15 to 17 with moderate to high needs in the Gladstone area in terms of accommodation support, social assistance and living skills. It talks about Anglicare. It talks about the Community Advisory Service. One group that is not named that works constantly and effectively in this area is the Roseberry Community Services Inc., which is a tremendous band of people who want to see young people at risk realign their goals and aspirations and achieve their potential. I would like to put on the record not only my appreciation but also that of the community for the tremendous work that these groups do. I include in that Queensland housing because it caters often for an older group of people who go to Anglicare and the Community Advisory Service but many of those families are no less in stress. To that end, I express my disappointment with the lack of funding in the Housing portfolio to address the issue of affordable housing.

I said at the commencement of my contribution that we are a high-growth area and that growth places incredible pressure on families in terms of being able to afford to live in the Gladstone region. Gladstone, along with Townsville, Mount Isa and parts of Rockhampton came up on an indicator just recently as having significant increases in housing prices which therefore affects housing affordability. Whilst I acknowledge that 21-room singles accommodation has been handed over to Roseberry Community Services just recently, that accommodation is completely filled with a significant waitlist already and it highlights the need for a good mix of affordable accommodation in my electorate.

The last time there was a major industry move into the area I regularly had families coming to my office saying, 'We have just come to say goodbye. We're going to have to leave. We cannot afford to live here anymore.' With more environmental impact studies and preliminary impact studies being done for industries looking to locate in the region for all the right reasons, it is critical that the government, both state and federal, act proactively to ensure that those people who live and work in the Gladstone electorate are not disadvantaged by the major industrial expansions or the new location of industry. That is best done by a significant injection of funds into affordable housing of all types.

I note that \$960,000 is allocated to continue the renewal of public housing in Gladstone but only \$188,000 is allocated to begin construction of public housing in Gladstone as part of the spinal injury initiative. I take that to be one house—I am assuming it is just a line item in the budget—but a special purpose house, and all power to the department for building it because it means that a person with special needs is going to have a purpose-built house that they will be able to enjoy into the future.

It is critical that more funding is allocated to affordable housing to alleviate the stress on families who have invested themselves in our community sometimes for 10, 15 and 20 years but who find, because of industrial development and the success of others, that they cannot afford to stay in the area. Everyone knows that the money is good in construction, but if you work at one of the major retail stores or in the councils—and I am not criticising their wage structure—you cannot compare it to construction money. Yet those families are asked to extend their available income to pay prices that are inflated because of strong economic growth. It is critical that as a government and as a community we give equal and fair access to those battlers in our community—and they genuinely are battlers—to make sure that they do not miss out and that they are not lost and treated as collateral damage for that success.

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—NPA) (9.27 pm): I rise to speak on the appropriation bills. It is good to see that money has been spent on the Lockyer District State High School. The Gatton campus of the University of Queensland is receiving quite good funds for its animal section. The Gatton campus does need a hand at the moment. Unfortunately tertiary education across Australia is down due to the high incomes and the high job levels across Australia. Tertiary education is down at the moment, so the Gatton campus does need some assistance.

Roads are important in the Lockyer. I am a bit disappointed to see that the only announcement was the RIP funding that had been announced in November last year for the Grandchester-Laidley road and some of those local roads. I think we do need to spend some money on those roads to tie up the western corridor, which is going to be really important to the growth of Ipswich and the Lockyer Valley for that matter.

Water is always important for the Lockyer Valley. I must admit the Treasurer has just given approval for the recycled water project, which everyone in the Lockyer Valley is very grateful for.

Mr Lawlor: I thought you might be whingeing about it.

Mr RICKUSS: No, I am not whingeing about that. The recycled water project, as the Treasurer said this morning, is probably at the most positive stage that it has been at for 10 years. I was involved with it virtually right from the start, so it is great to see that it looks like it might actually get up. It is going to be one of the biggest recycling projects in the world, so it will be very interesting to see where we progress to from here.

The minister is fully aware that we do not need the A-class water that the government is talking about delivering to Wivenhoe Dam. The tertiary treated water will be sufficient for the irrigation farmers, even though it has some phosphorous and nitrogen nutrients in it. I am sure that the farmers can manage that water without the extra treatment of osmosis that is being carried out before it goes to the Wivenhoe Dam.

Coominya has a water problem. It has applied for funding under the Smaller Communities Assistance Program. It is still out of its reach. This government should assist Coominya with its town water supply. It is the closest village to the Wivenhoe Dam, the major water source for south-east Queensland, yet it does not have town water. That is a disappointment to the residents of Coominya and many other residents. The cost at which the local council could make it available would be prohibitive. It is a great shame. I think Coominya could go ahead in leaps and bounds if it did have reticulated water.

Department of natural resources issues in the Lockyer Valley are always important. I have written to the minister for DNR in relation to Buaraba Creek. I am sure he is mulling over that at this very moment. It is an interesting situation and I am sure that the minister realises that the Bischoffs have been trying to get something done. They have been disadvantaged by what has gone on and we should look at some way of compensating them.

The EPA is always an issue in the Lockyer Valley. The environment minister was in the chamber earlier. I am sure that good common sense and the land use practices that most landholders have now adopted will manage the EPA issues.

It is an interesting time for Queensland Transport with the new licences for 17- to 24-year-olds being introduced. Hopefully it will reduce the statistics in that bracket. We know that 17- to 24-year-olds do kill themselves at roughly twice the rate of other Queenslanders on the roads. I have done some stats for the Gatton, Laidley and Esk shires and they kill themselves at almost twice that again. It is almost four times the rate in those rural shires. Unfortunately, when they have a bingle it seems it is quite often devastating. A lot of it is through pure inexperience. As the Premier said this morning, I encourage all parents to spend some time with young drivers so that they can get some real experience.

It is disappointing to see the higher tax on vehicles. I have some major transport companies in my area. Nolan's Transport has something like 200 prime movers and turns over a number of those prime movers every year. This tax will cost that company thousands of thousands of dollars. Some of the big farming operators transport their goods with trucks and it will be a major impost on them. It is unfortunate that this tax has been levied on them.

With the bonanza that we are experiencing in this state it is a shame that this government has not thought about reducing payroll tax. It is actually a tax on work. It is a shame that there have not been any proposals in the budget to reduce payroll tax. I do have a problem with the fact that even if people are not making a profit in a certain year they still have to pay payroll tax, which can be quite onerous and disheartening at times.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: I will take the interjection from the member for Southport. I know the land tax threshold has been extended, but that is just the way it goes.

Mr Lawlor: Do not blame us.

Mr RICKUSS: Well, you did it. That is what I said. The member has to pay attention. The Helidon dip has been an issue and I have raised it with the minister. He has spent a bit of money but I have heard there are still issues with the dip. It is part of the biosecurity for the tick program that stops the ticks getting west of the Great Divide. Someone has informed me that the dip itself is quite harmful to the cattle going through it.

Mr Lawlor: Harmful to ticks, too.

Mr RICKUSS: There must be some exposed metal there. I am sure the member for Southport has been through the dip a couple of times. Biosecurity is an issue. I am sure that the DPI&F is aware of issues of biosecurity. The member for Gregory talked about citrus at Emerald. That really was a bad situation where unfortunately biosecurity let us down.

I think it is almost time for Emergency Services to look at a new centre for the Lockyer Valley. The Warrego Highway now carries in excess of 20,000 cars a day. This has become 50 per cent of the work for the fire stations in Gatton and Laidley. The size and speed of the vehicles involved in accidents does create an issue for emergency services. I will be encouraging the Emergency Services minister to see if we can site a full-time auxiliary fire service, ambulance service and probably SES somewhere closer to the highway at some stage in the future.

We have two small hospitals in the Lockyer Valley, the Gatton Hospital and the Laidley Hospital, that are just adequate for the growing population in the Lockyer Valley. It is time to look at the 30,000-odd people who are serviced in the Lockyer Valley now—the people from Esk, Gatton, Laidley and the outskirts of Grandchester and some of the Ipswich shire. There is over 2,000 acres of land involved in the university complex. I am sure that that would be a good place for a hospital for the whole local area of the Lockyer Valley.

The Gatton, Laidley and Esk shires which make up the Lockyer Valley are an important part of my electorate, as are the outskirts of Ipswich, for example Willowbank where I am going this weekend to the drags. The Winter Nationals are always good.

Mr Reeves: You are not driving, are you?

Mr RICKUSS: Not driving this time. I do get invited down to the drags and I will probably see the member for Ipswich West. He seems to turn up there.

The northern end of Beaudesert shire is part of my electorate too. Those areas are growing rapidly. I honestly do not think amalgamation will be beneficial for my shire. The council does not fit into a lot of the criteria. It is large compared to some of the other shires around the state. It has a fairly large population base and is growing rapidly. My electorate officer told me that we sent out 600 new enrollees electorate letters today. The whole area is growing fairly quickly.

There are 37 schools in my area that I look after. The five high schools are expanding and have good, steady growth. Unfortunately, some of the smaller schools are struggling a little bit. People do seem to be driving past the one-teacher schools and so some are down in numbers and could be looking at rationalisation in the near future if numbers do not pick up. Some of the medium-sized schools, the three-to five-teacher schools, seem to keep increasing.

The police in Gatton, Jimboomba and Laidley do a good job servicing the area. In the Greenbank-Jimboomba area we have a lot of problems with motorbikes annoying the neighbours. I have written to the police minister advising that maybe we could look at the good behaviour legislation where the neighbours can actually participate in some way in trying to help police. There is a real problem of noise from motorbikes. I can understand the frustration. Unfortunately, people come out of the suburbs of Brisbane and buy a two-acre block and seem to think they have a sheep station. They then buy cheap, noisy motorbikes which are detrimental to being a good neighbour. I think the minister for police will review the situation this year. I ask her to review it thoroughly and see if there is some other way they can police these actions a bit better.

Corrective Services is going ahead with this superjail in the Gatton area. That jail will change the area dramatically over time. Unfortunately, that prison will be built in the Lockyer area. I do not know whether we have the transport services and the social services to cope with a prison of that size, but hopefully they will improve as the jail gets closer to being built.

The office of child safety is always an issue and, as the member for Gladstone said, those workers do not have an easy job. Some of them have a hard task. I notice that Minister Boyle is doing quite a good job of trying to manage the situation but it is a difficult situation. The minister did say to me once that she does not have that many nice days in the job.

The Office of Urban Management is up for review in 2008 or 2009, and I think it is time for that to happen. When it was brought in in 2004-05, I do not think growth was expected to continue at quite the rate it has. I urge the Deputy Premier to make sure the review is done quickly and realistically. Private landholders at the moment, particularly on some of the smaller rural blocks that are very hard to make a living off with the lack of water, feel they are disadvantaged by the fact they have almost become impoverished peasants as owners of this land who are not able to sell it for any use other than rural enterprises.

There are some real issues that need looking at, and water is one of them. We have to be a bit concerned about the level of debt this government has got us into. By 2010-11 the interest we will be paying will be in the vicinity of \$1.14 billion every year. That equates to building one 700-bed hospital per year or three 200-megalitre desal plants. It seems to be an enormous amount of interest to be paying, particularly when this government took over with virtually no debt at all.

Unfortunately, if the government had built some of this infrastructure at an earlier stage, we would actually be nowhere near the situation we are in now. The government missed out on building the Wolffdene Dam, which has turned out to be a crazy situation.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: I notice the member for Southport does not try to defend not building the Wolffdene Dam. He seems to accept that is a mistake the government made. I really do feel that if some of these infrastructure projects had been delivered at a more timely rate we would have nowhere near the borrowing we have now.

Mr ELMES (Noosa—Lib) (9.43 pm): I rise to respond to this year's budget and in doing so I have a few comments I wish to make. Firstly, let me applaud the Treasurer for deciding to return some of the flood of cash to the people of Queensland in the form of road upgrades in my electorate. I am pleased and I thank the Treasurer for heeding my calls to upgrade the Yandina-Coolum Road between Valdora Road and Arcoona Road. Some in this place might remember that some weeks ago there was a fatal accident on the corner of Arcoona Road and Yandina-Coolum Road, and while the \$2.5 million allocation is welcome and necessary it is but a drop in the bucket compared to the amount that needs to be spent on what is one of the main access points into not only Coolum but the Sunshine Coast.

I know that the people of my electorate are in danger every time they have to drive on Yandina-Coolum Road. I urge the Treasurer and the minister to fund a full upgrade, particularly that section of Yandina-Coolum Road between Quanda Road and the entrance to Coolum itself. In many places the road drops away some two or three metres on both sides, and with vastly increased traffic movements the capacity for further serious or fatal accidents is great.

While I am in the mood for congratulating the Treasurer, I also mention funding for the Eenie Creek Road and Weyba Road works. Those in my electorate and I live in hope that this budget shows that the Beattie government has turned the corner from its policy on infrastructure starvation.

I am sure the House will be interested to know that on Tuesday morning, budget day, when Noosa shire residents read their local paper, the *Noosa News*, they saw not only a news story but a photograph showing the federal member for Wide Bay, Warren Truss, announcing \$150,000 in black spot funding for safety improvements on Sunshine Beach Road—the stretch between Cooyar Street and Solway Drive—specifically to help with acute parking and safety issues in the vicinity of the Sunshine Beach State School. Only a few hours later the Treasurer was on her feet promising the same money to fix the same problem. The Treasurer had just performed a magic trick that would make David Copperfield very proud—she took federal money, put it in her hat and pulled out a rabbit in the form of her own project.

In looking down the budget notes a little further, I was struck with another strange sense of *deja vu*. I saw and noted the allocation of \$1.37 million to upgrade the Coolum Ambulance Station. On checking I found the same amount allocated in last year's budget and I am here to tell the House that not one cent has been spent on upkeep, let alone replacement of an ambulance station that is a disgrace.

This is the same ambulance station where prior to the election I was able to identify an ambulance with over 350,000 kilometres on the clock still in use. I am sure the House will be pleased to know that recently I had excited calls from ambulance officers in Coolum and the general community welcoming the news that at long last that ambulance had left Coolum. By then it had 500,000 kilometres on the clock and unfortunately for the member for Gympie, who is my very dear and close friend, that ambulance is now looking after the people in his electorate.

Mr Gibson: Slowly.

Mr ELMES: Very slowly, and only occasionally. There has been no action from the Beattie government to reduce response times and no action on the promise of more ambulances and staff. All the people of Queensland have been given by the Beattie government is fuzzy promises and sleight of hand economics.

I would like to invite the Premier and the Treasurer to my electorate to see the effect of their policy of starving Queenslanders of infrastructure. Come and see the absolute disgrace that is the Coolum Ambulance station. People in my electorate have shared with me on countless occasions how angry they are about the state of the station. I and my electorate hope that the second promise from the Treasurer will this time be met with action.

Now let us look at the fallacy that is the motor vehicle duty and the sleight of hand tactic that the Treasurer used to sell it. The Treasurer has displayed her contempt for the people of Queensland. She has tried to sweep the bite of a tax under the rug of mental health. People know that it is a lack of funding from the Beattie government that has caused the mental health shortcomings, but the Treasurer has the gall to blame the need for a tax on fixing those mistakes. It is the failure and continued failures of this government that has made this tax necessary and it was just in the name of a surplus. The Treasurer knows that it would be political suicide for her to present a budget in deficit, although the people of Queensland should know that this will be the last budget—

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr ELMES: The comrades are acting up at the back. This will be the last budget in which, even with record borrowings, this government will present a surplus. The Treasurer knows that the Howard government has set the benchmark for economic management in Australia—

Government members: Ha, ha!

Mr ELMES: Here we go! The people of Queensland demand that governments manage their budgets and not run deficits. Yet the only way the Treasurer could achieve this was to slug the people of Queensland with an absurd tax sold under the name of fixing the Beattie government's failures—and, in doing so, the Treasurer has set a new precedent for her incompetence and dangerous economic mismanagement.

The Treasurer has tried to cook the books on her debt. She has tried to hide debt across the government and GOCs. This kind of deceitful practice highlights again why Queenslanders cannot trust the Premier and why Queenslanders cannot trust the Treasurer, she who would be Queen. If we are not running a policy of infrastructure starvation they are spending money like sailors on shore leave. She is squandering our future and burdening our children with her legacy of debt.

This just shows that the Beattie Labor government, whether under the control of Beattie or Bligh, gives no heed to the future. They are happy to play the Pied Piper and lead Queensland down a dangerous road of debt. It has been the legacy of coalition governments federally to pay off Labor's debt. We know that the Howard government has paid off federal Labor's deficit and debt of \$96 billion, yet an incoming Rudd federal Labor government has already identified projects where they would rob the Future Fund which should be preserved for Australia's children.

This state government is no different. Interest payments this year alone will be \$390 million. How many nurses, how many teachers, how many police, how many beds in public hospitals could we buy with \$390 million? Yet it gets worse. By 2010-11 this government would have borrowed \$12.4 billion with an annual interest bill of \$1.14 billion. We will not be paying off that debt; our children and our grandchildren will be paying off that debt. That will put Beattie and Bligh right up there with their Labor heroes and Labor governments like Brian Burke's government and WA Inc., the fiasco that was the South Australian Bank, the governments of Cain and Kirner in Victoria where it got so bad that they had to sell off the trams and lease them back and, of course, the \$96 billion black hole left by Paul Keating and Kim Beazley.

This government is up there with their great Labor heroes on a pedestal of financial and fiscal mismanagement. Queensland and Queenslanders deserve much better from their government. Another term that was missing from this budget—and Queenslanders know this term very well—is 'the low-tax state'. This government now refers to us as a tax competitive state. The truth is the taxpayers of Tasmania and South Australia now pay less state tax than Queenslanders. It will be to the eternal shame of this government that an economic culture that has been fostered and safeguarded by conservative governments for generations has been squandered.

Queenslanders have no choice but to accept this budget which is, at its very best, voodoo economics gone bad. But I give the House the assurance that an incoming coalition government will make the decisions, as only a coalition can, to restore good order to Queensland's books.

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (9.52 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak in support of the state budget and its impressive investment in infrastructure which I am confident will improve the position of every Queenslander. I applaud the Treasurer on her building budget which adds immensely to the strong economic climate in Queensland that has been fostered by this government's nine previous budgets. Our position as the economic engine room of Australia has been well served with this visionary budget, and I especially appreciate the government's renewed investment in road and transport infrastructure.

In the wake of a recent federal budget that has dangled financial carrots in front of voters, the Queensland state government has delivered a budget that, through sound economic management and careful planning, is designed to propagate growth by constructing new infrastructure and building services for the people of Queensland. I am proud to be part of a government that has chosen to show the initiative and build a greater place to live for the constituents it serves. As I recalled the federal government's recent budget, whilst sitting in a long line of traffic congestion on the Pacific Motorway, one of our nation's most frequented highways, I wondered what exactly Peter Costello had built. Nothing—and I am still wondering.

The Pacific Motorway is a major south-east transport corridor linking Brisbane and the Gold Coast and continuing on to the New South Wales border. The Pacific Motorway forms part of the AusLink national network and plays a crucial role in the overall road network in Queensland linking transport spines like the Gateway Motorway and the Logan Motorway. The present congested state of the Pacific Motorway is proving to be an oversight on behalf of the federal government as it has become inefficient, unsustainable and unsafe for all its users, weakening the available transport infrastructure on a local and statewide level. Yet the federal government has refused to help fund its acknowledged AusLink responsibilities.

The electorate of Springwood is in the middle of the traffic corridor between Brisbane city and the Gold Coast. As such, the electorate is dependent on, and intimately affected by, the Pacific Motorway and its arterial roads. At present the people in my electorate face problems daily as a direct result of the congested motorway. These problems include a real cut in family time, as local people get caught in traffic for hours at a time, and concerns for physical safety as the number of accidents increase.

I previously referred to this current situation as an oversight because I trust that no elected official would knowingly allow the continuation of a situation that is so detrimental to the people they serve. I am fully aware that AusLink is a cooperative venture between state and federal governments, and I inform the House that the Queensland state government has acknowledged the urgent need for the upgrade of the Pacific Motorway with a contribution of \$427 million to the project over the last five years.

No matter who is in power in Canberra, I will be lobbying for this urgently needed funding on behalf of my constituents. That is why I have written to the Prime Minister, all Queensland senators and the federal opposition leader requesting they lend their support to obtaining funding for this vital piece of infrastructure. I quote from two of these letters—

Prime Minister, I am formally requesting that your government re-examine the merits of this application, with a deep consideration for the people whom are most affected by the decision. I join with the people of Springwood and Logan and formally request that the Federal Government match the State Government funding commitment to this project.

To Mr Rudd I wrote—

I am formally requesting that you lend your support to the upgrade, and declare any intention to fund the upgrade should Labor be elected to government. This is an immensely important issue to the people of Springwood and Logan and I look forward to seeing our federal Labor team offer a strong alternative government that acknowledges our needs.

I look forward to a much-needed display of support for the people of Springwood and Logan City. Rather than keep repeating my continued resolve to lobby the federal government to make a commitment to the Pacific Motorway upgrade and its constituents in Springwood, I look to this state budget as a fantastic example of a government responding in a tangible and effective manner to the needs of its people. I intend to speak more specifically about my electorate. Given the hour and knowing that many more members in this House wish to speak in this debate and out of respect for the hardworking parliamentary staff, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This budget has delivered some tremendous physical results for the people in my electorate of Springwood. The two State Government operated roads in Springwood, the Pacific Motorway (part of a national highway which has traditionally been funded 50/50 by State and Federal Governments) and Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road have both received funds in this budget.

The Pacific Motorway has received \$1.89 million to complete concept planning between the Gateway Motorway and Logan Motorway, on the Pacific Motorway. This project will allow my electorate to enjoy greater accessibility to the rest of the State.

There is \$2.73 million for the construction of bikeways on the Pacific Motorway, between Logan Road and Logan River, Logan, with a total State Government contribution of \$8 million.

Furthermore the budget has invested in the safety of Springwood Motorists with \$557,000 in funding being allocated to complete traffic management devices between Underwood and Logan River Bridge, on the Pacific Motorway.

Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road (State Controlled) completed is the duplication from two to four lanes between Cairns Street and Bryants Road, total cost \$8.36 million.

I would like to again draw attention to the residents and businesses who have so patiently endured the inconveniences of construction. This project will greatly benefit our local community, and your patience and co-operation is most appreciated.

Other road works funding for the electorate include \$477,000 for asphalt resurfacing between Magill Street and Chatswood Road, on Springwood Connection Road.

Transport

Equally as important as the Pacific Motorway Upgrade and the roads that service Springwood is the issue of Public Transport. I praise the \$1.2 billion dollar boost to Public Transport in Queensland.

Springwood, Logan, and indeed Queensland as a whole, have experienced larger increases in passenger demand for public services, and this budget has responded magnificently to the growing need allocation \$70 million over four years to provide more services and better links between those services.

This funding will facilitate a world class public transport system, as it secures more and better buses and trains, identifies new and faster routes and builds a network of dedicated bus ways.

The opportunities this creates to construct a public transport service with greater connections and services between all modes of transport will benefit the people of Springwood and Queensland for many years to come.

Education

Education is undoubtedly a steadfast investment in the economic future of our great state, but is also an immeasurable investment in the lives of every individual and community, allowing them to overcome adversity and disadvantage to enjoy new opportunities.

This budgets provision of Education funding is an exemplary feature of a budget geared towards the future.

The 2007-08 Education and Training budget is \$5.928 billion, and I am pleased to see that Springwood schools continue to be included in this investment.

Springwood will be part of a new numeracy initiative, which will help build teacher capacity through professional development programs and the development of teacher resources and training packages, which builds on the Literacy—the Key to Learning: Framework for Action 2006-2008 program that was announced last year.

A further \$35.6 million will be invested over the next four years to improve literacy for students in all schools, with intensive literacy support being offered to upper primary students identified through the Year 5 National Benchmark Tests as needing assistance.

The budgets provision for an additional 192 teaching positions in Queensland in order to meet enrolment growth in our state schools and support students with disabilities is a prodigious investment.

The allocation of \$50 million dollars will support the statewide implementation of the Prep year through the employment of more Prep teachers and the providing professional development for teaching staff.

A particularly noteworthy addition in this budgets Education funding is the \$70 million dollar allocation for the provision of a laptop computer to every teacher in a Queensland State School or TAFE institute. I strongly welcome this step to improve our education system, by equipping our teaching professionals with the best information, training and resources. The schools in my electorate are littered with well intentioned teachers eager for the best resources, not for personal gain, but to enhance their ability to teach our children.

These Statewide initiatives will greatly impact on the quality of the education students in Springwood schools are receiving, however as indicated earlier specific schools in my electorate received money for their identified projects.

- \$33,000 to Springwood State High School for the upgrade of the Performing Arts Community Rooms.
- \$50,000 through the Triple R Maintenance Program for reticulation at Chatswood Hills State School.
- \$50,000 for high priority maintenance related to class rooms at Shailer Park State High School (\$40,000) and Chatswood Hills State School (\$10,000)
- \$29,000 for high priority maintenance related to flooring at Slacks Creek State School.
- \$29,000 for targeted maintenance of building structures and hard external surfaces at Slacks Creek State School (\$20,000) and Kimberly Park State School (\$9,000)
- \$5,000 for targeted maintenance of hard external surfaces at Shailer Park State School.

Police

The record \$1.437 billion dollars in funding for policing in the State Government's 2007-2008 budget will contribute to the safety and security of each and every person in the State. The budget has delivered an additional 200 sworn police positions, taking the number of sworn officers in the Queensland Police Service to 9,928 by October 2008. These additional officers are inline with the increases we have seen across the board to ensure Queensland's services are able to handle the increased population.

However further than this population adjustment increase in police officers, the people of Springwood will benefit from a number of new services. A \$46.7 million dollar call centre will be established to enhance the service delivery of the Police Force. This centre is designed to increase the level of information available to the public and link residents in need with the appropriate level of police assistance.

A new district office at Coomera will begin construction following a \$3.65 million dollar allocation in the budget, creating an increased local police presence on the M1 and faster response times to the traffic matters on the highway.

Both of these new ventures present every day benefits to the people of Springwood. As will the \$135,000 in continued funding for the Logan and Gold Coast based Tactical Crime Squad which targets known crime hotspots with an emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences. The continuation of this funding speaks to the success of the Tactical Crime Squad and the substantial impact it is having on crime in the Logan and Gold Coast areas.

I would at this point like to draw attention to our remarkable State Emergency Services Volunteers. These are a group dedicated individuals whose continual altruistic efforts save lives and assist our emergency services.

Before I discuss the commendable budget allowances for our SES volunteers, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Logan SES team, and team leader Kevin Martin, who recently rescued a group of 15 exchange students from Finland who had become lost in Lamington National Park for two days. The SES volunteers involved in the search located the group after three hours, replenished their supplies and provided them with warm blankets before leading the group out of the bush the next morning.

One of the lessons that we have learnt from recent disasters is that we cannot do without the extraordinary work of Queenslanders volunteers, and our Logan SES volunteers are without a doubt some of our most dedicated emergency responders.

It is then extremely pleasing to note the State Government's funding boost to this group.

This budget includes \$4.1 million as part of a \$17 million dollar commitment over five years to boost preparedness and capability through enhancing the volunteer equipment and improving communication equipment.

Increasing communication equipment will not only boost response capabilities, but will also safeguard our volunteers, and the provision of new equipment like Kevlar helmets and protective clothing will also dually increase the areas our volunteers can search and ensure their safety.

This economically responsible budget is also practical and functional, as demonstrated by its allocation of \$14.3 million over the next five years for upgraded training for our SES volunteers, including online training and first aid training.

Health

I note the State Government's commitment to the Health with a 12% increase in funding as compared to last years budget, swelling the 2007-08 the health budget to \$7.151 billion. This includes \$224.9 million in new funding approved in the 2007-08 State Budget and new capital funding of \$132.2 million in 2007-08.

This reflects this Government's keen intent to deliver to the people a robust health system to the people of Queensland, and the people of Springwood will benefit directly from the increase in funding initiatives like:

- \$1.43 million has been allocated to community organizations under the Home and Community Care program, which provides support and maintenance services for eligible people at home to prevent early admission to residential care.
- \$215.4 million has been provided to improve the working conditions for Queensland Health staff, including visiting Medical officers, Clinical Staff and Administrative Staff in 2007-08 as part of a total package of \$3.48 billion over 3 years.

Sports and Recreation

Springwood's sports and recreation clubs have not been overlooked in the Budget. I mention a few—

- The Springwood Electorate has received \$23,000 towards the construction of a new training field including irrigation and installation of irrigation to an existing field to support Rochedale Rovers Soccer Club at Underwood Park, Rochedale South, with a total State Government of \$47,000.
- The Rochedale South Cricket Club has received \$57,245 to upgrade existing cricket practice facility under the Minor Facilities Program.
- The local bowling community also received a boost with \$115,876 to the Springwood Bowls Club to upgrade one existing grass bowling green to artificial green for lawn bowls under the Minor Facilities Program.
- These projects represent Springwood's eagerness to enjoy high quality sport and recreation facilities in the most environmentally appropriate and water conscious manner.

Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme

The State Government is recognising those people who are doing their bit to save water by buying water-efficient products.

While Logan City Council has withdrawn its rebate scheme, I am pleased that the State Government has acted to continue their commitment to the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme.

The Beattie Labor Government has committed over \$100 million for the Home Waterwise Rebate scheme.

The scheme will continue to offer rebates for water-saving devices such as rainwater tanks, washing machines, shower heads, dual flush toilets and pool covers.

Taxes

The Benjamin Franklin adage that 'In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes,' is a popular commentary on any government's taxation regime. I am delighted however to note this government's commitment to lower the taxation burden on Queensland families.

As the adage implies, taxes are certain, but I am heartened with figures illustrate that per person, taxes are \$131 lower than the average for other states and territories. With the Fuel Subsidy Scheme taken into account, Queenslanders are on average \$257 per person better off.

The 50% cut in mortgage duty from 1 January 2008 will save homebuyers between \$360 and \$500 on home loans between \$250,000 and \$320,000. Followed by a full abolition of mortgage duty from 1 January 2009, this is welcome news for all home buyers, especially those new home buyers attempting to enter a buoyant property market.

The Land tax relief package effective from 1 July 2007 includes cap on land value increases and increased thresholds, providing welcome relief to the people of Springwood.

As I draw to the end of my speech, I would like to note the net tax cuts of \$49 million in 2007-08 due to Budget measures. These cuts are an impressive government commitment to ease the financial burdens on families.

Mr Speaker, I would like to conclude by re-iterating that this government's tenth budget is a strong commitment to build a better and stronger State, and is truly representative of the wants and needs of every Queenslanders.

I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (9.57 pm): It is my pleasure to speak in favour of the appropriation bills and the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill. This is the 10th budget of the Beattie Labor government and the second for the Treasurer, the Hon. Anna Bligh. I congratulate the Treasurer on doing not just a good job but an exceptionally good job for Queensland. This is a responsible budget from a responsible government for a growing state.

This is a budget which leverages on the financial strength of our balance sheet to finance some of the infrastructure which has to be built if Queensland is to continue as the powerhouse of Australia's economy and jobs growth. This is a budget which ensures that, while average Queenslanders are better off today than when the coalition was last in power, some of our fellow Queenslanders are not being left behind. This is a budget which indicates clearly the commitment of this Beattie Labor government to the physical and mental wellbeing of Queenslanders.

Let us have a look at some of the key indicators of this state. Economic growth, the gross state product of this state, is now at five per cent. The average for Australia is only 3.75 per cent. Business investment growth is now at 18 per cent. Employment is growing at three per cent and the unemployment rate in this state is 3.5 per cent. In my electorate of Capalaba it is now below 2.5 per cent. Queensland's growth has outperformed every single state and territory for the last 12 years in a row—and 10 of the 12 years were under this current Labor government.

The coalition has always argued that this is because of the performance of the federal government. I have to say that 10 years ago we did not have an aviation industry in this state. Ten years ago we did not have a power industry in this state. In the last four years or so education sectors have also grown rapidly under this government. This government is also responsible for a surplus in 2006-07 of \$2.393 billion and projected general government negative debt of \$5,931 per capita at June 2007 compared to the average net debt of \$517 per capita in other states. Taxes are \$131 lower than the average for other states and territories. With few subsidy schemes taken into account, Queenslanders are on average \$257 better off.

There is also a 50 per cent cut in mortgage duty from 1 January 2008. Land tax relief packages from 1 July 2007 also include a cap on land value increases. Capital spending of this state is now more than \$14 billion for the year 2007-08, supporting more than 100,000 full-time jobs. There will be \$2.5 billion in water infrastructure, \$5.7 billion for main roads, \$619 million for education and \$630 million for health. As the parliamentary secretary to the minister for environment, I am obviously very interested in expenditure in the sustainable future of this great state. This budget allows for a \$9 billion investment by state and local governments for construction of the SEQ water grid. There is also \$100 million in the WaterWise rebate scheme. Some \$414 million has been allowed for climate change, including \$15 million from the Queensland Renewable Energy Fund to support leading-edge renewable energy technologies. Some \$300 million has also been allocated for a climate change fund with an interest to fund future climate change initiatives. There is also a \$300 million commitment to clean coal technology.

I want to expand a bit on the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill which this government has allowed \$300 million for. It has been said that the backbone of Queensland's economy is mining and agriculture. In the last few years or so that has been expanded to other industries as well. But over 300 billion tonnes of identified resources of black coal are still available in this state, and that will enable us to export that resource for the next 250 to 300 years. Queensland coal production reached a record 160 million metric tonnes in 2003-04. It is probably closer to about 200 million tonnes this year. As a major resource for us, it represents 30 per cent of Queensland's total overseas exports. The coal industry is extremely important because it also employs directly 20,000 people and indirectly over 100,000 people.

But the coal industry is under threat because of global warming and climate change. For the last two years I have been looking into this subject of climate change in the only manner I knew how—as an engineer. My research was based on the strength of science and the power of evidence without the bondage of any emotion. But I have to say that I did not like what I found. I know that there are still some scientists who claim that the global warming that the world is experiencing is only a natural phenomena and that it will be over in a few hundred years. I just hope that we will not be toasted to extinction in the meantime. I also know that there are in effect some people who believe that global warming is a deliberate plot by Jews to overtake the world's economy.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr CHOI: Members should see some of my emails. It is both entertaining and frightening. This evening is not a venue to discuss in detail the validity of global warming. Suffice to say that after two years of reading I have come to the conclusion that global warming is not an act of God but the work of man—and not just a few men but us collectively since James Watt powered up his steam engine fuelled by coal during the Industrial Revolution 150-plus years ago. From then on we fell in love with fossil and carbon based fuel and it is time to pay the price.

In the last few weeks it has been impossible to read the newspaper and watch the news on television without coming across some terminology which until a few short years ago was unheard of in my local Woolies or P&C meetings. 'Climate change' for example was best used to describe the weather of Melbourne on a 15-minute cycle and 'greenhouse effect' referred to some farmers who were able to grow watermelons in winter. But unfortunately it is not that. In the future because of climate change Queensland will experience longer and hotter summers, less rainfall, more evaporation, increased severe storms and cyclone activities and a projected sea level of up to 88 centimetres by the year 2100. By 2030 the Queensland average annual temperature is projected to rise by up to two degrees Celsius and the average rainfall to drop by 13 per cent.

Queensland faces two major challenges—to ensure reliable and adequate water supplies for south-east Queensland, which is adequately provided for by this government in this budget, and to find other ways to reduce emissions from coal-fired power stations. The Queensland government has committed up to \$300 million from the Future Growth Fund to support clean coal research and the industry will provide a further \$6 million, which is the reason for the clean coal bill. The Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill provides a key mechanism for Queensland to contribute to international efforts to develop clean coal technologies and to deploy these technologies to developed countries that heavily depend on coal as an energy source for electricity generation.

According to the International Energy Agency, China and India will install approximately 490,000 megawatts and 134,000 megawatts respectively of new coal-fired generation from 2004 to 2030. That is the equivalent to over 800 Kogan Creek power stations. Global carbon dioxide emissions from power plants are projected to increase by about two-thirds over this period, and China and India alone account for nearly 60 per cent of these increases. I commend the Australian Coal Association's action to date, particularly in forming COAL21 in 2003 to develop a national plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from coal based electricity generation and also in establishing the COAL21 Clean Coal Technology Fund in March 2006 by way of a voluntary levy on Australian black coal producers.

I now move to my electorate of Capalaba. The Beattie government's 10th state budget has delivered funding for a new fire station at Alex Hills. The budget delivered by Treasurer, Anna Bligh, contains a \$500,000 allocation to commence construction of the replacement of the fire station at \$3.75 million. I seek leave to table the budget allocation of my electorate and to have that incorporated in *Hansard*.

Tabled paper: Document detailing the Budget allocation for the Capalaba Electorate.

Leave granted.

This Budget allocated significant funding for the electorate's schools.

- \$45,000 for maintenance at Alexandra Hills State High School
- \$31,000 for repainting at Capalaba State College
- \$10,000 for maintenance at Coolnwynpin State School
- \$50,000 for reticulation at Hilliard State School
- \$50,000 for Birkdale South State School to increase student participation in physical activity and improve eating patterns

This Budget addresses that with a level of funding we have never seen before," he said. It includes:

- \$211,000 towards extensions to the PCYC at Capalaba to incorporate a gymnastics area and multipurpose room
- \$348,000 towards construction of a skateboard and BMX plaza, incorporating connecting skate paths at Capalaba
- \$584,000 across a number of institutions in the Redlands area to improve the stock of books in public libraries
- \$1.32 million to provide post-school support for young adults with a disability and their families as part of an ongoing commitment

Transport and Main Roads funding includes:

- \$46.7 million across a number of electorates, including Capalaba, to continue planning of the Eastern Busway
- \$11.07 million to complete duplication from two to four lanes between Vienna and Redland Bay Roads on Capalaba-Victoria Point Road
- \$106,000 for off-street parking at Capalaba College
- \$78,000 for the planning phase for the duplication from two to four lanes between Tingalpa Creek and Taylor Road
- \$41,000 to complete intersection improvements at Duncan, Taylors, Boundary and Redland Bay Roads

Shire wide commitments from the Beattie Government include:

- \$3.06 million for community organisations under the Home and Community Care program which provides support to provide early admission into residential care.
- \$2.8 million to complete upgrade of Emergency Department at Redland Hospital
- \$584,000 to libraries across Redland Shire
- \$423,000 for the Redland Shire Council Home Assist Secure program
- \$1.33 million for development of Redland Performing Arts Complex

Mr CHOI: In closing, I once again congratulate the Treasurer and also thank the minister for public works and housing for the allocation of \$500 million from the Queensland Future Growth Fund for social housing. The lack of low-cost housing is a major problem for my electorate and indeed for many other MPs in this House. I am pleased to read in this budget that there is an allocation of \$500 million for that purpose. This is the second budget for the Treasurer, the Hon. Anna Bligh, and \$500 million has been allocated for low-cost housing. For 12 years in a row the federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, has yet to allocate any funding for low-cost or affordable housing—for 12 years. While denying that it has any responsibility for housing, the Howard federal government continues to pump billions of dollars into the near collapse of the private rental market. For the last few years rent has gone up by 20 per cent, 30 per cent, 40 per cent or 50 per cent, yet the rental subsidy scheme has only gone up by four per cent per year and my constituency is suffering because of that. I can now go back to my constituents and tell them that this government has understood the problem and has now made an allocation of \$500 million to find a solution for the shortage of affordable housing. For that, I commend the bills to the House.

Mr WENDT (Ipswich West—ALP) (10.10 pm): Tonight I am proud to rise for the first time to support what I believe is a great Labor budget. I know that I speak for everyone on this side of the House when I say how pleased we are at the outcomes of the budget process. I would particularly like to go on record to congratulate the Treasurer on a \$32 billion budget, which cannot be viewed as anything other than fair and visionary.

Importantly, this budget maintains Queensland's AAA credit rating which, of course, allows the state to borrow at cheaper rates and, as such, helps us to maintain our position as the engine room of Australia, which is exactly what Queensland has been for nine years. Everyone knows that this is important because, as the Premier states, we have to keep pace with the additional people moving to Queensland every week and, as such, we have to provide for their needs.

After surpassing four million persons in December 2005, Queensland's population is forecast to continue to grow at a solid rate of two per cent per annum in 2006-07 and 2007-08. This translates into a net addition of 150,000 persons or nearly 1,500 people per week over the next two years. This means that 150,000 extra people will be looking for housing, wanting schools for their children, seeking medical assistance, using our public transport and driving on our road network. This figure is particularly significant when one realises that the Queensland population growth rate of two per cent is superior to that expected across Australia, which is only 1.25 per cent during the same period. If so many people want to come to Queensland each week, we must be doing something right. From what I can work out, this government's strong financial and social record is one of the major reasons so many of those people are attracted to the state.

Mr Moorhead: They are voting with their feet.

Mr WENDT: Exactly; they are voting with their feet. Let us now take a look at the state of the Queensland economy and see where we are at the present time. Firstly, this year's budget sets out a strong net operating surplus of \$2.39 billion and a cash surplus of \$1.7 billion. That is not bad, you might say, but the forecast also indicates a healthy surplus into each of the forward estimate years.

On any issue, this budget shines like a beacon when looked at in the national context. Queensland's economic growth of 5.5 per cent in 2006-07 was considered to be very strong and was driven by strong domestic demand and a recovery in our exports. Even with tough times predicted in the coming years, this rate is expected to remain steady at about five per cent in 2007-08. This figure looks positively fantastic when judged against that of Australia's growth of 2.5 per cent in 2006-07, which I might add is expected to grow to only 3.75 per cent in 2007-08.

This means that, in total, the state's net worth is forecast to increase to \$120 billion in 2007-08 and further rise in the out years of 2010-11 to \$131 billion. This will have the effect of increasing Queensland's per capita net worth in 2007-08 to 55 per cent greater than the average per capita net worth of the other states. It should be recognised that this is not something that we have only now been able to achieve. In fact, this growth rate is even more impressive when one considers that Queensland has been outperforming Australia's national growth rate for 12 consecutive years. That only goes to prove that we must be doing something right in the sunshine state.

Let us turn our attention to some other indicators that also appear to give this budget a big tick. Specifically, I was particularly keen to see that this budget will continue to assist all Queenslanders with employment opportunities right across the state. If we look at the specifics of employment growth, we can see that an above average rate of 4.5 per cent is anticipated in 2006-07. This represents the creation of some 90,000 jobs over the year. However, it is expected that this growth will continue to its long run average of three per cent growth in 2007-08, which represents the creation of more than 150,000 jobs over the next two years. That is a lot of jobs. It means that employment growth will see the state's year average unemployment rate potentially fall to a 33-year low—that is right, a 33-year low—of, as the Premier announced, 3.5 per cent in 2006-07.

Mr Bombolas: What was it?

Mr WENDT: It was 3.5 per cent. This represents a rate well below the national unemployment rate, which is expected to be at about five per cent. This means that all Queenslanders, and particularly our young kids, will have a greater chance of obtaining a satisfying and rewarding career in Queensland, which is something that we should all be proud of.

I am aware that the media has made much of the fact that the budget will provide for a capital program of more than \$14 billion in 2007-08, which is a 15.6 per cent increase on last year. This capital expenditure will directly support around 100,000 full-time jobs and includes infrastructure spending of approximately \$9 billion. This money will be invested directly to increase water supplies and improve the use of current water resources, including funding for desalination and recycled water facilities, new dams and pipelines.

As members can imagine, all of these programs, as well as previous government initiatives, have directly led to business investment in Queensland surging 18 per cent during 2006-07, and I would expect this figure to rise in the coming year. It is also important to recognise that this growth is broad based across the trade, property and service sectors, while public investment in water, transport and energy infrastructure is also expected to grow strongly. As such, I think that it is easy to see why this budget is the biggest infrastructure plan by any state government in the history of Australia. Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh deserve a big pat on the back.

On other matters, this budget also continues to ensure that the Queensland economy has a competitive taxation arrangement. As we know, this government is committed to a schedule of stamp duty abolitions that balance a range of community priorities, including the maintenance of the state's tax competitiveness while, at the same time, funding the delivery of essential community services and the provision of critical infrastructure. That is why the government has committed to the abolition of nine stamp duties of which, to date, seven have already been abolished. This has yielded savings to the taxpayers of \$345 million in 2006-07. I am also pleased to advise that the remaining two stamp duties will be abolished from 1 January 2011, which will have the effect of saving taxpayers around \$5 billion over seven years.

We aim to keep Queensland taxes competitive. That means that on the total tax take from the state government, Queenslanders pay less than any other Australians. In addition, we are the only state that provides a petrol subsidy. All up, it means that every year every Queenslanders is \$257 better off than if they lived in another part of Australia.

In terms of payroll tax, which I am particularly aware of as I have a business background, Queensland has the lowest rate in the country and the highest threshold. Coming from business I can state with authority that this is a good thing for business and a huge incentive for employers to increase their staffing numbers.

When a government has been as successful in supporting businesses as this one and is able to remove or reduce taxes, it will have a positive impact on all members of society. In real terms, this means that for 2007-08 Queenslanders per head will be expected to pay around \$2,226 in tax. This compares favourably with our southern cousins from Victoria, where the figure is \$2,229, and New South Wales where they pay \$2,510 per head. If we include all states—excluding Queensland, of course—a figure of \$2,357 needs to be paid if one lives outside Queensland.

Some of the positive specifics included in the budget include increasing the tax-free threshold for resident individual land tax payers from \$500,000 to \$600,000 as from 1 July 2007. As well, we are now announcing that there will be a cap on the increase in annual average land values at 50 per cent each year for three years for the purpose of calculating land tax liability. This will also be introduced from 1 July 2007 and will have the effect of guaranteeing that those people who have investment properties in very fast-growing markets and very fast-growing areas of the state will not be victims of the big hikes and big jumps that we have seen. I am aware that some land valuations have reportedly jumped by as much as 200 or 300 per cent, and in some parts of central Queensland the hikes have been significantly higher than that.

I am particularly happy to see in the budget an emphasis on developing more affordable public housing stock. I know that Minister Robert Swarten is very pleased with this year's budget announcement of a record Queensland housing assistance package of \$719 million in 2007-08, which underpins the provision of a range of social housing solutions. Funding of \$85 million for 2007-08 is also provided from an injection of additional funding of a massive \$500 million over five years from the Queensland Future Growth Fund. This figure is the largest in the history of this program and certainly is the largest single injection since we have come into government. For that I think all Queenslanders owe this minister a debt of gratitude. In effect, this means that we will see \$500 million go into new public housing, which will take some of the people who are currently in the rental market and living beyond their means into the public housing market. This will alleviate some of the stress and pressure on the current housing market and, hopefully, help those desperately in need.

Importantly for the children who sit in classrooms around my electorate, this government has decided that it would be advantageous for a direct investment in wiring their teachers into the future. This has been achieved with the investment of \$70 million over four years to provide laptop computers

to every teacher in every classroom in every state primary and secondary school in Queensland. But that is not all: every teacher in every TAFE institute will also be included in this fantastic program. As the Premier said, this is about making sure that our teachers are linked to the world. This program will also include the appropriate professional development and training needed to operate these computers so that our teachers continue to keep out in front of the students they are teaching. This technology is really the future of education and Queensland teachers deserve to be right there at the cutting edge of that future.

As every member here knows, one of the things I wanted to achieve in my time in this place is an improvement in the standard of our roads. With this in mind, I must congratulate the Treasurer and the minister for transport for in the 2007-08 year this government will continue its significant program of road infrastructure projects, road related initiatives and investigations to address congestion. The largest areas of expenditure in this budget include \$691 million to begin construction of a second Gateway Bridge, which is estimated to cost around \$1.88 billion; \$384 million to improve traffic flow on the federally funded Ipswich Motorway; and \$134 million towards the construction of the Springfield-Ripley-Yamanto extension, which is scheduled for completion by mid-2009. These are only a sample of the great road initiatives that are funded under this program, and I congratulate the Treasurer and minister on their fine work.

I now turn my attention to how this budget will improve the lives of the people of the Ipswich West electorate. I am proud to announce that my electorate has received a multimillion-dollar windfall, with money for emergency services, schools, community groups, roads and transport and the new Amberley Aerospace Park. I think it would be good to go through many of those allocations here, but I should point out that they are in no particular order. It was great to hear that the government will deliver over \$3 million to purchase and develop land for the Amberley Aerospace Park and also an extra \$350,000 towards developing the Ebenezer Industrial Park. These are landmark projects and they are extremely important for the region. They will boost the local economy and create jobs, jobs and, I hope, more jobs.

In addition, funding for new emergency services infrastructure for the region will include an allocation of \$3.25 million to complete the new Ipswich Ambulance Station based in Ipswich, as well as \$111,000 to commence the new Lowood Auxiliary Fire Station, which will end up costing approximately \$479,000. From talking to the locals in Lowood I am aware that they are eagerly anticipating the new facility as they have certainly outgrown the current station.

As the area that I represent is experiencing unprecedented population growth, it is vital that essential infrastructure is put in place to support my communities. With this in mind I was also delighted to see that the Ipswich West region shared in a \$500 million package to build and upgrade schools. This will have the effect of providing \$450,000 for the Minden State School to commence the development of additional toilet amenities, which will end up costing \$600,000; \$1.54 million to the Fernvale State School for the construction of a general learning area block, which will end up costing around \$1.8 million; and \$550,000 to the Leichhardt State School to commence construction of replacement toilet amenities, which will end up costing around \$900,000. I have visited all of these schools in recent times and can vouch for the fact that this funding will be put to good use. It will improve the learning environment of each of the schools and will be particularly welcomed by all of the children and the staff.

Other schools which will share in over \$200,000 for general maintenance work include \$8,000 for maintenance at the Clarendon State School, \$8,000 for maintenance at Haigslea State School, \$9,000 for maintenance at Ipswich North State School, \$100,000 for maintenance at Ipswich State High School, \$31,000 for repainting at Marburg State School, \$25,000 for maintenance at Rosewood State High School and \$35,000 for repainting of the Rosewood State School.

We all know that it is imperative that we have the right community infrastructure in place for the thousands of new residents who have settled in the region. As such, it was good to see that the budget addressed some of the less sexy items, which included \$13.3 million to continue the construction of the new electricity substation at Abermain, as well as \$3.11 million to add a second transformer and module to the substation at Karrabin. Additionally, over \$40 million will be spent on delivering and completing the construction of the new transmission line from Middle Ridge to Greenbank and associated substation upgrades which cross my electorate.

Additional community funding was also made available by including \$46,000 for water supply services to the lower Lockyer, \$87,000 towards construction of a walkway/cycleway at Jim Finemore Park at One Mile and \$461,000 to Cabanda Aged Care at Rosewood. This allocation was to construct four community managed dwellings for older people which, I understand, will end up costing around \$950,000. I often get the chance to visit this facility and I know that Craig and the board will be very happy to know that their great work will continue and that the older residents of Rosewood and its surrounds will have first-class facilities later in their lives.

In addition, the budget has allocated \$6.25 million to complete the construction of 28 new public housing seniors' units. This accommodation is for low-income earners in the area and will end up costing us over \$7 million. These units will be built in Ipswich and Rosewood and, like the nearly \$1 million for Cabanda, will help alleviate accommodation issues for those older citizens in our

community who are less well off than the rest of us. I would like to go on the record as particularly welcoming the funding allocation of \$447,000 to construct a public housing development as part of the spinal injury initiative. This specialist accommodation will be purpose built to house severely injured people and will end up costing around \$556,000.

On another issue, the budget has also allocated \$637,000 to improve the stock of books in public libraries across the Ipswich region, and \$13,500 for the Ipswich and West Moreton Cricket Association to construct two new shade structures for our young sportspeople.

As I noted in my maiden speech, roads in my area are one of my priorities. As such, I was pleased to note that the budget announced \$1.3 million to complete the widening, repairing and strengthening of the Rosewood-Laidley Road; \$196,890 for an at-grade intersection and traffic improvements at the Toongarra Road-Samford Road intersection outside the Leichhardt State School; \$1.15 million to complete resurfacing on the Karrabin-Rosewood Road; \$97,500 to widen, repair and strengthen Glamorganvale Road; \$199,000 to complete the widening, repairing and strengthening of the roads between Urry Road and the mine entrance outside of Rosewood; \$81,500 for rehabilitation works on the Lowood-Minden Road; \$427,000 to complete the provision of route lighting between Brisbane Street and the Warrego Highway; \$277,000 to complete the provision of traffic management devices between East Street and the Warrego Highway; and \$303,000 to continue the planning study for the Brisbane Valley interchange which, I might add, is a federally funded road.

This budget puts Queensland far ahead of the pack in terms of building the physical and social infrastructure that we need. That is infrastructure that we need now and into the future. It is also a budget with heart and a budget that delivers the services upon which Queenslanders who are vulnerable or in need rely from this state government. It is a budget that builds our health system, it is a budget that looks after people with a disability or a mental illness, and it is a budget that looks after those who need public housing and education. As such, I commend this budget to the House.

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.26 pm): I would like to congratulate the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Anna Bligh, on her second state budget. And what a great budget it is. There is something in it for everyone. It is a true Labor style budget. No-one is left behind.

It is with great pleasure that I respond to the 2007-08 budget as the member for Bulimba. Every day I feel honoured and proud to represent the people of Bulimba here in the Queensland parliament. The Bulimba electorate is a very special part of Brisbane. It takes in the suburbs to the south of the Brisbane River, including Bulimba, Hawthorne, Balmoral, Morningside, Cannon Hill, Norman Park, Murarrie and parts of Carina and Camp Hill. I would like to pay tribute to the residents of my electorate. They are generous, close-knit and caring people. When someone has a problem, they all have a problem. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land that makes up the Bulimba electorate—the Tugulawa people.

In recent times Bulimba has gone from being one of the best kept secrets to one of the most trendy, popular and entertaining places to be. The heart of Bulimba is Oxford Street. It is famous for its great dining and entertainment. Oxford Street is a fantastic place to spend an afternoon browsing through unique little boutiques, catching a movie at Brisbane's cheapest independently owned movie theatre or sharing an affordable and delicious meal with friends.

Despite being the Minister for Emergency Services I am very mindful that my job, as the representative of the people of Bulimba, comes first. Every time I rise to speak in this place I feel humbled by the privilege and feel committed to getting the best deal for the people in my area. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I am pleased to rise tonight to discuss the 2007-08 State Budget which provides substantial funding for the key areas of vital infrastructure, health, education, transport and of course emergency services.

In 2007-08 the Health Budget is providing additional funds to strengthen our health system through recruiting and retaining skilled staff, continuing major capital infrastructure projects across the state and upgrading the information and communication technology capacity of Queensland Health.

The Beattie Government's Health Action Plan is in its second year and benefits from an increase of 12% taking Queensland Health's Budget in 2007-07 to a massive \$7.15 billion.

Queenslanders are seeing results from the Government's record expenditure—with a significant increase in the number of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals in 2007-08.

The Bulimba electorate will share in this health funding including:

- \$50 million for the upgrade of the Emergency Department at the Princess Alexandra Hospital; and
- an additional \$9.5 million—taking this year's total of \$34.4 million to fund another operating theatre at the Mater Hospital; and for the recurrent costs of the Mater Hospital's redevelopment project resulting in an increase in maternity, neonatal, and adult public hospital and outpatient services.

Queenslanders deserve a fast and reliable emergency response 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Our ambo's are doing a great job providing a world-class ambulance service and we want to support them with the resources that they need.

As the Minister for Emergency Services I am pleased to be responding to this Budget which provides the biggest injection of funds to the Queensland Ambulance Service.

This State Budget is creating history with the single biggest increase in ambulance staff in one year, on top of the 220 extra staff recruited last year.

One of the central features of the Budget is the massive funding boost to provide for the recruitment of 250 new ambulance staff in 2007-08.

Other highlights include the commissioning of over 140 new ambulance vehicles, 3 new stations and 17 redeveloped or replacement ones, as well as around 135 new life-saving defibrillators in 2007-08.

The QAS Budget also provides funding to directly benefit the people of Bulimba with \$2.207 million for the commencement of the replacement ambulance station at Balmoral.

Tenders for this project closed at the end of May. The Department of Emergency Services is currently evaluating the submissions received. It is expected that a tender announcement should be made later on this month.

The Department advises me that excluding any delays practical completion should be achieved by the end of November.

Mr Speaker, the replacement Balmoral Ambulance Station will be a first-class facility for paramedics to provide an even more responsive ambulance service to the residents of my area.

QAS paramedics are some of the most highly trained anywhere in the world, and the replacement station will help them to better service the people of Bulimba and surrounding suburbs.

This Budget will deliver the services and infrastructure needed to build a better future for all Queenslanders and in particular the people of my electorate.

The 2007-08 Budget invests in knowledge, skills and education.

Mr Speaker, our children are our future. This Budget recognises the importance of educating our children in the best facilities, with the best resources and the best teachers.

The Beattie Government has committed \$70 million to ensure every state school teacher is provided with a laptop. This will ensure that in every state primary and secondary school—our teachers will have the technology to make their jobs easier.

Mr Speaker, with the money in this budget we will be building better classrooms and upgrading facilities to give our children the best learning opportunities.

In my electorate the Bulimba State School received \$20,000 for maintenance in this year's Budget and I thank the Minister for Education for this contribution.

I would like to pay tribute to Michael Zeuschner who has been the Principal at the school for the past 12 years and has seen the school's numbers increase each year.

This school has a rich history in the local area with families having their second, third and fourth generations attend Bulimba State School. The school is a credit to the Principal Michael Zeuschner and his dedicated band of teachers who are committed to making the school the best school it can be.

The new eight classroom block is nearing completion and I thank the Minister for Education, Rod Welford, for his support for this outstanding school.

I would also like to mention the Norman Park State School which is a great little state school in my area that has some fantastic, state-of-the-art facilities. In 2003 the school was heritage listed. Many of the classrooms are the old red brick variety with some modern wings constructed from timber.

In 2005 a \$4 million building project was completed, providing the school with a 3 storey, architecturally designed, eight classroom block and an undercover assembly area.

Norman Park School has several unique features including a farm containing chickens, guinea pigs as well as vegetable bush tucker gardens.

This year's State Budget provides \$150,000 to commence construction of additional amenities. Principal Andrew Walker and his wonderful team have worked hard to see this school grow in strength.

I would also like to talk about Murarrie State School which is a great school in my area that is big on learning. I was extremely pleased to see that in this year's Budget, \$70,000 has been allocated to Murarrie State School for the development of a Cultural Research Centre. This funding will mean so much to this school and I know that Principal Tina Gruss and the hardworking Murarrie School community will ensure that this money is well spent.

Balmoral State High School is the only state high school in my electorate. This year we welcomed Debbie Ward as the new principal. I know that Debbie is looking forward to working with her wonderful team to ensure that Balmoral High School continues its innovative programs and remains a leader in cutting edge education.

The funding allocated to Balmoral High in this year's budget for reticulation, repainting and maintenance at the school is most welcome.

As well as Sts Peter & Paul's Catholic Primary School, the Bulimba electorate is also home to St Oliver Plunkett Catholic Primary School at Cannon Hill and St Thomas Catholic Primary School at Camp Hill. Both are very popular and respected schools.

This Government is committed to giving our children the best learning opportunities possible. We've introduced a prep year in all Queensland primary schools.

In March this year I had the pleasure of attending the official opening of the new prep year facilities, refurbished classrooms and the new administration building at St Oliver Plunkett's by His Grace, Archbishop Bathurst.

There are also two private colleges, Lourdes Hill College and the Cannon Hill Anglican College. Both these colleges are highly respected and well known for their excellence in education.

I acknowledge that with so many outstanding private colleges throughout the Brisbane area, it is due to the outstanding commitment and dedication of their principals. Narelle Mullens at Lourdes Hill and Robyn Bell at Cannon Hill are no exception to that.

Morgan Innes was a well-liked and very talented young student at Lourdes Hill. I would like to extend my condolences to her family and friends following their heart-breaking loss of this beautiful young girl.

I would also like to commend the Premier for his recent announcement that five talented young Queensland ice skaters will have the chance to chase their Olympic dreams with \$50,000 in funding to help establish the first Morgan Innes Scholarships in Queensland.

The scholarships, are to be awarded through the Morgan Innes Foundation and administered by Ice Skating Australia. They will enable Queensland figure skaters to go abroad and learn from leading figure-skating trainers around the world.

Morgan's memory will live on and this new initiative will help budding young ice-skater's like Morgan realise their dreams.

Mr Speaker, this Budget also provides for unprecedented levels of transport infrastructure and public transport services across the state.

The State Budget has invested in a record \$1.2 billion in public transport infrastructure and service improvements in 2007-08.

The Beattie Government is boosting services with \$70 million over four years to accommodate growth in demand on public transport.

There is a massive \$1.88 billion to start the duplication of the Gateway Bridge and upgrade of the motorway which will greatly benefit the residents of my electorate.

I would like to thank the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Paul Lucas, for helping to expand the popular Nightlink Service to the Bulimba area.

Back in May I was pleased to see the introduction of the Nightlink service to help late-night revellers on the weekend get home to Hawthorne, Bulimba, Balmoral and Morningside.

The existing NightLink 226 bus route that used to travel directly along Wynnum Road, now travels via Hawthorne Road, Lytton Road, Thynne Road and Burrai Street before rejoining Wynnum Road.

As a parent myself I am pleased to see this service provided in my local area—to ensure young people can get home quickly and safely after a night out on the town.

Mr Speaker, this Budget is a wonderful result for Bulimba, and for the state as a whole.

There can be no doubt that the Beattie Government is once again showing its commitment to Queenslanders.

Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (10.29 pm): It is with great pleasure and pride in the Queensland Labor government that I rise to support the appropriation bills and the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill. This is a budget that lays the foundation for our state's future and the sustainable development of far-north Queensland.

The Queensland economy is booming and has outperformed the other Australian states for 11 consecutive years. Growth is running at 5.5 per cent and is forecast at five per cent for 2007-08. Contrary to the claims by the opposition, Queensland's strong economy has not happened by accident. Prudent and responsible economic management over the past nine years of this Labor government has created the conditions for our record \$14 billion capital program. More than half of that will be spent outside south-east Queensland.

The infrastructure program will be partly funded by borrowings. Incurring modest debt distributes the burden of financing new public works across the generations that stand to benefit. The budget is again in surplus and is projected to remain in surplus for the out years. Queensland maintains its AAA credit rating enabling its borrowings to be made on attractive terms.

One of this government's finest achievements is reducing unemployment to four per cent, the lowest rate for 33 years.

A government member: 3.5.

Mr WETTENHALL: It is now down to 3.5 per cent, which is the most recently announced figure. When the Premier announced a target of five per cent some people said it could not be done. Thankfully, they have been proven wrong.

Although the government has adjusted transfer duties on motor vehicles with the aim of encouraging the use of fuel efficient vehicles, Queensland still remains a low-tax state. Seven state taxes have been abolished since 2001, and overall budget measures deliver a net tax cut of \$49 million. That might be one of the reasons that 900 people flock to this state every week. Queensland's population is growing at two per cent—well ahead of the Australian figure of 1.25 per cent. But population growth of that magnitude puts pressure on public infrastructure and services. That is why this government is building tomorrow's Queensland today with new schools, hospitals, police stations, public transport and roads.

Population growth also puts pressure on house and land prices. Housing affordability has become an issue of great significance in this state and elsewhere, and this budget contains a number of initiatives to make buying a home in Queensland more affordable. The land tax threshold has been increased from \$500,000 to \$600,000 and increases are capped at 50 per cent, averaged across three years. Mortgage duty is cut by 50 per cent from 1 January 2008, saving homebuyers between \$360 and \$500 on home loans between \$250,000 and \$320,000. The duty will be abolished by 1 January 2009.

In a historic injection of funds for social housing, \$500 million has been allocated from the Future Growth Fund, creating 1,700 units of accommodation for those in need. More than any other, this measure demonstrates Labor's commitment to those disadvantaged members of our community who have not fared so well in our prosperous times. I am pleased that I have played a role in reaching agreements that will see new and redeveloped Indigenous housing in the community of Korowra, and I am now working with members of the Kuranda community to identify social housing needs. I expect I will be lobbying for some of those new funds to be allocated to areas of high need in my electorate.

Labor will never desert the vulnerable in our community and our ideals of social justice—foolishly derided by members of the opposition as socialist leftism—will be embraced by Queenslanders who want a fair go for everyone and do not want people left behind. That is why Queenslanders will also welcome Labor's measures to improve services for the mentally ill with a \$528 million injection of funds for hospital and community based mental health services. One in five Queenslanders will experience mental illness in their lifetime. Those who suffer mental illness and their families, friends and carers deserve the best possible care, treatment and support.

The budget also increases funding to enhance disability services with an extra \$237.4 million in recurrent funds and \$136.7 in capital funding. I am sure that the members of the Regional Disability Council, of which I am an ex officio member, will support regional funding of \$9.9 million for Home and Community Care, \$5.8 million to support people with a disability to live and participate in their community and \$2.8 million for respite support for families of people with a disability.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the passion and dedication of the members of the Regional Disability Council—Robert Pyne, Elsie Butler, George Theobald, Doreen Mortimore, Doug Robins, John O'Brien, Patrick Heraghty and Suzy Murdoch—who work so hard to obtain improved services for people with a disability. I also want to acknowledge all those volunteers and paid—some would say underpaid—workers in the sector who strive with skill and compassion to improve the quality of life of people with a disability and their families, friends and carers.

One such organisation in my electorate which is full of dedicated staff is St John's Community Care Ltd. Under the guidance of Theo Bacalakis, St John's has 20 permanent staff and approximately 140 casual staff. I would like to personally acknowledge the chairman of directors, Father Con Tscalos, director and parish priest; Margaret Hart, coordinator of Home Assist Secure; Wendy Phillips, disability services manager; Trisha Williams, general manager; and David Hargreaves, the coordinator of aged-care services. In this budget, St John's will receive \$321,000 for private housing, Home and Community Care and the home modifications program, as well as \$563,000 for the Home Assist Secure program.

Nothing is more important than the health of our community. This budget allocates additional funds to the Health Action Plan. I am also pleased that specialist services in Cairns will receive a boost with \$1.87 million for enhanced cardiac and cancer services at Cairns Base Hospital and \$1 million to commence planning of the \$11.1 million expansion of the Cairns Base Hospital emergency department. I am also pleased that a further \$743,000 has been allocated for the drug court trial at Cairns, which diverts people from the criminal justice system into treatment for drug dependency and addiction.

This budget also contains a number of measures designed to combat both the causes and effects of climate change. Queensland leads Australia in tackling this most complex and pressing issue. The amount of \$414 million will be spent on climate change initiatives, including \$50 million for a renewable energy fund to support leading edge renewable energy technologies, \$300 million to create a climate change fund—the interest from which will fund future climate change initiatives—and \$64.25 million for other programs including an energy savings fund.

As part of the government's climate change strategy, a new state planning policy for climate change will be developed. The Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill 2007 is an important component of the Beattie government's climate change strategy, which is leading the way to a low-carbon future by working towards achieving deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

The bill also establishes the Clean Coal Council, which will provide advice on the best and most viable clean coal technology projects. The council will recommend which projects deserve priority in funding with the aim of accelerating the deployment of clean coal technology. Achieving such cuts is vital because 80 per cent of Queensland electricity is produced by coal-fired power stations. Power stations in Queensland account for 40 per cent of Queensland emissions or 58.8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year. If nothing is done to curb these emissions, by 2030 emissions would be 200 per cent higher than at year 2000 levels. Accordingly, the coal industry has the highest responsibility to respond to the challenges posed by climate change.

Because there is no quick-fix solution to climate change and because it is acknowledged that cleaner coal technologies will take time to be developed and deployed, the government has devised a climate change strategy that includes a diverse range of short-, medium- and long-term policies that meet our obligations to tackle climate change and secure our state's economic future and our continued prosperity.

Meanwhile, the federal coalition government, after years of burying its head in the sand, is still dragging its heels on climate change policy. Only in the wake of the political and policy lead taken by state Labor governments and federal Labor have the conservatives been driven by the polls to begin to consider the issue seriously.

The Queensland coalition's only contribution to the debate has been the introduction of ill-conceived legislation to establish a voluntary carbon trading scheme which was rightly consigned to the dustbin of political stunts by the Queensland parliament this week. I am conscious of the hour and I seek leave to incorporate the balance of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In the Barron River Electorate

In my electorate of Barron River, the focus is on schools, roads and sporting facilities to meet the needs of our rapidly growing communities. Every corner of my diverse electorate derives a benefit from this Budget.

Schools

Major projects include \$9.6 million to complete Stage Two of Redlynch State College and will commence planning for Stage Three. Significant improvements will also be made at Edge Hill, Yorkey's Knob and Trinity Beach State Schools.

In a new initiative costing \$70 million, every teacher in state schools will be provided with a laptop computer.

Schools in my electorate will also benefit from a new \$2.5 million program which provides professional support teachers and learning support teams to schools with high numbers of Indigenous students.

A new numeracy initiative is funded building on the literacy program announced last year continuing the drive to improve literacy and numeracy for all students from prep to year 12.

Roads

Major road improvements will also be made to the Captain Cook Highway and the Cairns Western Arterial Road on bridges, intersections and roundabouts.

The busy Redlynch Intake Road will be widened and shoulders sealed at a cost of \$205,000 and \$35,000 has been allocated to construct bikeways and footpaths along its length. This will improve safety for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists but is particularly important for school students at the rapidly growing Redlynch State College and St. Andrews Catholic College—both close to one another and both to become P-12 schools.

Cairns Airport

- Redevelopment of the Cairns Airport domestic terminal has already commenced with \$52 million allocated towards a total project cost of \$139 million.
- \$3.09 million will be provided to upgrade the main airport runway with a total cost of \$9.17 million.

These major airport improvements will underpin predicted passenger growth and, as well as improving the travel experience of all airport users, are vital to support the regions \$2.4 billion tourism industry.

Tourism

Budget measures to support tourism include \$50 million for tourism promotion and industry development and the implementation of the Queensland Tourism Strategy including continued funding for Tourism Tropical North Queensland and new funds to appoint a destination management officer.

Electricity Supply

As residential and tourism related development proceeds apace in my electorate, \$27 million will be spent by Ergon Energy reinforcing supply to the northern beaches suburbs of Cairns.

Wastewater Treatment

Major funding of \$5.665 million has also provided for upgrading the Northern Treatment Plant which will increase capacity and improve the quality of wastewater enhancing protection of the Great Barrier Reef.

Regional Planning

Funding of \$200,000 for the Far North Queensland Statutory Regional Plan 2025 will ensure that predicted population growth of 3,500 every year in the region is managed in a way that protects our precious natural areas like the Daintree, protects high quality agricultural land and provides a framework for private and public investment in the region.

Using up the latest data, a legislated urban footprint will guide residential and commercial development which is particularly important in the high growth coastal areas north and south of Cairns. This will help to ensure infrastructure decisions are based on sound modern and planning principles.

I am very optimistic that FNQ 2025 will play a key and enduring role in guaranteeing a sustainable future for the region and I am delighted to be a member of the Regional Planning Advisory Council that will advise the Minister for Local Government and Planning on the development of the plan.

Sport and Recreation

Mr Speaker, the lifestyle of far northerner's is the best in the world. Providing opportunities for sport and recreation is a key part of the Government's commitment to healthy and active lifestyles.

That's why I am particularly pleased that \$900,000 has been allocated toward construction of a multisport facility on land adjacent to St Andrews Catholic College at Redlynch.

With matching funds from the Cairns City Council, the facility will provide much needed courts, ovals and associated infrastructure in one of the fastest growing areas in Cairns.

The freshwater valley and surrounding suburbs of Brinsmead, Freshwater, Kamerunga, Caravonica contains a high proportion of families with children, exactly the demographic that will gain maximum benefit from this project.

Other sport and recreation projects that will benefit people are \$116,479 for the construction of an amenities building for the Redlynch junior soccer club and \$75,000 for extensions to the Redlynch Skate Park.

In addition, \$593,000 is provided for the construction of a 25m eight lane swimming pool at the Kuranda District State College at Myola. This project is the realisation of a dream of a committed bunch of Kuranda locals who have campaigned for many years to achieve this result.

When I lived in Kuranda, and then represented the area as a candidate, I was very happy to support that campaign and am thrilled the dream has become a reality. The pool is on track for completion in early 2008.

Complementing the pool and improving the safety of students travelling to school by bicycle is \$10,000 for construction of extensions to the bikeway at Myola.

Kuranda locals will also benefit from the continuation of a popular, innovative and successful recreation program with funding of \$52,000 to the Ngoonbi Co-op Society for the employment of one full-time and one part-time sport and recreation officers.

James Cook University

Mr Speaker, the Cairns Campus of James Cook University is located on a spectacular site nestled at the foot of world heritage listed rainforest and adjoining the Smithfield Conservation Park at Smithfield, right in the heart of my electorate. JCU has positioned itself as Australia's leading tropical research university.

The university is enjoying strong enrolment growth and is forging strong partnerships with industry and the wider community.

Cairns is now a university city, and education and research will play an increasingly important role in the local economy and in the intellectual and cultural life of the community.

The Beattie Government plays a key role in facilitating the establishment of infrastructure at the university and supporting the research effort that increasingly takes advantage of locational comparative advantage in areas such as tropical medicine, biosciences, forestry and tourism.

World leading research on the impact of climate change on the wet tropics and mitigation and adaptation measures is taking place at JCU.

That is why the Government's investment of \$2 million towards the establishment of the Australian Tropical Forest Institute, ably led by Executive Director Professor Steve Turton is well justified.

The new Australian Tropical Forest Institute is destined to be a centre of excellence resulting in better tropical forest conservation and sustainable use, including business and research opportunities.

The main purpose of the ATFI will be to encapsulate the potential offered by the wet tropics region by creating a world-leading centre of 'tropical landscapes' research, knowledge brokering and management, through co-location, collaboration and regional partnerships.

ATFI will ensure Queensland continues its excellence in tropical science. The Australian Tropical Forest Institute facilitates co-location, collaboration and regional partnerships of key players in the sustainable use and management of tropical forest landscapes. ATFI hosts research, Government and non-Government organisations and conducts a high profile research program in the Tropical Landscapes Joint Venture (TLJV). Other projects located at AFTI are:

- Australian Tropical Herbarium
- Centre for Sustainable Indigenous Communities
- Centre for Tropical Agritech Research (CTAR)
- CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems
- Earthwatch Institute: Rainforest to Reef Conservation Research Initiative
- JCU/CSIRO Tropical Landscapes Joint Venture
- Marine and Tropical Science Research Facility (MTRSF) / Reef & Rainforest Research Centre Ltd

The Queensland Government's Department of State Development and Innovation (DSDI) provided \$9.6 million from Smart State Research Facilities Fund (SSRF) in 2002 to construct the ATFI building on the James Cook University campus in Cairns. The magnificent new building is soon due for completion.

Complementing this funding is \$125,000 to complete the co-location of the herbarium at the AFTI. At one point, the herbarium was slated for re-location out of far north Queensland, so I am particularly pleased that this magnificent collection of tropical plants will remain in the north for the lasting benefit of teaching and research.

The Herbarium will combine collections from the Australian National Herbarium in Atherton, the Queensland Herbarium in Mareeba and James Cook University campuses with state-of-the-art molecular science laboratories essential for modern plant research.

In November last year I joined the Minister for State Development, John Mickel, then James Cook University Vice Chancellor Professor Bernard Moulden (now retired) and CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems' acting Chief Dr Brian Keating to launch the Australian Tropical Herbarium and the Tropical Landscapes Joint Venture.

The Tropical Landscapes Joint Venture has been established as a vehicle for developing a collaborative program of research to underpin the sustainable management of tropical landscapes, including the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area.

Environment

Mr Speaker, I am also very pleased that other environmental projects have been funded in this year's Budget. Perhaps the most significant of these is \$375,000 to Cairns City Council for the first branch of funding for the development of the Cattana Wetlands project.

The Cattana wetlands site covers an area of 100 hectares and was once used for sand mining. This project will restore wetlands, re-establish vital habitat and flora links and create recreational space in an area between Yorkey's Knob and Smithfield.

The Cattana Wetlands area represents an integral component of the low forests of Far North Queensland, with valuable features such as the rare feather palm forest freshwater lake and saltwater lakes.

Key infrastructure such as access roads, car parking facilities, walking tracks and toilet amenities will be constructed to complement extensive revegetation, weed removal and interpretive opportunities.

The project aims to recreate the wetlands as a significant regional park. Its immediate proximity and accessibility to Cairns city is an obvious choice for development as a regional park providing nature-based recreation.

Cairns City Council will contribute matching funds and develop the Cattana Wetlands area. The project will be completed in stages, with completion expected in mid-2009.

Groups such as Landcare, James Cook University and the Cairns Ornithological Society have all expressed interest in the Wetlands.

Construction of this passive recreational facility will also contribute to boosting the tourism potential of the Northern Beaches area. To that end, I have already held discussions with Tourism Tropical North Queensland with a view to exploring the potential tourism synergies that may exist with the East Trinity Environmental Park declared in August 2006.

The Budget also commits \$926,000 to Cairns City Council for the redevelopment of the Botanic gardens and tanks precinct. This precinct is of great importance to locals and visitors alike. It includes features of environmental, historical and cultural significance.

The tanks were used during World War II for the storage of oil and diesel for navy ships. The tanks have now been renovated for use for cultural purposes. The botanic gardens were first started in 1890 and moved to the current site in 1967.

\$70,000 is allocated for the erections of barriers and signs at Kamerunga conservation park. This will help stop illegal and inappropriate vehicle entry to the park and allow regeneration of areas damaged by vehicle traffic and will be especially welcomed by park users and volunteers who have told me they have planted trees in the park only to have them destroyed by vehicles.

Police and emergency services

Other Budget initiatives that I am particularly pleased about are, extra funding for equipment and training for SES volunteers, 200 extra police and 250 extra ambulance officers and a new emergency helicopter to be based in Cairns.

If I have my way, some of those new police officers will find their way to Smithfield police station where \$700,000 of a total \$1.5 million is being spent this year upgrading the station. As part of that project, a holding cell will be constructed which, as well as improving security, will save a lot of officer time from having to transport those in custody to Cairns station.

New Neighborhood Centres

Construction of a new neighborhood centre is well underway in Kuranda and I am working closely with the management and staff of the Marlin Coast neighborhood centre to identify an appropriate site to locate their new \$1.5 million centre.

Bikeways

Mr Speaker, Cairns is a great place to ride a bicycle and the popularity of cycles and cycling is booming. Not surprisingly then, one of the things I am asked most often about is cycle lanes and pathways.

In addition to the two I have already mentioned, I am delighted that the Government has allocated \$66,788 for construction of a shared bikeway linking the beachside suburbs of Machan's Beach and Holloway's beach. These communities are close-by as the crow flies but are separated by waterways and at present can only be reached by returning to the Captain Cook Highway—which is impractical for walkers or cyclists.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, this budget delivers works and services and election commitments based on Labors core values of economic responsibility, social justice, and environmental sustainability.

I congratulate the Treasurer and commend the bill to the House.

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (10.40 pm): With pleasure I rise to speak on the very important Appropriation Bill 2007. I am very proud to stand here as the member for Surfers Paradise and reply to the budget. I will speak about local issues first and acknowledge the support for Bellevue Park State School which has received an extra allocation for an extension of its assembly hall which I have been in. That is greatly appreciated by the people of Bellevue Park. I would like some clarification, if possible, in relation to a report in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. In the very skinny section of the budget allocated to Surfers Paradise it was reported that there was an allocation to Benowa State High for an arts hall. I could not find that anywhere in the capital statement. I would certainly be happy, along with Principal Mark Rickard, if at some stage we could get that arts hall for Benowa State High. I will keep lobbying for that if the *Gold Coast Bulletin* was actually mistaken in its information yesterday.

Police stations are always very important on the Gold Coast where we have a high incidence of tourist influx and a transient population. Last year allocations were announced in relation to Coomera and Surfers Paradise. The district police station at Coomera will not be completed this year, according to the capital statements. The one in Surfers Paradise certainly will not. I note that the allocation for Surfers Paradise has had to go up to \$4 million from \$2.7 million, but we certainly welcome a police station in the middle of Surfers Paradise in Orchid Avenue. I know that my friend, the member for Robina, would like to have an allocation for his police station which is in George Avenue at Broadbeach. The police there certainly work in very difficult circumstances. And, of course, the member for Robina would like an allocation for stations at Varsity Lakes and Ashmore as well.

I also note with concern police numbers. There will be 200 new police for the whole state. That is down 150 on last year's allocation of 350. I note with concern the attrition rate of two to three per cent in the Police Service, which is up to nearly 10,000 police, which means that we will be losing 200 to 300 a year. I have concerns about whether we are providing enough police when at the Gold Coast there is a great need for more police in many areas, especially in Surfers Paradise which is the heart of the Gold Coast.

The member for Robina has mentioned that of a \$14 billion capital budget when he was counting out the numbers—so I will let him wear the blame for this—there is a mere \$115 million in new projects for the Gold Coast which, of course, is the second largest city in Queensland.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: Exactly, that is right. I will take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. Even though we are representing very vigorously on behalf of the Gold Coast sometimes our Labor members are not as active in their representations as they could be. I also note money announced earlier this year for the extension of the convention centre. We welcome that because it has been a great success.

Mr Lawlor: I will be opening a fete in your electorate on Saturday. Where will you be?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the member for notifying me of his attendance in my electorate.

Mr Lawlor: Where are you going to be?

Mr LANGBROEK: I will be at the Rural Doctors conference speaking to rural doctors. I also note the very disappointing increase of 5c a kilometre in the travel subsidy for people under the travel scheme. The member for Burdekin would be very disappointed with that on behalf of her constituents.

This is the second budget of the Treasurer and Deputy Premier who is in the chamber and I would like to make the comment that I think that it is a very big spending budget. As many members have said before, it is typical of a Labor Deputy Premier. As the health spokesman, I noted with concern a simple line in the Deputy Premier's speech and that was that there was a budget increase of 12 per cent to \$7.15 billion for Queensland Health in 2007-08. I woke up the next morning at about four o'clock and thought, '12 per cent? Boy, that is a big increase.' And, of course, the AMA had also put out a press release saying they welcomed an increase of 12 per cent to \$7.15 billion. I had a look at the Ministerial Portfolio Statement and the Deputy Premier's speech and thought, 'These numbers don't add up'. Last year's budget was \$6.64 billion and the actual estimate was \$6.8 billion, so actually \$6.8 billion was spent. And 12 per cent on top of \$6.64 billion does not get to \$7.15 billion. I was looking because I know how much the Treasurer loves to pick on people who do not get their numbers right. She loves to come in here in her charming way and have a go at people who do not quite get their statistics right.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: That's right, a little bit of Pinocchio happening there. Then I noted that there was a press release from the Minister for Health dated 5 June that said that last year they increased the budget to \$6.38 billion, which was clearly not right. The health minister was not aware of what the allocation had been in last year's budget. He dropped out \$250 million. The Treasurer had taken the health minister's word as gospel and had failed to crunch the numbers herself, which I think is very disappointing given the number of staff that she and the health minister have. In fact, the health budget has increased from \$6.64 billion to \$7.15 billion—money which of course is welcomed but which is actually an increase of 4.95 per cent.

Normally I would be far more gracious about a mistake such as that because 4.95 per cent is still a significant increase in real terms. In medical terms it is significant because, as most people realise, with advances in technology and surgical techniques medical inflation runs consistently higher than increases in the CPI and 4.95 per cent does not cover medical inflation. Clearly, 12 per cent is incorrect. I look forward to the Treasurer and the health minister putting out corrections about this fallacious 12 per cent increase in the Queensland Health budget and proof that they have not got it right when they add up their numbers.

The 4.9 per cent increase is welcome but, when one considers expenses, it puts a lie to the statement that the government will fix the health crisis plaguing Queensland Health. Let us have a closer look at the numbers. As I said, the estimated actual figure for Queensland Health is \$6.8 billion and on these figures the increase in the health budget is just over \$300 million. Last year out of \$6.8 billion, \$4 billion was for employee expenses and wage rises. This year that amount has increased by \$500 million. Employee expenses have gone up \$500 million and the budget increase is only \$300 million. Contrary to the spin that we are getting from this government, there is no extra money to solve the many crises in public hospitals, no extra money to decrease the waiting lists or conciliate with medical radiation professionals and other allied health professionals and scientists left out in the cold in wage negotiations. In fact, there will be less money after the wage rises have been allocated. Obviously if more is spent in one area something has to be cut back and we need to have information in relation to where these cutbacks will be occurring. The government is big on taxation but poor on providing services.

On the same page as the alleged 12 per cent increase, which was actually a 4.95 per cent increase in the budget, the Treasurer spoke about a net increase of doctors by 1,000, 3,000 nurses and more than 1,000 allied health professionals and scientists. But since June 2005 6,000 doctors, nurses and allied health professionals have left Queensland Health. This statistics of resignations shows that all is not well in Queensland Health, which is something the opposition has been saying for a long time.

We have a high-taxing, high-spending, big-borrowing and poor service-providing government, giving us voodoo economics. We have electricity bills with ambulance levies on them and now we have a stamp duty increase supposedly to provide mental health funding. If you landed in Queensland from another planet and heard that this was how taxes were raised and how they were supposedly linked, you would not believe it could be possible. It is evidence of the arrogance of the Beattie government—a government that thinks it can say anything and do anything and get away with it.

More evidence of this big taxation comes in the *Queensland state budget 2007-08 at a glance* document. The stamp duty increases on motor vehicles which we will all have to pay every time we buy a car—whether it is second hand or new—are listed in the budget highlight documents under the heading 'Competitive taxes' as a virtue. The increase in stamp duty is highlighted as a virtue—there will be 'changes to motor vehicle duty rates from 1 January 2008'.

Mr Stevens: More tax as a virtue.

Mr LANGBROEK: More tax sold as a virtue; I take that interjection from the member for Robina.

It is voodoo economics when the government says there are net tax cuts of \$40 million, because we know the government is giving back revenue it promised under the GST agreement but taking \$80 million in the first year with the motor vehicle registration increases. I also note the concerns of my National Party colleagues that there are eight-cylinder diesel vehicles that are more efficient than some six-cylinder vehicles and there are also no concessions given to people who are buying these environmentally friendly enviro cars.

Mr Stevens: The Prius.

Mr LANGBROEK: The Prius and cars like that. There should be incentives in terms of stamp duty concessions for those. I note that members opposite all voted for that yesterday when supposedly they were standing up for the battlers of Queensland—battlers like my daughter who got a 20-year-old Volvo a couple of weeks ago and she has to pay the stamp duty on that.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I will be driving that car soon. I would like to turn to specific figures in the health budget.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I would like to be able to afford a hybrid. I am very concerned that fewer services will be provided because of the amount that is being spent on wages and salaries. The specific area that I am concerned about in the budget is under the heading 'Future development'. I welcome the fact that recommendations made in the review of mental health conducted by Brendan Butler are being implemented in this budget. I am concerned that in the Deputy Premier's budget speech she actually again almost made a virtue of the fact that it had been eight years since the Forde inquiry and that it has taken eight years to recompense victims in a redress scheme. I hope mental health initiatives will not take as long.

I note that \$40 million has been committed over four years to implement the reforms from the Brendan Butler recommendations. There is \$9.3 million this year. That is welcome, but only in the last sitting week did the coalition state that we thought mental health recommendations and reforms should be implemented sooner rather than later.

I note that the President of the AMA has also called for the Queensland mental health strategic plan to be released, as it was supposed to be in 2006. I am also concerned that the Treasurer once again said that even after the increase in mental health funding—which again will come from the stamp duty on cars—it will still not reach national funding per capita levels. It is just incredible that in 2007 in an area such as mental health—which is one of the biggest issues in health in Queensland—we still have a Deputy Premier and Treasurer saying we will not reach national funding per capita levels.

The concerns I have about palliative care issues were highlighted this morning in the House when the Minister for Health once again showed that he had no knowledge of his portfolio in terms of where palliative care beds were going to be moved from. The member for Robina will remember that he asked the question this morning—

Mr Stevens: Yesterday morning.

Mr LANGBROEK: Yesterday morning, I beg your pardon. The Minister for Health thought that palliative care beds were being moved from Southport Hospital when they were being moved from Robina Hospital. I have spoken to surgeons at the Pacific Private Hospital who tell me that the second floor of the Pacific Private Hospital is the most unsuitable place to put people because there are only a couple of lifts and there is no mortuary at the hospital. It begs the question as to where people in palliative care will be taken after they have died—and many of them will die. Will it be in the dead of night? It is a most unsuitable place.

I note, too, that the health minister recently suggested that the problem with mental health on the Gold Coast was not to do with bed numbers but was to do with staff numbers. That is a sign that he is really out of touch with mental health issues on the coast and throughout the state.

When we look at the Ministerial Portfolio Statement on Health, mental health is once again prime amongst my concerns. There has been a decline of over 11 per cent in the last year for in-patient mental episodes of care—down from 22,070 to 19,526. Once again, we have a crisis in mental health care. Fewer patients are able to be treated. The AMAQ has recommended that we need \$300 million annually. The government has put in \$528 million over four years but, as I said, given the budget has gone up with only a \$300 million increase overall after an allowance for wages, it begs the question as to how much of this will end up in front-end services.

I note that there are still nearly 35,000 Queenslanders on elective surgery waiting lists. What are all the new staff that the health minister is always talking about in his Health Action Plan doing? He is always saying that thousands have joined Queensland Health but, as I said, 6,000 have left since June or July 2005.

As for bed numbers, I would like to table a sheet that shows the ratio of Queensland public hospital beds to 1,000 people.

Tabled paper: Chart titled 'Ratio of Queensland Public Hospital Beds to 1000 people'.

Ten years ago we had a higher ratio than the rest of Australia. Now we clearly have a lower ratio of beds. It is an indictment on this government that 10 years ago we had 10,000 beds and now we have just over 9,600 beds for a population that has increased markedly.

Mr Rickuss: Has the population gone down?

Mr LANGBROEK: No, the population has gone up. It keeps going up. I keep hearing that we are getting an extra 900 people a week—and it was 1,500 a week—but we have fewer beds than we had 10 years ago.

I have concerns about dental services for children. The occasions of service for children are down 6.6 per cent from 630,000 to 538,000. I have lots of anecdotal evidence from parents who say to me that their children are not being seen by the school dentist as often. I asked a question on notice about that recently and I look forward to getting the answers.

I am concerned about general dental services which have declined 10 per cent from 240,000 to 217,000. I note that the number of emergency clients in dental services increased to over 320,000. This focus on emergency care in dentistry is not like a focus on emergency care in medicine. Emergency care in dentistry is just a patch-up repair. When dentists come to do the final job, it is often much more complex because it was not dealt with originally. This spike in emergency numbers in the dental waiting list is not making a difference to the waiting—

Mr Mickel interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thanks very much for that, Noddy, I appreciate that, yes. When patients call between seven and eight o'clock and have their emergencies assessed, that leads to the problems becoming much greater later on. As I say, emergency care does not provide a fix for the long term.

I notice there have been well-publicised problems with elective surgery. What has happened to the staff increases? I note too that the Future Growth Fund has been raided of its entire contents of \$3.1 billion and we are descending into more debt. I went back and got the second reading speech in the debate on the Future Growth Fund from May 2006. I note that the same words used in that speech are in the current budget papers—'While other states have directed proceeds from similar sales to pay off debt, the Queensland government's history of prudent financial management means it is able to invest the sale proceeds in the future growth and prosperity of the state.' We spend and we borrow. Big borrowing is a great contrast to the fiscal management of Peter Costello.

The federal Future Fund has been built up over a time of economic stability and growth. Kevin Rudd is already threatening to raid the piggybank at the federal level, if elected, for broadband initiatives or anything else he thinks of. They will just go and raid the Future Fund. Our Future Growth Fund has been spent in one budget. The \$3.1 billion is all accounted for. All of it is allocated. In the original debate on 10 May 2006 there was an expectation of only a billion dollars being raised from the selling off of our energy assets. We have \$3.1 billion all accounted for.

The Premier has always flaunted that Queensland is the lowest tax state. Now the Deputy Premier has had to relinquish that title. South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory have lower tax rates than Queensland. I note by her own figures that the Treasurer is allowing for a cash deficit in the general government operating position for 2007-08. Below the net operating result of \$268 million is a cash deficit of \$892 million. It is big taxing, it is big borrowing, it is big spending and it is poor service provision from this Labor government.

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—NPA) (11.00 pm): I rise tonight to speak in the debate on the appropriation bills relating to the budget for 2007-08. To be the elected member for Bundaberg is a great honour and a privilege and not a day goes by when I do not thank the community of Bundaberg for putting their faith in me—faith that instills a great passion to work hard and a commitment to get the best for the constituents of Bundaberg.

The average family in this state is still paying more in state taxes than ever before, at a time when we are experiencing higher than normal economic growth. With such a positive financial environment we need a state government with a long-term plan for Queensland that meets the social, economic and infrastructure needs for the future instead of always responding to a crisis. We need forward planning and a vision for Queensland that will not just see us past the current drought but into the future. Our children and future citizens need to have confidence in their future and the state government.

I welcome the state budget allocations for Bundaberg. After reading through the marketing material and highlighting the funds that had already been allocated to Bundaberg prebudget I welcome the sight of Bundaberg residents getting back some of their hard-earned dollars taken in state levies and taxes. For the electorate of Bundaberg it is great to see \$435,000 of the allocated funding of \$957,000 to replace amenities at Bundaberg State High School. These amenities are in very poor condition and were highlighted to this government at the Bundaberg community cabinet meeting several years ago. The amenities were at the rear of the main hall in which the meeting was taking place.

I sincerely thank the education minister for prioritising this work and for helping ensure a safer and a more educationally friendly environment for the Bundaberg State High School community. Bundaberg State High School has a very proud tradition with excellent teachers, staff and students. The current school site is landlocked, considering the ratio of land area to students, and has major traffic issues at its front entrance on Maryborough Street. I look forward to working with the education minister and the public works minister to achieve further successful outcomes for the benefit of schools in Bundaberg. The final funding of \$1.5 million to complete the Hinkler Hall of Fame is very welcome. It will be a great showcase for Bundaberg. It will be an historic and tourism landmark for future generations.

Health funding of \$2.3 million for this financial year is dramatically short of the \$41.1 million promised by the state government at the last state election. However, now that Queensland Health has an actual master plan for Bundaberg Base Hospital and an excellently skilled and permanent district manager in Ms Patti Scott, I look forward to positive steps ahead for the hardworking staff—the doctors, nurses, administration officers, cleaners and the many valued volunteers.

The \$9.9 million provided towards construction of the Bundaberg ring-road to provide an alternative route from the Isis Highway to the industrial areas and the ports to the east of Bundaberg city at a total cost of \$92 million is very welcome and will go a long way to relieving future transport frustrations. The funding of \$9.7 million for the reinforcement of electricity supplies, \$963,000 for the Bundaberg Port Authority, \$1.5 million to continue the Energex Bundaberg Hospital helicopter rescue service, \$300,000 for expansion of the Bundaberg Child Safety Centre and extra funding for intersection upgrades to Walker Street are all very welcome. I again welcome these much-needed funds to the Bundaberg electorate and look forward to the completion of these projects and future projects, including the Bundaberg airport, that will assist the future growth of the Bundaberg district.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (11.05 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to participate in the debate on this year's budget. I thank the minister for her assistance in clarifying budget issues involving my electorate. I will try to restrict my contributions to how the budget has impacted on my electorate and not repeat comments made by earlier speakers. I thank the Treasurer for many of the projects which have received continuing funding and projects which have received new funding. In a constructive way I hope to be able to use this opportunity to remind the minister and other ministers of the ongoing funding needs for my community.

Improved health services continue to be a very high priority. I note the allocation of \$215.4 million to assist in improving working conditions for Queensland Health staff and support health workers. I believe that one of the simplest ways to show how the government values our health staff is to always ensure that our medical and support staff lead the pay scale by way of comparison with other states and territories in Australia.

I note the \$2.5 million allocated for the purchase of land for the expansion of the Nambour Hospital car park and look forward to work starting on this project in the next couple of months. I understand that a number of the houses on the site will be available for removal and will not simply be demolished.

The allocation of \$4.6 million for the replacement of our Nambour Hibiscus Nursing Home residential aged-care facility at the hospital is very much appreciated by residents, staff, family and friends. It is good to hear that a new site for the nursing home has been secured at Glenbrook Drive and Jack Street, Nambour. I hope to visit the nursing home next week, speak with staff, residents and supporters of the nursing home about the wonderful new nursing home that the minister has proposed. Thank you, Minister, for your dedication and commitment in pursuing a site and ensuring an allocation of appropriate funding for this new nursing home.

I understand the budget papers refer to \$4.76 million being provided to assist community organisations under the Home and Community Care program to support residents in their own homes so as to delay or prevent their admission to residential aged-care facilities. I understand almost \$50,000 has been provided for child health services to the electorate. The Sunshine Coast renal service will benefit from part of \$3.9 million allocated to improving renal dialysis services in Queensland. The Sunshine Coast Health Service District will benefit from the allocation of \$3 million this year for additional beds.

I turn to the issue of education. Following on from the allocation of \$616,000 last year for the redevelopment of trade facilities at the Nambour TAFE campus I note from the budget papers a further \$1.53 million has been allocated this year to continue this redevelopment at a total cost of \$12.3 million over four years. Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the government for your continuing support for the Nambour TAFE.

I note that the budget papers refer to an additional amenities facility to be provided at the Montville State School to eventually cost approximately \$1.2 million. In addition, further upgrading to existing facilities and improved maintenance at the following schools has been specifically identified in the budget papers. Bearing in mind that it is just after 11 o'clock I will not go into all the detail apart from identifying the schools involved. The schools are: Burnside State High School, Nambour State High School, Nambour State School, Nambour Special School, North Arm State School and Mapleton State School.

I also use this opportunity to thank the minister for public works and housing, Robert Schwarten, for his support in having the Nambour Primary School Hungerford Hall roof replaced at a cost of approximately \$50,000. Minister, that is really very much appreciated.

I also place on record the need for the Palmwoods State School to have additional classrooms and a new administration office. I understand that the current growth in student enrolments at the school is consistent with the school's request to prioritise the allocation of new money for these facilities. I hope to take this matter up with the minister during the next sitting of parliament. Hopefully we will have a delegation of students and P&C representatives to meet with the minister.

On the issue of fire safety, last year the Minister for Emergency Services, Pat Purcell, listened to my request for money to be provided to purchase a new site for the Nambour Fire Station at a cost of more than \$500,000. I again thank the minister for last year's decision to purchase the new site and the allocation of \$750,000 in this year's budget for preliminary work to be carried out on the replacement station, which the budget papers refer to as having a total estimated cost of \$3.65 million. I can assure the minister and the government that our community on the Sunshine Coast is very proud of our local fire officers and the level of valuable community work that they perform during the course of their duties. I thank the minister and the government for their support.

On the issue of primary industries, my electorate is very fortunate in having the regional department of primary industries research station located at Nambour in the heart of the Sunshine Coast. I am very pleased that the government has allocated \$2.4 million for the purpose of building a regional office at its Perwillowen Road research station site just on the outskirts of the town of Nambour this year, with a further \$50,000 to be spent next year. I support this project and have already had preliminary discussions with departmental staff regarding the building. It is exciting times for the research station.

I understand that \$1 million has already been allocated for the planning and early acquisitions of land necessary for the upgrading of the railway line between Landsborough and Nambour, with \$34.5 million allocated for future funding. In the budget papers reference is made to \$33.1 million for the replacement of old timber bridges, including pedestrian bridges, throughout the Queensland railway network. I have already put in a request for the department to immediately look at the need to rebuild the railway bridge on the Blackall Range Road at Woombye. I understand that only last month Queensland Transport inspected the bridge and although it says it believes it is structurally sound I believe the bridge is past its use-by date and it is time for the bridge to be replaced with a safer, wider and more appropriate bridge, especially in light of the high volume of vehicles that travel over that bridge on a regular basis. I intend to continue to pursue this matter with the minister in the weeks ahead.

I note that \$129,709 has been allocated for bus and car set-down areas at the Kenilworth State School in the Maroochy shire with a total state government contribution of \$135,000. This project, while referred to in the budget, was completed last month. Some \$300,000 has been allocated to complete planning for bridgeworks at the Caboolture Creek on the Yandina-Bli Bli Road at a total cost of half a million dollars. I understand this project being funded is part of the Regional Bridge Renewal Program. Some \$300,000 is also allocated to construct and improve Razorback Road to a two-lane sealed standard on the range going to Montville. I understand that the total state government contribution to this council project is \$450,748. For the record, this is a Maroochy Shire Council road and a Maroochy Shire Council project, yet the state government has provided financial support. The road is currently under construction and work is due for completion, I understand, later this year, weather permitting. Some \$2 million is allocated for the intersection improvements between the Kiel Mountain Road overpass and

Erbacher Road on the very busy Nambour Connection Road. For the record, I note and draw to the minister's and the government's attention that some people in my community simply do not support the proposed works which have been allocated. But we need to note that this is a joint project which has been jointly funded and worked through in partnership between the local council and the state government.

I note \$25,000 in state government funding has been allocated for pedestrian crossing improvements on School Road at Bli Bli. I understand that design for this work is currently underway and the work is scheduled to be completed next year. Some \$100,000 is allocated to commence safety improvements on the Eumundi-Kenilworth roads at a total cost of \$290,000. I understand that the minister will in the near future be making a further announcement about this very important link road. I understand \$478,000 has been allocated to construct Dusty Rhodes Bridge and the approaches to Petrie Creek Road, and that is located in the Maroochy shire. Some \$124,958 is also allocated and provided to construct off-road shared pedestrian bikeway bridges at Maroochydoore-Noosa Road and Eudlo Creek bridge in the Maroochy shire with a total state government contribution of approximately \$150,000. I understand that a preliminary design for the work is currently underway and it is anticipated that construction is scheduled to start early next year.

In the budget papers there is also reference to \$43,000 being allocated to the Maroochy Shire Council to assist with the Maroochy regional botanical gardens at Tanawha with a total state government contribution of \$86,000. This has been announced previously, but it is good to see it referred to in the budget. There is also the \$875,000 that the state government has provided to the Maroochy Shire Council to help with the Nambour revitalisation project, with a total state government contribution of \$1.75 million. I put on the record my community's sincere appreciation of the government coming on board with the council and with local councillor Paul Tatton in his strenuous efforts to get the state government's support for this very important revitalisation of Nambour. I thank the minister for local government for his very committed support for our town. I certainly appreciate his involvement and look forward to continuing to work in a very sensible and proactive way with the minister for local government and the Treasurer in trying to ensure that Nambour continues to receive the significant funding to ensure that this revitalisation project continues.

There is also \$5.38 million allocated to complete the construction of 28 public housing apartment units for low-income earners at a total cost of \$6.72 million. I put on the record my appreciation to the minister for public works and housing, Robert Schwarten, for his genuine efforts to try to provide additional funding and support for the less privileged people in our community who are in need of public housing. Hopefully in the lead-up to the federal election we will have more commitments from both the government and the alternative government to ensure that more money becomes available to the less privileged in our community.

I note there is mention of \$1.1 million to provide post-school options for young adults with a disability and their families as part of the government's ongoing commitment to care for the disabled in our communities. I thank the minister again for his support. Some \$651,000 has been allocated to the Sunshine Coast Regional Housing Council under the community rent scheme to provide short- and medium-term accommodation to public housing applicants in need of immediate housing in the private rental market at a total cost of \$1.95 million. The Sunshine Coast Regional Housing Council does a very good job on the coast in very trying times. Some \$2.92 million has been allocated to assist adults with disabilities to live and participate in their respective communities as part of the government's ongoing commitments. I thank the minister again for his ongoing support.

In relation to ambulance services, I hope that the injection of \$50 million to the Queensland Ambulance Service and the recruitment of 250 new ambulance staff this year will significantly reduce the pressure on ambulance officers and assist in improving the delivery of ambulance services around Queensland and also on the Sunshine Coast and in my electorate. I thank the minister for the funding to train and employ an additional 200 police positions in the state and hope that some of these new positions will be allocated to the Sunshine Coast region. On the issue of training, I note there has been the provision of \$1.18 million to provide training to Sunshine Coast disadvantaged Queenslanders, and this should assist participants in these programs to better improve their skills and employment prospects.

On the issue of water, it is great that it is raining—and I note that a few other members have mentioned this—and it is great that the recent rain has certainly been well received. I note that there is an allocation of \$81 million in the budget for the continuation of the Home WaterWise rebate scheme which offers rebates for water-saving devices such as rainwater tanks, washing machines, shower heads, dual-flush toilets and pool covers for residents who install these devices in their homes. I certainly urge Queenslanders that if they have not applied they should put their applications in in order to make sure our water goes as far as possible.

While speaking to this Appropriation Bill, I realise its very clear connectivity with the clean coal bill and the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill which was debated yesterday. I understand some of the amendments to the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill give effect to

reductions in the mortgage duties and reductions in land tax. The changes proposed by these amendments were for changes to vehicle registrations according to the number of cylinders of the respective vehicles. I understand that a four-cylinder car would attract a three per cent duty, a six-cylinder car would attract a 3.5 per cent duty and an eight-cylinder car would attract a four per cent duty.

The government has justified this increase in rates by saying that there will be an incentive for people to purchase smaller vehicles and that the income generated by this increase will go to support the mental health services. To vote in support of a reduction in taxes and an increase in funding for mental health services, the drafting of the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill was such that one also had to vote in support of the increase in vehicle registration.

I use this opportunity to clearly say that I do not condone or support this technique. I certainly do not condone or support the proposed increase in vehicle registrations. I am disappointed that the government has used this technique as a way to get support for increasing vehicle registration fees. I note that other members have spoken about the very clear similarities with the way that the government used the increase in electricity fees to pay for ambulance services. I certainly hope that we are not going to see more of this strategy in budgets to come. I hope that next year the government will find a different means to fund our very important mental health services.

I am very much aware of the need for increased funding for mental health services on the Sunshine Coast. There is a mental health unit attached to the Nambour Hospital, which is just up the road from my electorate office. There is a mental health office just over the road from my office. I am very much aware of their needs.

There is a concerning increase in the number of people with mental illnesses. It seems to me that there is a very clear connection between that and the level of drug abuse in our community. Perhaps for a future budget we could consider that connection. Perhaps the proceeds of crime, confiscated assets and money made through illegal activities could be directly connected to funding mental health services, which are certainly needed not only in my electorate but also throughout Queensland.

It is now 11.20 at night and I know that other members certainly want to speak. I close by saying that, as with the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I will support the Appropriation Bill. However, I certainly do not want the government or anyone else to point to my support of these and other bills and say that I support the increase in registration fees in the way that it has been undertaken. I certainly do not support that. I certainly did not support the way that the government used the increase in the electricity charges as a way to fund our ambulance services. Tonight we are seeing a continuation of a new style of increasing taxes, so that the community can connect a worthy cause like increased funding for mental health services or ambulance services with a tax that might otherwise be very unpalatable to it. I look forward to hearing other members' contributions to this bill.

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (11.22 pm): This is a good budget for the people of Queensland. It is a budget full of new initiatives and spending that will go a long way to improving our state's infrastructure and services. It is a budget that builds on the government's commitment to improving the opportunities available to young Queenslanders at school and in preparation for their journey into the workforce. It is a budget that demonstrates that the Beattie government recognises the most vulnerable living in our communities such as people with disabilities and their families, young people needing the support of the Department of Child Safety and the elderly.

There is much about the budget that I wish to talk about today, but the time afforded to me limits the detail I can promote about the budget. I will, of course, be endeavouring to meet with community groups, school P&Cs and other organisations to make them aware of the funding opportunities included in this budget. Most importantly, this budget delivers on the election commitments announced during the 2006 state election and residents would expect that this would be the case.

Broadwater schools will benefit from the funding provisions with \$41,000 being allocated to Coombabah State High School for the enhancement of the Special Education Unit facility; \$9,000 has been allocated for maintenance at Coombabah State School and \$6,000 to Labrador State School; and \$19,000 has been allocated to provide before and after school and vacation care for school-age and under school-age children.

I am pleased to use this opportunity to report on the progress of a number of projects that are underway in the Broadwater electorate. In this budget, \$600,000 has been allocated to Paradise Point Bowls Club for the completion of a new outdoor synthetic lawn bowls green that will be completed in late July.

The Hollywell Fire Station has received a further \$125,000 to complete its redevelopment project. Construction on this project has finally started, and I know that the wonderful firies at Hollywell will be looking forward to its completion. This redevelopment project includes the construction of a new lecture and training room and a new dormitory as well as the refurbishment of the station area and repainting of the station internally.

A sum of \$550,000 has been allocated to complete concept planning between the Gold Coast Highway and Southport-Nerang Road. Road upgrades have been highlights in every Broadwater budget since 2001. A sum of \$17.93 million has been allocated for the duplication of Hope Island Road to Lae Road and \$9.9 million has been delivered to complete the duplication from two to four lanes of the road between Oxenford and Santa Barbara Road. That project is well underway.

Local community facilities are well used in the Broadwater electorate and it is important to ensure that they are improved and modified to meet community needs. A sum of \$46,000 has been allocated to the Dodgers Touch Football Club to upgrade lighting and a further \$130,170 has been allocated to the Labrador Australian Rules Football Club to upgrade its lighting at Cook Murphy Oval.

A sum of \$20,000 has been allocated for modifications to the Runaway Bay library. A sum of \$10,000 has been allocated to the Gold Coast City Council to help provide for the Runaway Bay Esplanade foreshore improvements along Shearwater Esplanade, Anglers Esplanade and Oatland Esplanade. That work is currently due to finish in November 2007.

A sum of \$50,000 has been allocated to help provide the Broadwater Esplanade foreshore improvements. This work is being carried out along Hollywell and Runaway Bay foreshores and is due for completion in December this year.

There is a lot I could mention about this year's budget, but it is the huge spending on mental health and housing that I wish to now turn to. In doing so, I commend the Treasurer for recognising the dire need for funding in these areas in this year's budget. However, having regard to the time, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Housing

The 2007 state budget has allocated a massive \$719 million for projects that will provide for a number of social housing solutions. More often than ever before, people who have no place to live and no where to go are coming to my office for assistance. In all my time as a member of parliament, the frustrating reality of not being able to find someone warm, safe and affordable accommodation is the issue that most upsets my office staff and I.

As everyone is aware, the Gold Coast is continuing to grow in population and while the government is working hard to ensure there are facilities, services and improved infrastructure to cope with that growth, the housing needs of the Gold Coast population is certainly one area that has clearly fallen behind in the supply demand equation. In addition, the private housing market availability for many Gold Coast residents is becoming more and more out of reach and, indeed, more people who are making the rental payments are living in after-housing poverty, that is, they cannot afford other bills and expenses.

The federal government's rental assistance scheme is not doing a thing to address the issue of providing for affordable housing. Rental assistance has only increased by \$4.60 in the last five years while rental prices have soared. The Minister for Housing Robert Swarten is to be commended for his persistent efforts in addressing this issue. Despite the Commonwealth government slashing over \$500 million to housing out of the state housing agreement, the state government continues to cover the shortfall. The state government is investing in more capital works projects for the Department of Housing than ever before to assist with the growing waiting lists for housing commission accommodation.

The state government also recognises the financial challenges faced by private market home buyers. In our area we have seen the rapid escalation in land values around the state putting pressure on housing prices and housing investment. For many people looking to buy their first home near their family or where they grew up, our area is just no longer affordable.

I am very pleased that the budget introduces measures to help reduce this pressure on young couples and families. This budget will lift the individual resident tax-free threshold on land tax from \$500,000 to \$600,000. This change will apply from 1 July, and initial estimates suggest that some 6,000 households who have had to pay land tax will no longer have to do so.

In addition to these reforms, a 50 per cent cap will be placed for three years, on the annual increase in land values used for calculating land tax for all parcels of land other than newly-created lots. This measure ensures that in the face of large land valuation increases, no land taxpayer will see more than a 50 per cent increase in their land values used for land tax purposes. This will significantly reduce the impact of large movements in land valuations. This change will also commence from 1 July. It is expected that during the next 12 months alone this will put \$50 million back into the pockets of property owners. These changes are in addition to the government's commitment to reduce mortgage duty by 50 per cent from 1 January next year, with the complete abolition of this burden on from 1 January 2009.

Health continues to be a major focal point of the State Government spending. Another record budget of \$7.15 billion will continue to drive the reforms of the Health Action Plan that are improving Queensland's health system. This means more funding for mental health services more hospital beds and record numbers of doctors and nurses. In addition, \$635 million will be spent building world class infrastructure that will take our health system into the next decade.

This year's budget contains the biggest spending on Mental Health needs ever and the Gold Coast Hospital will benefit from this. For the Gold Coast, \$501,000 has been set aside for community organizations under the Home and Community care program, which provides support and maintenance services for eligible people at home to prevent early admission to residential care. A sum of \$215.4 million has also been allocated to improve the working conditions for Queensland Health staff, including Visiting Medical Officers, and clinical and administrative staff in 2007-08 as part of a total package of \$3.48 billion over three years.

There will also be an increased recurrent funding of around \$50 million for the Queensland Ambulance Service to meet growing demand. This will see the state government investment in ambulance services exceed \$400 million for the first time. This includes money for an additional 250 ambulance officers, 135 new defibrillators, 140 replacement and new vehicles and upgrading of facilities across the state.

This budget also delivers additional 200 police positions across the state, taking the number of serving officers in the Queensland Police service to 9928 by October 2008. The budget includes \$3.65 million for the commencement of the construction of a new district police office at Coomera. This new 24-hour district office will manage the areas of Runaway Bay, Coomera, Hope Island and Biggera Waters Beenleigh, Yatala, Pimpama, and Jacobs Well. The new district office will accommodate a range of police teams, focusing on a variety of operational and service areas, including Scenes of Crime, CIB, and Traffic Branch police. This is indeed good news.

I am pleased to see that this year's budget delivers a record budget for the Department of Child safety of \$551 million. This is an increase of over \$48 million. No person likes to hear of the very sad stories of circumstances involving the emotional or physical harm of young people. This funding will provide for the employment of about an additional 13 Child Safety officers, 29 additional Child Safety support officers, and 16 additional court coordinators and 53 permanent record keeping officers to ensure accurate and up to date record keeping to assist in child protection.

Education

The educational development of our young Queenslanders is a priority for the Beattie government. I often visit the schools in my electorate as a commitment to the parents and staff that I am willing to learn about the work being achieved in schools and the needs of the staff to ensure students are equipped with the best learning environments.

This year's budget delivers more than \$500 million to modernise schools and training facilities and includes a \$1.5 million allocation to a new numeracy initiative which will provide teachers with professional development opportunities for teachers. A sum of \$35.6 million is being invested over 4 years to improve literacy for students in all schools.

One of the biggest highlights in this year's budget from the portfolio of Education is the announcement that the Beattie government will invest \$70 million over the next four years to provide every teacher working two days or more per week in a Queensland state school or TAFE institute with a dedicated laptop computer for their classroom. This initiative will assist our fantastic teachers with further capacity for lesson planning, digital presentation of lessons, and student assessing and reporting.

From the feedback I have received from staff at local schools in my electorate already, the message is clear. This is good use of funding, directed straight at delivering for the needs of teachers to help them with their workloads and enhance their teaching methods.

This is a budget from which many can benefit, now and into the future. It is a budget that demonstrates the Labor government's strong fiscal management commitments yet recognises the needs of the state's vulnerable and needy. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (11.26 pm): I leap to my feet to speak in support of the 2007-08 Queensland budget. It is a responsive budget and it is a responsible budget. To start with, \$7.15 billion has been allocated to continue improvements and reforms to the Queensland Health system, delivering on our election commitments to improve mental health services, open more hospital beds and employ a record number of doctors and nurses.

The people of the Sandgate electorate are pleased to have a new emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital and welcome the \$134.4 million that has been allocated to upgrades.

This budget provides a number of mechanisms to ease the housing pressures being felt around the state. The March 2007 quarter Housing Industry Association/Commonwealth Bank Housing Affordability Index fell by 0.6 of a per cent, the fourth consecutive fall and the lowest level since the index was established in 1984. Affordability was 10.3 per cent lower than it was a year ago across Australia. In Brisbane, a 5.7 per cent rise in the median first homebuyer price resulted in affordability declining by 4.6 per cent. According to the Commonwealth Bank housing affordability index, median house prices in the northern suburbs of Brisbane increased by 14 per cent, or \$50,000 over the past 12 months.

The 2007-08 Queensland budget provides the first glimmer of hope to many people in the Sandgate electorate who are trying to purchase their first home or who are struggling to pay their rent. Too many people come into my electorate office in desperate need of affordable accommodation, having received notification to quit their premises. Some are facing huge jumps in weekly rents, but many are given no choice and are simply asked to leave because their house, boarding house or flat is being sold.

This budget includes a record Queensland housing assistance package of \$719 million. The Department of Housing provides a variety of solutions for those people struggling to find affordable housing. Cabbage Tree Housing, a non-profit community housing organisation in Sandgate, has been struggling with the growing demand for lower priced accommodation.

I am pleased to support the allocation of \$497,000 per annum triennial funding under the Community Rent Scheme so that Cabbage Tree can help provide subsidised accommodation in the private rental market for people who have applied for public housing and are in urgent need of short-term or medium-term accommodation.

Cabbage Tree has been doing wonderful work in the community under stressful conditions for some time and I hope that this funding will provide some relief to their workers as well as to the many people who are in urgent need of accommodation. The Ti Tree Housing Service, which provides accommodation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, will also receive \$263,000 per annum triennial funding under the same Community Rent Scheme. I congratulate the Cabbage Tree and Ti Tree teams for their ongoing dedication.

Although both of these housing organisations are based in Sandgate, they service many suburbs on the north side of Brisbane. The Sandgate electorate has a wide variety of public housing accommodation, flats and houses, with a large stock of family residences in Bracken Ridge. I am pleased to say that the renewal program will continue with another \$830,000 allocated for the renewal of 19 public rental houses in Bracken Ridge. An amount of \$30.6 million will be spent upgrading facilities in public housing stock and \$571,000 will be spent on upgrading facilities in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing stock across greater Brisbane.

As part of the new spinal injuries initiative, \$300,000 has been allocated to begin construction of a new specially designed detached house. I am keen to support the provision of specially designed accommodation to suit the various physical, intellectual and family needs of people with disabilities. I believe that it is important for people's wellbeing to stay close to the suburbs and communities where they have family and friends and a good support base. I will continue to represent the needs of these families and individuals and hope to see more purpose-built facilities in the future.

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

Leave granted.

The Sandgate and District Home Assist Secure program operates a service that allows people to stay in their own homes as long possible by providing repairs, modifications and home security for people aged 60 and over and people with disabilities.

\$204,000 will go a long way to providing shower rails, security grills, smoke detector installation and even a light bulb changing service just to name a few of their services.

This is wonderful service staffed by caring and patient people and flexible tradespeople.

Marjorie McNamara and her team will be relieved that more funds are on their way.

The Home and Community Care Program has similar goals and funds many non-profit community organisations which provide the services and support needed for older people and people with disabilities to stay in their own homes.

A total of \$348.5 million will be allocated to HACC programs across Queensland in 2007-2008, including \$4.472 million for organisations based in the electorate of Sandgate.

HACC provides domestic assistance, social support, personal care, home maintenance and nursing services so that those receiving care can live comfortably in their own home and stay in their local community.

Organisations in my electorate receiving HACC funding under this Budget include:

- Sandgate and District Meals on Wheels, which has a huge team of dedicated volunteers who deliver freshly prepared meals,
- Qualltime, which provides centre-based day care and respite care for people with disabilities,
- Bayside Community Options, which provides a broad range of services from assessment, case management and centre-based care to domestic and personal services and support,
- Blue Care Sandgate, which also provides a broad range of in-home services including assessment, case management, centre-based care, allied health care, nursing and respite care.

Blue Care in Sandgate has just celebrated its 50th anniversary.

A wonderful, active member of the local community, Elsie Jordan, was one of the first nurses in the team and still stays involved with Blue Care and the Sandgate Uniting Church.

\$216,000 has been allocated to help individuals who live in the Sandgate electorate and who are ready to relocate from institutions.

These are individual support packages to help the family or carers prepare the home for the person with a disability.

There are many people in the electorate of Sandgate who have experienced setbacks and need some support to get back on their feet again.

While I recognise secure housing as the most basic of needs, the next most important component is the ability for people who are able, and of working age, to earn money.

\$81.75 million dollars will be spent in 2007-2008 across Queensland to assist the most disadvantaged unemployed and underemployed people.

The Skilling Queenslanders for Work program will continue the excellent work of the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative which has assisted 171,137 people in total to date and of those, placed 121,203 into jobs.

\$22.84 million will be allocated to this program across Greater Brisbane in the next year.

The Sandgate and Bracken Ridge Action Group (SANDBAG) has conducted these programs in the past and I have heard great stories of success from participants.

In fact, on Friday next week I will be representing the Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations at the graduation ceremony for the latest group completing a work experience and training program at SANDBAG.

The graduates are long-term unemployed and have completed training and on-the-job paid work experience.

The participants were involved in promoting SANDBAG and its host organisations at the Zillmere Multicultural Festival.

During the 16 week program, participants gained work experience and accredited skills in team work, effective communication and negotiation skills, customer service, marketing, sales, event and project management training, computer literacy training, workplace health and safety, job search and career planning skills.

Maggie and Debbie and the team have worked very hard to bring this together and the participants should be very pleased with their progress and are now "job-ready".

The Experience Pays Participation strategy and the Youth Works strategy will continue to assist mature-aged and young people gain the skills and assistance they need to enter the workforce.

Ongoing Government support for non-government organisations in the Sandgate electorate is essential for our communities to thrive.

SANDBAG's Domestic and Family Violence Counselling based at Bracken Ridge has turned around the lives of many individuals.

Unfortunately, the service is far too busy and the increased Budget allocation of \$36,000 per annum will go some way to helping get people back on their feet.

Heather Oakes and her team are local champions and tireless workers for local families.

There is still more work to be done as referrals are coming from farther afield and I will continue to work with SANDBAG to build their support base.

SANDBAG will also receive a further \$173,000 per annum for other community support services.

Jabiru Community Youth and Children's Services also provides support services in the Sandgate electorate and will receive increased funding of \$191,000 per annum to support young people in the Education system via their unique place-based education program.

Jabiru is also gaining a reputation for their well managed and implemented outside school hours care program.

The staff employed by Jabiru is top notch and Ken Morris and his team should be congratulated for their work in the community and care and development of children and young people.

Jabiru will receive \$28,000 for its OSHC programs—Taigum, Bracken Ridge, Norris Road, and Brighton State Schools.

Nashville State School P&C and Shorncliffe State School P&C will also receive funding to assist with their respective OSHC programs.

I take this opportunity to congratulate all the parents and friends that make up the Parents and Citizens and Parents and Friends committee at schools in my electorate.

They are very dedicated volunteers and champions for an excellent education system.

The education initiatives in the 2007-2008 Budget continue to build on the Education and Training Reforms for the Future.

A laptop for every teacher in Queensland state schools and TAFEs who work more than 2 days per week will not only help teachers balance work and life commitments, it will enable teachers to keep abreast of the latest technological advances and teaching methods.

The education budget also extends to infrastructure improvements, with Bracken Ridge, Norris Road, Sandgate and Sandgate High all receiving extra recurrent funds for building and repairs.

I look forward to continued close collaborations with the Principals, staff and parents of all my local schools.

We have mostly older schools in the Sandgate electorate and the maintenance needs are ongoing.

Sandgate State School first opened temporary quarters in 1873 and by 1874 had moved to its current site.

The new acting Principal, Duncan Ree, is working very closely with parents at the school to plan for the future.

Taigum State School and Bracken Ridge State School both mark their 50th Anniversary this year.

Mark Fisher and his staff and students from Taigum hosted a wonderful open day at the school last week and buried a time capsule for future students.

Jim Dionysios and his staff and students are busily planning the Bracken Ridge celebrations for September this year.

Today I joined Brighton State School Principal, Patrick McAuliffe, and students, parents and staff to celebrate the official opening of "the shed".

Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Education, Pat Farmer, was the special guest speaker.

The multi-use activities centre became a reality largely due to the driving force of Pat.

Funds were contributed by the Commonwealth, Queensland Education, the Gambling Community Benefit fund and student and P&C fundraising efforts.

The Queensland Government has a variety of programs and grants that support the work of local governments.

We have helped fund the foreshore upgrades in Shorncliffe and Sandgate and this Budget allocates a further \$32,700 to the Brisbane City Council to assist with the Lovers Walk Lighting Project.

I refer to the increase in funding for our wonderful emergency services and I would firstly like to take this opportunity to thank the hard working & dedicated emergency services staff and volunteers in my electorate for the great work they do.

I welcome the extra ambulance staff and new ambulance vehicles that will help to manage the demand for services driven by our growing and ageing population and I look forward to some of those extra resources for my electorate.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service is also receiving a funding boost of \$36.1 million in this budget.

Firefighters respond to a wide range of emergency situations daily, from fires, to chemical threats, to motor vehicle accidents and this budget will ensure the Service is suitably equipped to respond to whatever threat is facing the community.

The State Emergency Service will also receive a major boost with the Budget committing record expenditure to ensuring that volunteers are trained and equipped to assist Queensland communities to remain safe and secure.

This Budget is committed to grass roots improvement, including the introduction of key programs to support community preparedness for disasters and infrastructure to enhance operational support.

In addition the introduction of the 132,500 national SES telephone phone number is a great initiative that will assist communities to easily contact the SES in times of storms, floods and cyclones.

The budget also delivers increased police numbers for Queensland and an additional enhancement is the establishment of special contact centre which will help the delivery of police services to the community.

The State Budget will see the first instalment of \$46.7 million funding over four years to establish a police contact centre in a purpose built government call centre facility which will allow the public to easily contact the Queensland Police Service through a central phone number and will also assist with 000 emergency calls.

Sadly there remains an unacceptable level of parental neglect and abuse in this state and this budget shows that the Queensland Government is committed to continued action by extending and strengthening child protection services across the state.

The Department of Child Safety's 2007-08 budget has increased to \$551.3 million—more than triple the \$182 million allocated to child protection in 2003-04 before the new department was created.

The 2007-08 budget is an increase of \$48.2 million or just under 10% on last year.

It is essential to remain vigilant in the detection and protection of children at risk of harm.

I am a keen supporter of my local sport and recreation clubs and will be encouraging them to access the great funding opportunities that are available through the department of sport and recreation.

I thank Minister Fraser for assisting me with a 'How to get that Grant' night that we are organising for my local sport and recreation groups.

It is important that we continue to emphasise the benefits of adopting an active, healthy lifestyle to our kids & the general community.

I would also like to thank Minister Fraser and Pat Rafter's Cherish the Children foundation for giving me the opportunity to participate in the Eat Well be active challenge.

I learnt a great deal during the challenge and I look forward to seeing the programs the Sandgate Police Citizens Youth Club will be able to deliver with my \$10,000 prize for winning the challenge.

Transport and Main Roads funding in the electorate and around the state will not only upgrade roadways, including the duplication of the Houghton Highway, but will provide funding to encourage people to use public transport and bikeways.

The big ticket items in the Budget will benefit each and every Queenslanders.

\$81 million has been added to the Home Waterwise Rebate Scheme for rebates on water saving devices such as rainwater tanks, washing machines, shower heads, dual flush toilets and pool covers.

The people of the Sandgate electorate have taken the water restrictions very seriously and are proving to be among the state's best water savers.

The \$14 billion infrastructure program will position our growing state for the future.

I congratulate Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure, Anna Bligh, for listening to Queenslanders and delivering the infrastructure and services that we need in our growing state.

Congratulations to all Queensland Cabinet Ministers for listening to my representations on behalf of the people of my electorate and providing a responsive funding program.

I am proud to represent the people of electorate of Sandgate. I will continue to fight for the needs of all people in my electorate.

The 2007-2008 Budget meets the social and infrastructure needs of Queensland and I am pleased to support this Bill.

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (11.31 pm): I would like to start my contribution to the 2007 budget by making some general comments and observations about the overall fiscal nature of the budget before commenting more specifically on aspects directly related to my electorate. The members opposite have used a lot of fancy words to complain about the budget and they have discussed the allocation of large amounts of money. I would like to bring their fancy words down to concepts that the people in my electorate—those mums and dads out there—can understand.

The general criticism labelled against the government in relation to this budget is that apparently we are awash in money, just like the homeowners out there. Allegedly, they have heaps of money coming in. Yet the opposition is criticising us for not doing enough—for not building enough infrastructure, for not investing in enough projects. Yet the mums and dads out there who run a household budget understand that there is a limited amount of money and they spend it where they can.

If I wished to speak to a householder and say to them, 'I don't think you are spending your money wisely. I think you should be spending more money in a particular area, be that on your car,' or 'be it on your children' then it is fair for me to also make a comment as to where I think those people should take that money from. The members opposite say that the government is not spending enough money, but they refuse to identify what projects they would cut and where they would not spend that money. They carp and complain about where we should be spending the money, but they do not identify what projects we should shut down, where we should not be spending the money and hence reallocating it.

At the same time, the members opposite criticise us for borrowing. Again, the majority of the mums and dads in my electorate—and I assume also in the electorates of the members opposite—have taken out a loan to invest in the biggest single investment in their lives: their house. If a person is taking out a loan to invest in bricks and mortar, a house, that is a very good investment. I encourage people to do that if they can afford to do so. Just like a person taking out a loan to invest in bricks and mortar, investing in hard infrastructure is an extremely good deal for the government and an extremely good deal for the long-term future of Queensland. For a person to take out a loan and blow it on a night out at the pub is extremely stupid. For a government to take out a loan and blow that money on recurrent costs is stupid. But this government is not doing that. It is taking out a loan to invest in the long-term interests of Queensland. So underneath the fancy words, underneath the huge amounts of money that are being discussed in this budget, the opposition's concepts do not stack up for the average mums and dads out there.

Speaking of matters closer to home in my electorate, I think this budget is good for the people of Redlands. Mount Cotton State School has received just under \$600,000 to complete the construction of additional toilet blocks. Toilet blocks are not overly sexy, but in this area of Mount Cotton where people

do not have sewerage these amenities are necessary. Mount Cotton State School is a growing school in my area. Certainly, the cost of putting in those amenities and servicing them is an ongoing issue. I am sure the community of the Mount Cotton State School will appreciate that.

The P&C and the school community of Redland Bay State School have long lobbied me for an upgrade to their library. There is \$300,000 allocated in this budget to complete the planning for the upgrade of the library. I was speaking to the members of that school's P&C this morning at a function. I said, 'There is money in the budget for planning. There is no commitment next year to build the damn thing.' But, of course, in my opinion the government would not be spending \$200,000 on planning for that library upgrade if it was not going to deliver it. I certainly urge the minister for education to please consider putting money in next year's budget to address the urgent need to upgrade this school's library. A number of other schools in my electorate are receiving money for reroofing, reflooring and general maintenance. Many of the schools in my electorate are older. Of course, as we all know those older buildings require a lot of money for maintenance and upkeep.

The duplication of Boundary Road is continuing, with an allocation of an additional \$5.6 million in this year's budget. Planning work is starting for considerable road upgrades. There has been an allocation of \$78,000 for the planning of the duplication of that stretch of Mount Cotton Road that goes into Duncan Road from two lanes to four lanes. There is an allocation of \$45,000 to begin the planning of the upgrade of Cleveland-Redland Bay Road from South Street down to Boundary Road. I know there is going to be a lot of public consultation on that upgrade later in the year. I certainly urge the two schools that will be affected by that section of road—Faith Lutheran College and Carmel College—to be involved in that public consultation process. The sporting community at Pinklands will also be heavily involved in that consultation. I will certainly encourage the department to look at the intersection of Beveridge Road and Ziegenfusz Road. In my opinion, the entry into Pinklands should be upgraded as a matter of priority. I will be seeking community support in that regard.

Carbrook State School and Mount Cotton State School have both received money from this budget for upgrades to their pick-up and set-down areas and car parking areas. I think all members are concerned about parking issues around the schools in their electorates. It is good to see that the government it is not just sitting on its hands. I know that both the Logan City Council and the Redland Shire Council have spoken about the need for car parking at those schools. All I can say is that at Mount Cotton State School the government has put its hand in its pocket to the tune of \$70,000 and at Carbrook State School it has put its hand in its pocket to the tune of \$120,000. I urge both the Logan City Council and the Redland Shire Council to also put their hands in their pockets and contribute to getting a solution and not to just whinge about the problem.

This budget has been extremely good for community groups. The Russell Island Museum building will receive money from the state government. Public housing, through the minister for public works and housing, will receive just under \$300,000 for the spinal injuries initiative. Like the member for Sandgate, I think it is important that we build housing for people with spinal injuries and other disabilities that is close to their community and close to where their relatives live. That is a great initiative.

A range of sporting clubs receive money from this budget. The Redlands Netball Association will receive an allocation for more courts. The Redland Bay Tennis Club, the Carbrook Golf Club, the Russell Island Bowls Club and, of course, the Victoria Point Sharks Sporting Club will also receive money from this budget.

I would like to conclude my speech speaking about a few items very close to my heart—that is, the building of the new police stations on Macleay Island and Russell Island. There is \$400,000 for the Macleay Island complex and \$1.3 million in this year's budget for the Russell Island police station. Again, I thank the minister, the Hon. Judy Spence, who is here in the chamber, for those allocations. I encourage the minister to keep her foot on the throat of the department to see that those police stations are delivered as soon as possible.

The Hon. Pat Purcell has provided \$500 million for the new fire station at Redland Bay, and that is also welcome. Again, I know my community has been waiting a long time to see this station come to fruition. The land was supposed to have been first purchased in 2001 and subsequently built in 2002. My community has been waiting a long time for this asset, and I hope that the minister and his department can deliver it as soon as possible. With those few words, I commend the budget to the House.

Mrs MENKENS (Burdekin—NPA) (11.40 pm): I am very happy to contribute to this debate tonight on the cognate bills. This year has seen an unprecedented level of revenue coming into the Treasury, but the overall picture for local infrastructure, services and capital works—particularly if one lives in north Queensland—could be described as very bleak.

This year the Burdekin electorate received various capital infrastructure funds which I genuinely welcome. It is noticeable, though, that none of these projects are new. The previously announced redevelopment of the Murray Sports Complex in Townsville at \$12.3 million is very welcome, as is the continuing funding of \$163.8 million for the final stages of the men's and women's correctional centre at Stuart.

I particularly welcome the two new police stations in the Burdekin electorate at Ayr and Stuart. Funding for the Ayr Police Station of \$6.9 million this year should see the completion of that building early next year as it is already underway. Funding for the police station at Stuart was allocated last year, and I understand that this building will also be completed early next year. That this station has been upgraded to a 24-hour station is very welcome and certainly much needed. The relocation of the traffic branch to this station is also going to add to its significance. Provided that staffing numbers are made available, this will be a very positive move for policing in the northern end of this electorate.

The allocation of \$28 million towards the Abbot Point coal terminal, which is due for completion towards the end of this year, and \$410.9 million to build the rail loop for the new Sonoma coalmine is a step in the right direction. Funding for the Water for Bowen project though is almost nonexistent. Why are these people ignored yet again? If water and electricity were readily available at Abbot Point, we would see business enterprises knocking each other down to come. When will this government look ahead and plan for the future?

I am disappointed that there was no mention of funding for any schools or other government buildings. There are 34 schools in the electorate and an agricultural college campus that are all desperate for capital works. The same seems to apply right across regional Queensland. So it becomes very noticeable where the money has gone—70 per cent of all capital works spending is in south-east Queensland. Again, we see the government shunning and ignoring the needs of the north. I was disappointed that primary industries did not seem to appear in the Treasurer's speech and that shows how much importance she puts on that department.

Mr Mickel: What about Smart State? That was in her speech. That has primary industries in it.

Mrs MENKENS: Not a lot. North Queenslanders are asking the questions: why are we being taxed so much, why is the debt so high and why are the services so bad? The majority of the resources boom and wealth generation comes from north Queensland and it has received no infrastructure funds that assist in new economic development in return.

The budget is a sham. There are record amounts of tax revenue and record debt, yet where has the money gone? Queensland is no longer a low-tax state. State taxation last financial year exceeded the GST and has increased more than 80 per cent under Beattie Labor. GST revenue has increased 60 per cent since 2001. This is an unprecedented level of revenue, and Labor is embarking on a debt that our children and future generations will have to repay.

Mr Lawlor: And our children's children.

Mrs MENKENS: Yes, our children's children; that is right. The state government's net debt in 2010 is forecast to be over \$12 billion. This means that the government will have to find over \$1 billion per annum just to pay the interest. This Labor government has proved that it cannot manage public finances and the economy—and it is a socialist way of management.

A government member: Who told you to say that?

Mrs MENKENS: I learnt to say that a long time ago. They know the socialist way. They know all about that.

Last month I launched the Queensland coalition's discussion paper on climate change. One of the many recommendations within it states that 'the Queensland government needs to get serious about clean coal technology and follow industry's lead and advice'. To that extent I welcome a commitment from this government to actually acknowledge and make progress on this technology.

The purpose of the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill 2007 is to establish the Clean Coal Council and to authorise the Premier to enter into the Queensland Clean Coal Agreement. It is imperative that government policy must encompass the integration of social, economic and ecological factors for environmentally and economically sustainable development in Queensland. This approach to the environment is necessary in Queensland to provide the foundation for the development of strong, healthy and diverse human communities now and in the future.

The 1987 United Nations environment report *Our common future* first put forth the idea that economic development and ecological sustainability can coexist. The coalition has made this idea core environmental policy as we believe that, with careful planning, we can provide a sustainable future for Queensland. Although many natural factors influence the earth's climate, a large number of the world's scientists believe that greenhouse gas increases—

Mr Mickel: What do you think about tree clearing? That's a different environment.

Mr Lawlor: That's different, isn't it? Tree clearing—you love it.

Mrs MENKENS: I think I will ignore the crowd over there. It is the simplest thing to do. Greenhouse gas increases are believed by many scientists to be the main factor contributing to global warming over the last 50 years. This has been attributed to carbon dioxide and other gases. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2001 stated that 'there is new and stronger evidence that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities'. But there are many differing viewpoints on this issue. In simple terms, there is a harsh reality that with increased industrialisation we are pumping far too much unnecessary carbon into the atmosphere.

Climate change has the potential to affect all of us. The community is concerned and it wants all governments to act. But a major problem is weighing up all the conflicting views and opinions about what needs to be done. Coal is a major fuel source in most parts of the world and certainly in Queensland. It is the major fuel source within the stationary energy sector. In Queensland the stationary energy sector is by far the greatest producer of greenhouse emissions. Figures in 2004 show that these emissions have doubled since 1990.

Climate change has taken a central role at both state and federal government levels in recent years, and the development of clean coal technology is certainly part of that. We must ensure that all solutions are practical, achievable and, importantly, protect our future economic prosperity. New clean coal technologies are attempting to address the problem so that the world's enormous resources of coal can be utilised for future generations without contributing to global warming. One of the biggest problems with the technology is the cost, and the major challenge will be being able to produce clean coal power at a competitive price.

This bill will allow the Clean Coal Council to be formed to make recommendations to the Premier on the allocation of funds equivalent to those raised from Queensland producers from the COAL21 Fund for the research, development and demonstration of clean coal technologies. As has been said before, it will authorise the Premier to enter the Queensland Clean Coal Agreement with the ACALET group. The bill, together with the agreement, will give the Premier the final decision on which projects are funded and the amount that is going to be provided from the COAL21 Fund.

The Australian Coal Council seemingly has given support to the Queensland Clean Coal Agreement but only after various threats by the Premier to raise coal royalties. The coal council no doubt had no option but to come on board. The bill and the agreement give the Premier the final say on how and with what priorities et cetera these funds will be expended. Bearing in mind that these funds are coming from industry as well as the state, it does seem to be an overarching power control tactic. Taking control of non-government funds by the Premier is definitely a very questionable action and one has to ask what has happened to the basic principle of democracy, as again this smacks of socialism.

Government members interjected.

Mrs MENKENS: This group do not like being called socialists, do they? The coalition is concerned about the seeming lack of transparency in the process. There is no requirement or indication that council decisions will be made public or be open to independent overview. We see a vehicle where the government can hide its decision-making processes from the public which is very frightening and also shows a very arrogant government in power-hungry control.

A major priority for Queensland is the production of more power, particularly in north Queensland. Various major industry players are waiting for further power generation. The coalition identified this need several years ago and it was a key plank of the coalition's northern development policy that I launched prior to the last election.

The Queensland coalition has been pushing hard for a coal-fired power station in the north and Collinsville has been identified as an eminently suitable place. I got very excited a couple of days ago when I heard the Minister for Natural Resources and Water announcing that a new north Queensland power station should be up and running by 2012. I will repeat those words because that is what he said—a north Queensland power station should be up and running by 2012. I was very disappointed when he backed away from these claims in parliament on Tuesday.

It seems very obvious that he let the cat out of the bag early this week and has been desperately covering up since. Lots of rhetoric and hot air again from this minister. Then there was the very intriguing media release sent out by this same minister claiming that I do not support the concept of a baseload power station for Collinsville. What a ridiculous statement and one that is so totally untrue. It is similar to previous accusations that he made in 2006 when he accused me of wrongly supporting industry at Abbot Point because he thought it was not in the electorate of Burdekin. In fact, to quote his words, 'The member for Burdekin was actually not working for her area but was sprouting for an area that does not even seem to be in her electorate.' I think we have improved his geography since then, but again he is showing his basic ignorance of the facts on record and he should be ashamed of himself.

I suggest that he sprouted government information that he was not supposed to and he is trying to cover his tracks. If this government puts a clean coal baseload power station in Collinsville drawing water from the Urannah Dam it will have achieved a major milestone for north Queensland. Bring it on! I challenge the government to do it. Minister Wallace's part of the deal is to provide the water. Current water supplies are nearly fully allocated. The new Gattonvale storage leaks like a sieve and the only reliable water source for that area will be the Urannah Dam.

I mention to the Leader of the House that it is getting late and that this very late evening we are having is rather unfair and extremely hard on the staff. I do support both of these bills, but I have major concerns about the absolute power that is being given to the Premier in the clean coal legislation.

Debate, on motion of Mr Schwarten, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.53 pm): I move—
That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Friday, 8 June 2007.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. RE SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.53 pm): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Future Leaders Eco Challenge 2007

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—NPA) (11.53 pm): I rise tonight to bring to the attention of the House an outstanding event that occurred in my electorate this week. On Wednesday, 6 June the Future Leaders Eco Challenge was held in Gympie. This was the fourth forum held in Gympie since October 2005. The idea was as a result of the vision of Peter Sergeant, principal of Gympie East State School. This year students from around the region took on the challenge ‘in an ever changing world, what does climate change mean to you?’

I commend the work of Megan Sperring from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority’s Reef Guardian School’s program who ran the workshop. I also commend Gympie Landcare, with generous support from the Burnett Mary Regional Group who provided the funding for the venue and the catering. Gympie East State School’s environment committee members helped to coordinate the event and provided the technical support and management skills. Councillor Maree Prior from the Cooloola Shire Council opened the forum.

It was wonderful to see the students from the following schools in my electorate participate: Tin Can Bay State School, Gympie High School, Gympie East State School, Gympie West State School, One Mile State School, Jones Hill State School, Monkland State School and Kilkivan State School. Numbers may have been down on participating schools, but the group of 61 students made up for it with their enthusiasm, knowledge and attention during the sharing showcase of the wonderful environmental projects happening within the Wide Bay-Burnett region. During the workshop they took on the challenge of contemplating Gympie in 2050 with the worst and best case scenarios. The quality of the work, the information the children had a handle on and the sincerity with which the children worked together, as well as the Gympie High School students working with the primary school students, impressed all who witnessed this event.

Due to the tyranny of distance I was unable to attend this Eco Challenge and sent a message to the students by DVD, which was apparently well received. The students worked together in 14 teams and then presented their ideas to the forum. They then formulated the letter which is now waiting for me in my office to respond to on my return.

I am told that all who witnessed the forum were impressed with the work the students were doing and the passion that they demonstrated for the environmental issues discussed. I want to add my support and praise to the youth of the Gympie and Kilkivan shires. Their interest and enthusiasm for the environment and sustainable development inspire and motivate us all to do better. I would like to share some of the points contained in the letter that the young people have sent to me—

We, the youth of Gympie and Cooloola and Kilkivan Shires respectfully ask for your support for the following ideas: every house to have a water tank; a bike track network in Gympie; the establishment of a community garden on Council land in Gympie; support for local produce; support for alternative energy use—houses, council properties; support giving ‘youth’ a voice—a ‘Youth Environmental Council’; create parkland/environmental space adjacent to the Mary River; tree planting incentives for landholders; modern recycling depots; strategies for cleaning up public spaces ie. butt bins, recycling bins etc, education; recycling bins for Kilkivan; making sure there is never a dam on the Mary River; making sure we have sustainable ways of using and re-using water without damming rivers.

Mathers, Mr I

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (11.57 pm): Members of this House have heard me speak before about the great work performed by the Redlands Ulysses Club. This club has planned and run the annual Ron Power Ride to raise funds for local Redland palliative care organisations. The Redlands Ulysses Club has a proud history of providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere, with well conducted rides and a strong focus on motorcycling safety.

On 26 May 2007 the Redlands Ulysses Club suffered a tragic loss with the death of one of their favourite sons, Ian Malcolm Mathers. Late last year Ian was diagnosed with amyloidosis. Ian, with the support of his wife Julie and daughter Tam, confronted the challenge of this illness with his usual determination. I saw Ian earlier this year at our local Relay for Life, a cancer fundraising event. Ian looked pale and gaunt. However, he was still optimistic about winning his battle with amyloidosis.

Having ridden with the Redlands Ulysses Club in many of the recent Ron Power Rides, I have had the privilege to get to know many of the Redlands Ulysses team, including President, Allan Pratt, and his lovely wife and secretary, Savaugn Pratt. During these rides and at a number of meetings I first met Ian Mathers. Over the years I have never seen Ian Mathers get angry with anyone. Over the years I have never heard Ian Mathers talk negatively about anyone. Speaking to his friends and other club members who knew him better than I did, I could not find one person who had seen Ian respond angrily to anyone. Ian was a person, not a saint. Friends have told me that when Ian got upset with a matter he would walk away and come back a few minutes later prepared to keep working on the original problem.

The two things that stick in my mind when I think of Ian are Ian's very dry, quiet and reserved sense of humour and his absolute commitment to rider safety. Ian represented Ulysses clubs Australia-wide on a range of panels and forums. I ran into Ian one day here in parliament when he was part of the parliamentary Travelsafe Committee's review of the QRide program. Ian's articles in the Redlands Ulysses Club magazine would continually confront and challenge his fellow riders to improve their adherence to safe conduct on the roads.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Redlands Ulysses Club for its dignified and appropriate service and send-off for Ian. I would like to thank Pastor Kenn Lewis, who is also the club's welfare officer, for his leadership in the service. Queensland motorcycling, the Redlands Ulysses Club and our community are poorer for the passing of Ian Mathers. I am sure that all members of this House join me in passing on our thoughts and prayers to Ian's widow, Julie, and daughter, Tam. Ian, you went far too early. I hope you are at peace with Angela. Rest in peace.

Kawana Electorate, Public Hospital Facilities

Mr DICKSON (Kawana—Lib) (11.59 pm): Additional public hospital facilities are long overdue for the people of my electorate. The government's announcement in February this year that a new hospital will be built at Kawana was very welcome news. At the time I applauded the announcement but I also expressed my concerns that it would not be built until 2014.

Now the government is considering a public-private partnership for the hospital. I am not opposed in principle to public-private partnerships. However, the delays that could result from this process are a matter of great concern. My constituents need and deserve this hospital as soon as possible. They do not need a drawn-out bureaucratic procedure. If, as the minister for infrastructure claims, a public-private partnership is not appropriate for the new Gold Coast and children's hospitals because of logistics and timing, it should not be considered for the Sunshine Coast either.

My constituents have good reason to be cynical about public-private partnerships. The Maroochy Shire Council sought to enter into such a partnership in 1998 to build a car park in Brisbane Road, Mooloolaba. Nearly 10 years later, that project still has not commenced.

I call on the government to guarantee that whether or not the Kawana Hospital is built in a public-private partnership it will be delivered on time. I also ask for assurances that the government will not use a public-private partnership to renege on the \$940 million it has committed to spend on the hospital. If the Kawana Hospital is built under a public-private partnership that saves money for the government, the savings should be put into other Sunshine Coast health initiatives. My constituents deserve no less.

National Heart Foundation, Go Red for Women Day

Ms DARLING (Sandgate—ALP) (12.01 am): Friday, 15 June is Go Red for Women Day, a National Heart Foundation awareness raising campaign. Every day 31 Australian women die from heart disease. That equates to more than one every hour. Many women are well aware of the risk factors of heart disease and recognise them in their partners and husbands, but they often neglect their own health. Heart disease is often considered to be a disease suffered by older men.

The Heart Foundation's Go Red for Women campaign is designed to alert women about their risk of heart disease and inform them about the actions they can take to improve their heart health. The good news is that heart disease is largely preventable. Women can reduce their risk of heart disease by making smart health choices, such as not smoking, eating healthy foods, doing some form of regular physical activity and knowing their numbers.

I urge women in this House and all Australian women to find out three numbers—firstly, their cholesterol level; secondly, their blood pressure; and, thirdly, their waist circumference. Having just completed the Eat Well, Be Active challenge, I would encourage people to take the first step to a healthier lifestyle. Just start with 10 minutes of continuous exercise—like walking, vacuuming, anything that gets your heart rate up a little—then increase that to 30 minutes a day. Try joining a walking group like the Sandgate and Bracken Ridge Gone Walking groups.

Mr Hayward interjected.

Ms DARLING: No, I cannot say that I have vacuumed myself recently, but I understand that it can get the heart rate up. Try swapping one deep-fried snack for healthy fruit or popcorn or carrot and celery sticks—

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Ms DARLING: Yes, I am pointing to you; and increase to two serves of fruit and five serves of vegies each day. Wear a splash of red on Friday, 15 June, or better still purchase special Go Red for Women merchandise to raise vital funds for the Heart Foundation for research and education into women and heart disease. I have some merchandise on sale in my electorate office, including some lovely red emery boards and tie pins. For heart health information or free *Women and Heart Disease* booklets, call 1300362787 or visit www.heartfoundation.com.au. And do not forget the Eat Well, Be Active web site for tips and ideas on healthy living; it is www.eatwellbeactive.qld.gov.au.

Robina Hospital, Palliative Care

Mr STEVENS (Robina—Lib) (12.04 am): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the ill-conceived, inconsiderate, compassionately bankrupt and bureaucratically expedient move by Queensland Health to evict extremely sick palliative care patients from Robina Hospital to the high-rise Pacific Private building in Southport. The weak and indefensible excuse for the move is that the health department cannot find another venue to accept mentally ill patients. This reflects pointedly on the government's lack of planning for the mentally ill sector of Queensland Health on the Gold Coast. Queensland Health has to take over the ward from the palliative care patients at Robina and it is then committed to returning palliative care to Robina Hospital by 2010, which makes this interim move costly, poorly planned and totally inexplicable.

The insensitive evacuation of those poor palliative care patients has left families of current patients distraught, it has evoked strong emotional responses from families whose loved ones passed away under the excellent care of the palliative care staff in the current purpose-fitted palliative care unit and it has been hastily and deceitfully expedited to avoid controversy, protest or any opportunity for a reversal of the decision. The pity of the decision making that has brought about this inappropriate move is that it fails to recognise the excellent features that are available to families and loved ones at the current site of Robina as opposed to the facilities that will be much reduced in the proposed new high-rise site in Southport.

The ground floor visiting area and barbecue facility at Robina has been witness to many happy and memorable final hours for family and friends of patients whose time in this space eased the pain of their burden of dying with peace and dignity. The new ward at Southport will be purely a hospital ward with nowhere for relatives to go but to hover around the bed of the patient.

In addition, the Robina ward is right next to the train station which makes it a convenient destination for public transport access that the government's own planning policies say is an integral part of the 21st century answer for the treatment of health. The Southport solution is isolated from public transport, except for an inadequate, multichange bus access and the parking in Southport is jam packed already with no near-patient parking for relatives and friends.

I cannot understand the knee-jerk reaction by Queensland Health. While trying to fix the problem of housing mentally ill patients on the Gold Coast, it has created another problem by downgrading the care facilities for palliative care patients on the Gold Coast at their current popular and successful location at Robina. There is still time for this decision to be reversed. I urge the health minister to intervene personally in this bureaucratic, decision-making process to preserve one of the few aspects of the Gold Coast health department that is currently serving its constituents well.

Gaven Electorate, Emergency Services Demonstration Day

Mr GRAY (Gaven—ALP) (12.07 am): I rise tonight to talk about the involvement of emergency services in the electorate of Gaven. On Saturday, 16 June between the hours of nine and 12, all emergency services that provide this vital and important service to the residents of the fastest-growing area of the Gold Coast will gather at Discovery Park, Helensvale, to not only conduct demonstrations but meet with locals and provide an educational program on fire safety both within the home and in other areas which is so vital in these times.

They will be joined on that day in an event which is sponsored by the Lions Club of Helensvale and me to celebrate the good work that emergency services officers do. The police will be represented with a pursuit car, a motorcycle and several officers. The Ambulance Service will be represented. The rural fire services of both Wasp Creek and Guanaba will be present. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service will be present and will be conducting demonstrations on containing fires which occur in the kitchen, as this is the most dangerous place in the house with the electrical and gas appliances. They will be talking to people about the importance of having smoke alarms in their homes and maintaining them.

The Lions members of Helensvale will be providing a free sausage sizzle during the three hours, and I am sure the event will be well supported by members of this House. You are all invited. This is an opportunity to thank those in the St John's Ambulance brigade, the SES and all emergency services for the very good work they do in the electorate of Gaven.

Voluntary Carbon Credit Trading

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (12.09 am): On Wednesday evening I made a contribution to the debate on the private member's Voluntary Carbon Credit Trading Bill 2007 which was unfortunately defeated by the Beattie government. My allotted time expired before I was able to complete my remarks in relation to a few important issues in the bill. I would like to do that tonight.

As I was saying on Wednesday night, like any form of vegetation, sugar cane locks up carbon in its biomass. The significant advantage that makes sugar cane competitive as an efficient crop as far as relative energy inputs and greenhouse gas emissions are concerned includes the fact that bagasse, a by-product of sugar production, is available as a fuel for the generation of energy. In fact, many cogeneration projects are currently undertaken by a number of sugar milling companies.

Sugar cane in these mills requires virtually no input of fossil fuel energy for processing. The paper that I referred to on Wednesday night actually assesses a raw tonne of cane sugar as creating an energy credit at the end of its production life cycle. I wanted to canvass that because I think it is important to remember that there are alternatives to plantation forestry which have the capacity to contribute positively to carbon sequestration efforts. The advantage of sugar cane is that it continues to maintain a productive crop that provides jobs and incomes for families in the sugar industry and in the growing, harvesting and milling sectors. Importantly, these jobs are in regional and rural areas of Queensland. I also want to canvass this issue because, increasingly, there is pressure on the sugar industry in relation to land use in regional and rural areas because plantation forestry is looking to gain a foothold and expand its estate.

In my electorate, managed investment fund companies, full to the brim with superannuation money, and the government owned corporation Forestry Plantations Queensland are aggressively buying up land to establish plantation forestry. The sugar industry is worried about its ongoing viability if it continues to lose land to trees as it undermines the size of the harvest, which has implications for all three sectors of the industry in the long term—the growers, the harvester operators and the milling companies.

Certainly, I am not opposed to the development of a commercial timber industry. However, in both circumstances the land being targeted in many cases is good quality agricultural land, already cleared and drained for farming. As far as the bill was concerned, it would have been important that any carbon trading scheme recognised crops like sugar cane as having the potential to contribute positively to carbon sequestration efforts and that the sugar cane delivers a net carbon emission credit at the end of its production cycle.

I certainly think that the bill did that through the three methods by which the exchange would have provided certification on a voluntary basis to corporations and enterprises which reduce carbon emissions. Those efforts, as I mentioned last night, included sequestration, power produced from low or zero carbon emission industries and where traditional power sources can demonstrate that per unit emissions are reduced by an amount exceeding any reductions achieved by the industry as a whole.

The sugar industry meets those criteria and I believe has the capacity to make a very significant contribution to the sequestration of carbon. As such, I was pleased that the Queensland coalition provided the state with the opportunity to move forward but was ultimately disappointed that the Beattie government decided to defeat the bill for base political purposes.

Beenleigh Cane Festival

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (12.12 am): I would like to use this opportunity to recognise the hard work of the Beenleigh Rotary Club, particularly John and Di Crawford, for another successful Beenleigh Cane Festival. The Beenleigh Cane Festival is not only a celebration of Beenleigh and its heritage but a massive fundraising effort by Rotary to support local charities.

On Saturday, 2 June the annual cane parade made its way through the streets of Beenleigh to the Beenleigh Showgrounds. Hundreds gathered in Beenleigh to see the parade, with many great contingents including the Willman family—as always—the Beenleigh Primary School, Beenleigh State High School and St Josephs of Tobruk Memorial School.

The culmination of the Beenleigh Cane Festival is the Beenleigh Cane Quest and the crowning of the Beenleigh and Districts Cane Queen. Cane Queen entrants and their sponsors spend six months working hard to raise funds for local charities. This year's quest had five extraordinary entrants who worked very hard. This year's entrants were Deanne Page, sponsored by Noel and Sam Camilleri from

the Music Cavern; Elle Tait, sponsored by the Beenleigh PCYC and the Beenleigh Sports Club; Kerri Balaba, sponsored by Woodlands Delfin; Emma Valiance, sponsored by the Beenleigh branch of the National Australia Bank; and Nicole White, sponsored by the Beenleigh Bowls Club.

I attended the Cane Festival launch in February this year and met the five entrants. Across the various events between then and the awards dinner on Saturday, I have seen the confidence of these young women grow. At this year's Cane Quest dinner Elle Tait was successful in taking out both the Cane Queen and Charity Queen titles, with Nicole White taking out the Charity Queen runner-up title. All of the entrants were very impressive young women who are a credit to their sponsors and to Beenleigh and surrounding districts. I am sure they all have bigger and brighter things ahead in their lives and careers.

Importantly, the Cane Quest raised \$54,638 for local community service organisations. Particular recognition must go to Elle Tait, the Beenleigh Sports Club and the Beenleigh PCYC on raising \$25,701. There are a number of people who must be recognised for their tireless efforts in the Cane Quest. John and Di Crawford have worked tirelessly year after year to be the driving force for the Cane Quest and have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars. This year John and Di were ably assisted by local Rotary President Martin Corbley, Sam Camilleri and her husband Noel and many more. I also wish to recognise the sponsors of the Cane Quest for their contribution. The support of Woodlands Delfin, the Beenleigh Bowls Club, Quest Newspapers, the Beenleigh Marketplace and WorkDirections was invaluable.

The weekend of the Cane Festival was made complete with the annual Opera in the Canefields held at the Heck Homestead at the Rocky Point Mill. The Canterbury College Cantabile Choir was amazing as always and held its own in performing side by side with the Queensland Opera. Given that the Queensland Opera are performing I know that the member for Yeerongpilly, as the most cultured member in this House, will be joining me there next year.

100 Years of Scouting

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (12.15 am): On 1 August 1907, scouting's founder, Robert Baden-Powell, blew his kudu horn on Brownsea Island at 8 am to open the world's first scout camp for 20 boys. Scouting began to quickly spread around the world and now exists in 216 countries and territories. On 1 August 2007 scouts around the world will gather to renew their promise for a new century of scouting and celebrate the anniversary of the largest and most successful peace movement ever.

Lord Baden-Powell's vision of a better world has influenced the lives of millions across the globe, and not just children. Today more than 28 million people belong to the scouting community. More countries are participating in scouts than participate in the Olympic Games. Lord Baden-Powell was voted the 13th most influential person of the 20th century. Baden-Powell's 1908 book *Scouting for Boys* made him the best-selling author of the 20th century.

I would like parliament to note that next year, 2008, Australia itself will celebrate its own centenary of scouting. Last weekend I attended the Bunya Mountains scouting group's AGM. I believe that the value of the scouting movement and the benefit to our children from the dedicated men and women who instruct them and act as scout leaders is often underestimated. As one scout leader stated on the night, 'They are just scouting kids who grew tall. They have never lost their love of scouting and have known the benefits they themselves received from being a scout and therefore became leaders to pass on the same experience to their own children and other people's children.'

Baden-Powell was quoted once as saying, 'Amongst our boy scouts and girl guides there is not one that does not feel the bond of friendship and comradeship and brotherhood with those of other countries.' I believe he is right—although times have changed and there is no longer segregation of the sexes; today we have boy and girl scouts.

Scout groups in my area have not had an easy time. Those in the Burnett had difficulties maintaining numbers or keeping scout leaders who have either retired or moved from the district. But through it all they have managed to endure and continue. As Stephen Dennis, District President, stated, 'It was only because of a constant, stable and strong core personnel.' These people need to be acknowledged by government for what they do because they take young children, teach them, challenge them both as members of a team or as individuals and produce confident, self-reliant individuals.

I was absolutely floored when Chris Littlejohns of Bunya District Scouts made me an honorary scout and presented me with a commemorative centenary scarf, which I have worn today. It is one of only 100 scarves made available in Queensland. I was presented with two woggles—the official leather woggle and a woggle made from a peculiar growth on a tree. This growth is made from the new shoot which does not break through the bark but instead turns in on itself and grows around and around forming a ball shape. This woggle was made by 'Panther', as he is known to the scouting fraternity, or Terry Fryett, as he is known in the wider community. I congratulate scouting on its centenary and thank the Bunya District Scouts for the honour they have bestowed on me.

Tidal and Storm Surge, Insurance Coverage

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (12.18 am): I wish to draw to the attention of the House tonight the potentially very serious implications for tens of thousands of Queensland homeowners who live in our coastal areas. Up and down the length and breadth of this great state we have many people who have houses that have been built within quite short distances of the coast, and in my town of Hervey Bay some 5,000 houses would be within striking distance of a two-metre tidal surge. The last ministerial forum held in Hervey Bay last year was attended by the Hon. Pat Purcell, the Minister for Emergency Services, and the topic of the forum was preparedness for an emergency. The most likely emergency which my community might face would be a tidal surge driven off the back of a cyclone and for which we are well and truly overdue. The last serious cyclone we had was in 1994 but that, very fortunately for us, struck at the bottom of the tide rather than the top. Before that, Hervey Bay has suffered a number of cyclones and has had some particularly large ones over the years. We are certainly due again.

One of the pieces of information that emerged during the debate at the ministerial forum was provided by representatives of the insurance industry who informed the some 200 people who were at the meeting that something in the vicinity of 70 per cent of standard housing insurance contracts have an exclusion clause which excludes all liability for damage caused by tidal surge or storm surge. Regrettably, many people are not aware of this and many people in my city—as I said, some 5,000 people—would have their homes inundated by a two-metre storm surge. On those figures, one would expect that at least 3,500 of them may wake up to find their houses have no insurance whatsoever.

It is a matter that all homeowners should take immediate action upon and I urge all residents of coastal communities to contact their insurer to look at their insurance policy and to ask the specific question: am I covered for damage from storm surge or tidal surge? As I said, 70 per cent of insurance contracts do not cover you. Notwithstanding that someone might have coverage for flood and notwithstanding that someone might have coverage for storm damage, they will find that a standard exclusion clause removes the liability of an insurer to pay for it if the damage is caused by storm surge or tidal surge. It is a potentially major problem for Queensland and Queenslanders, but it is one that can be addressed by simply saying to an insurer, 'I want the proper policy.'

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.21 am (Friday).

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Barry, Beattie, Bligh, Bombolas, Boyle, Choi, Copeland, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Dempsey, Dickson, Elmes, English, Fenlon, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Gray, Hayward, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Knuth, Langbroek, Lavarch, Lawlor, Lee Long, Lee, Lingard, Lucas, McArdle, McNamara, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Pitt, Pratt, Purcell, Reeves, Reilly, Reynolds, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Weightman, Welford, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson